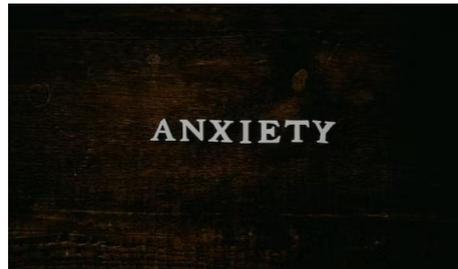


# Feeling Anxious?

## Keep Your Eyes Off The Internet



Anxiety is an emotional response that is contributory to the survival of human species. In a time where opportunistic predators cohabit with our human predecessors in an erratic terrain, that emotional drive could mean a difference between one thing. Life or death. The external manifestation of anxiety is oriented towards an intrinsic need for safety and the restraint of danger.

Anxious avoidance of potential geographical-based drought has saved lives.

Fleeing from a dangerously dormant snake has spared someone another day.

However, this adaptive response to stressors undergoes a revolution with the shifting ecosystem and social roles of the human species. Existing external stressors exist, but have transformed from the likes of primeval combats or mandatory game hunting to undesired aftermath of digital interconnectivity. In the face of this shift, anxiety, as a learnt or genetically encoded emotional response may manifest as a mismatched response to stimuli of perceived dangers or threat.

So, how has your innate emotional regulatory system adapted to the influx of digitally retrievable, mind-blinding, dance-popping dances on Tik-Tok?

## Here Is Why The Internet Generate Anxiety

### 1. Doomscrolling sends your brain on a roller coaster ride.

It may be uncanny for internet users to scroll and keep scrolling on their screen one page after the other. Some attribute it to the familiar comfort of establishing

safety through an information gathering process. Some regard it to the attention grabbing technology that constantly feeds social media platforms with clickbaits and enticing call-to-actions. Or, you could just be bored.

An activity which initially appears harmless can lead to a chain of events that traps an individual in a loop on an endless roller coaster ride. As the frequency of scrolling increases, the more the brain demands the dopamine hit from the action. For example, a person exhibiting concerns over their career path will constantly scan for more information on the internet to satiate their curiosity. However, as the brain's processing center craves for more constant influx of information, that 30-minute scrolling may easily turn into 3 hours of ordeal opening one Pandora box to the other. You may eventually find yourself in a rabbit hole of doom scrolling, the act of devoting excessive screen time to the absorption of negative news. Not surprisingly, this addictive action can feed anxiety to the mind.

## 2. You are keeping up with the Joneses.

You see your friend living their best life in the most romantic relationship on their latest highlight reel.

Your colleague is flaunting her abs on a yacht during her xx trip on the sea of Hawaii on her Instagram.

A sense of dissatisfaction or even envy starts to creep in. This phenomenon can be attributed to the concept Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) which relates to the intrusive perception that others are experiencing rewarding events or living better lives. FOMO can be problematic leading to anxiety, lack of concentration or sleep, and dependence on social media for gratification. As social creatures, perceived exclusion can directly contribute to negative psychological impacts.

The direct upward comparison amplifies the feeling of not measuring up to someone else's success within your social circle. The ease of information access from the advancement of social barriers generates new information faster than our emotional system can cope with. In return, the FOMO phenomenon can negatively affect our self-esteem and worth, confidence and mood.

### 3. Tragedy overload

Bad news, of deaths, wars, natural disasters and other misfortune events are now at the end of one's fingertips as phones transform into an extension of a person. The arrival of bad news promotes adaptive emotional response of anxiety to ward off occurrences and establish security arrangements. Such collective group behavior was documented during the shelf shortage during phases of the pandemic, where news of shortages cause people to mass purchase and contribute to the initial issue.

## Moderation Is Key

Each individual item of bad news raises the background anxiety of an individual. Usage of the internet and social media in moderation will curb tragedy overload from reaching new heights in your household. Include example

There is no doubt that the internet is a life-changing technology that improves our quality of lives in various avenues. When used in a healthy manner, social media is an excellent platform that increases connectivity in your social circle. Curate your feed with inspirational contents and establish limitations to digital sources that do not bring valuable input to your lives. These seemingly little steps are practical to curb the collateral mental health damage from the boost of digitization in our lifestyle.