

a tiny ramble  
about recovering  
from anxiety

a zine  
by chelsea sieg

acknowledgments

made in electric zine maker  
a tool by nathalie lawhead

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I've been a rather anxious person for as long as I can remember. I'm officially diagnosed with social anxiety disorder (among other things), but I feel like in general I'm anxious about a lot of things, not just social stuff. I'm also anxious about dealing with any sort of confrontation, or when confronted with things that remind me of my trauma, or when driving in Portland. Or especially when driving in Seattle. I like Seattle the city just fine, but fuck driving there.

Anyway.

I've been through a lot of therapy and tried a lot of things to help lessen/deal with my anxiety, and honestly, I've had limited success. Like the thing where you count things in the room, or count five things you can see or hear. I never got any relief from that. Maybe I'm doing it wrong.

Just in general, I have a hard time knowing if I've actually gotten "better" or if I'm still...I don't know...unwell. It's hard to know if I'm mentally healthy when I don't have any baseline to compare it to. I don't really know what mentally healthy is yet.

But recently, when I'm dealing with anxiety, I've started noticing something. I've become much more aware of the physical effects of anxiety, like my heart racing and my face getting red. But at the same time, I can practically feel my brain going through the logic of the situation, trying to talk me through whatever situation it is. Whether it's my car insurance stressing me out over the phone or a customer berating at me because I wouldn't let them return six-month-old items as per our clearly posted return policy, my brain handles it, even when my body isn't/doesn't want to.

It's honestly pretty unsettling now that I'm starting to notice it. It's strange to have my body telling me that I'm freaking out right now when my brain is telling me something different. My body wants to keep running until it reaches Canada, and my brain is like, "Nah, you got this."

It's. real. weird.

I'm trying to take it as a sign that I am getting better. I know how to handle my anxiety a little better now, rather than just getting swept up in it. It's a good thing. It's just...still a really weird thing.

It is comforting to know that all that therapy did actually amount to something, at least. I still don't really feel like I'm better, but logically, I know I'm at least a little better. Maybe not BETTER. But you know. Better. It's a start.

If you've read this far, thank you so much. If you also have anxiety, I wish you all the best in dealing with it in the future. I hope that you too can get to a point where you're writing weird rambles about how you might be a little bit better.

- Chelsea Sieg

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