THE ANXIOUS COMMUNICATOR

ON THE AGENDA FOR TODAY

- Anxiety - What it is and How it Affects Us
- Other Things that Affect Our Anxiety/Work
- Checklists - Why They're Great & How to Use Them
- Making Mistakes - We All Do It, So How to Move On
- Question Time & Resources

ABOUT ME

- Communications Specialist at BC/DC Ideas
- Marketing Specialist at Nonprofit.ist
- Run my own nonprofit
- Proud human of this guy

ABOUT ME

Also, I have Generalized Anxiety Disorder and ADHD.

Disclaimer: I'm not a mental health professional - I've just been to a lot of therapy & collect a lot of information.

POLL TIME!

What makes you anxious about nonprofit comms?

https://www.menti.com/al4ngywdznzu

Mentimeter Code: 8175 0988

ANXIETY

“A SENSE OF FEAR AND APPREHENSION THAT PUTS YOU ON ALERT. BIOLOGICALLY, IT’S MEANT TO PUT US IN A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF AWARENESS SO WE’RE PREPARED FOR POTENTIAL THREATS.”

“What Anxiety Does to Your Brain & What You Can Do About It”
Lifehacker

Why are we like this??

YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

I'M THE PROBLEM, IT'S ME

ADRENALINE +
CORTISOL
INCREASING

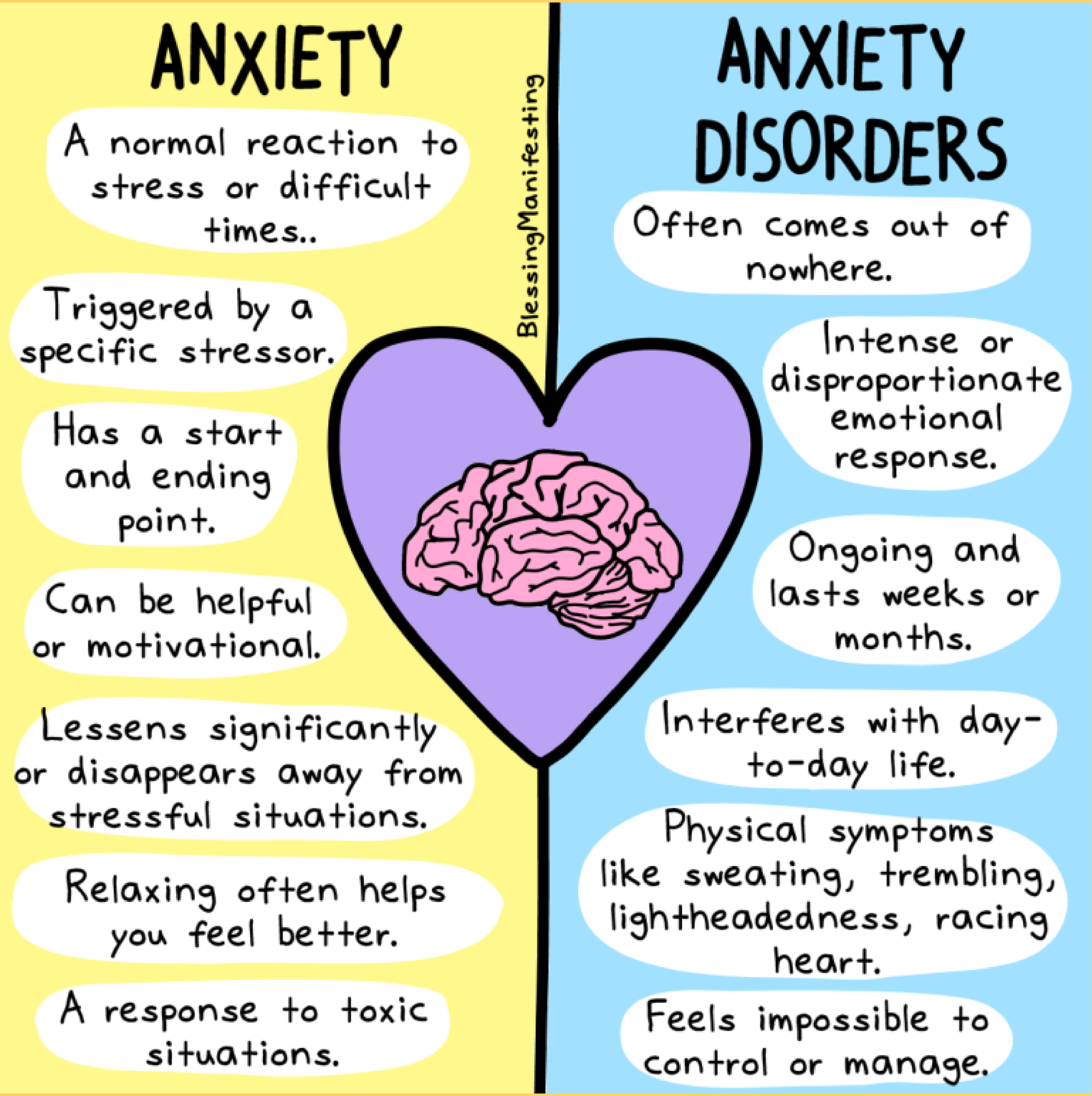
ADRENALINE + CORTISOL INCREASING

LOGICAL BRAIN SHUTTING DOWN

ADRENALINE +
CORTISOL
INCREASING

LOGICAL BRAIN
SHUTTING DOWN

PROTECTION MODE



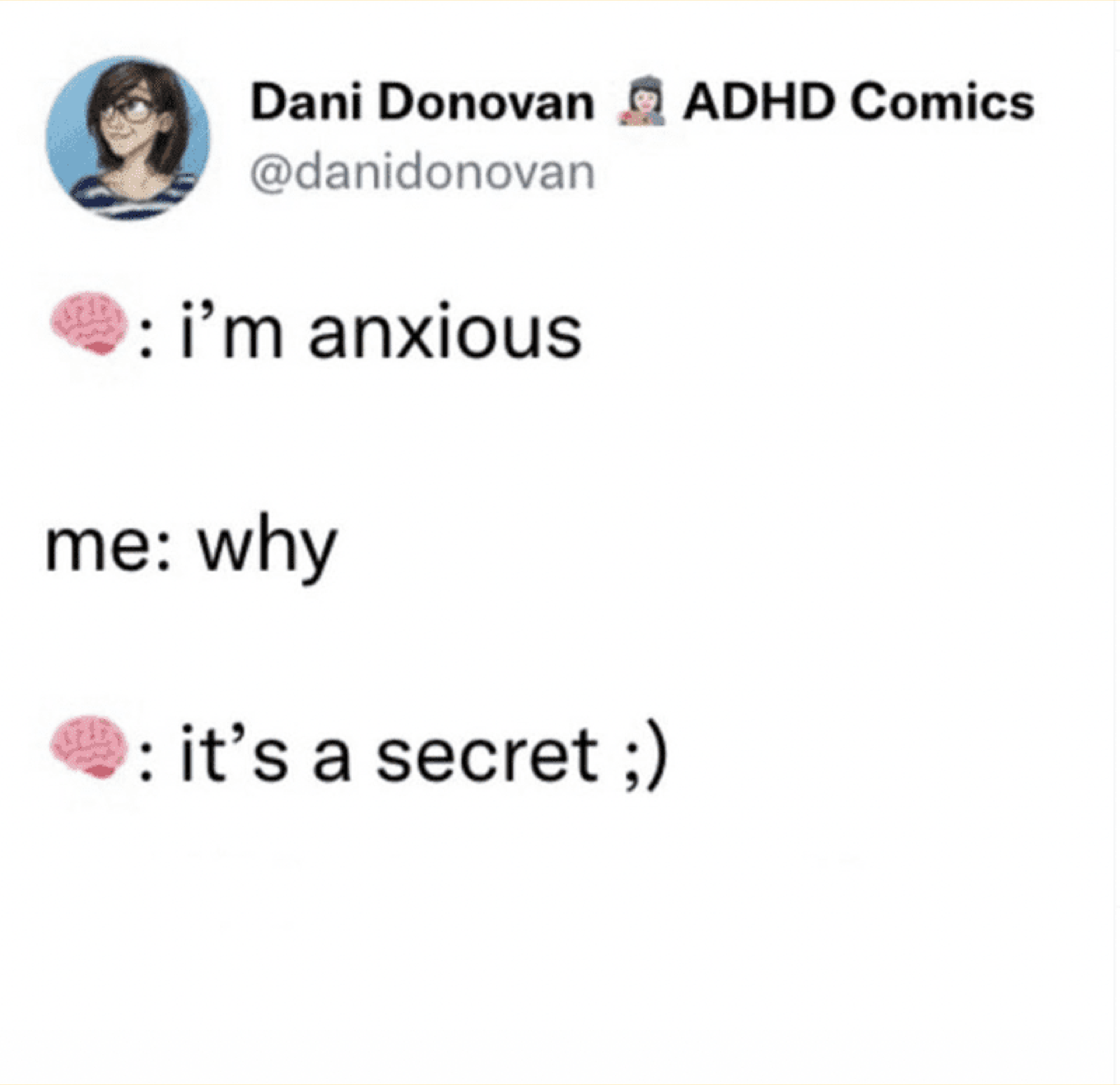
ANXIETY

- A normal reaction to stress or difficult times..
- Triggered by a specific stressor.
- Has a start and ending point.
- Can be helpful or motivational.
- Lessens significantly or disappears away from stressful situations.
- Relaxing often helps you feel better.
- A response to toxic situations.

ANXIETY DISORDERS

- Often comes out of nowhere.
- Intense or disproportionate emotional response.
- Ongoing and lasts weeks or months.
- Interferes with day-to-day life.
- Physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, lightheadedness, racing heart.
- Feels impossible to control or manage.

BlessingManifesting

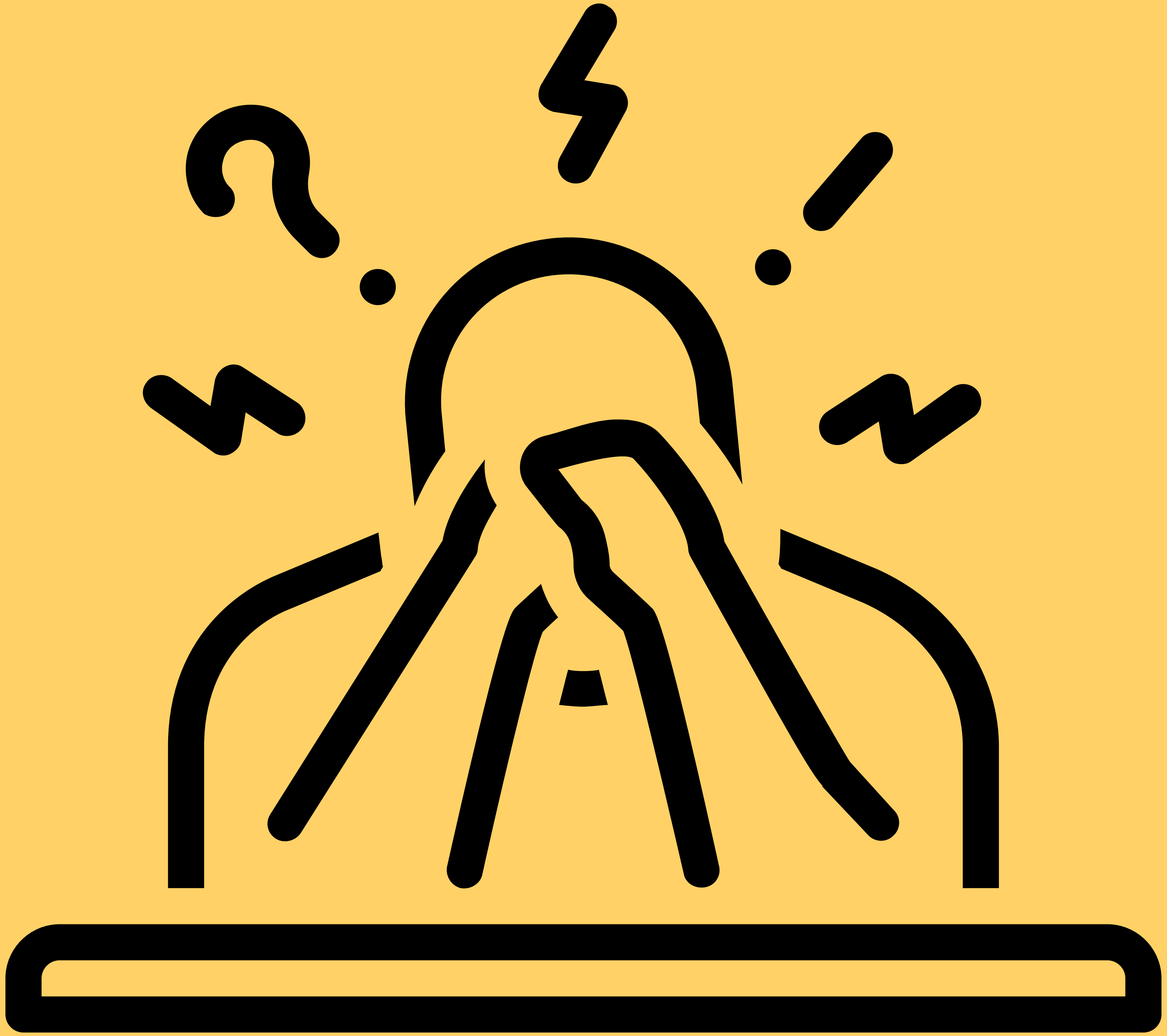


Dani Donovan 👩‍🎨 ADHD Comics
@danidonovan

🧠: i’m anxious

me: why

🧠: it’s a secret ;)



19.1%

ADULTS HAVE AN ANXIETY DISORDER.

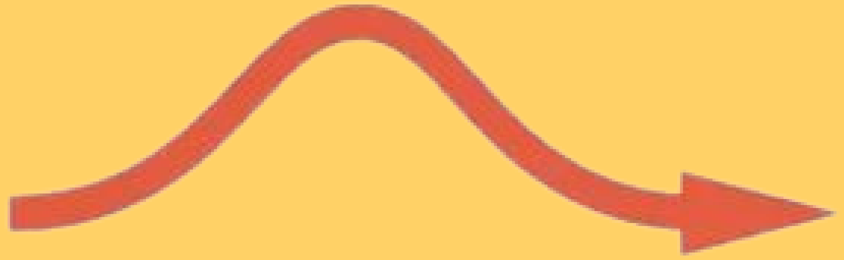
Anxiety and Depression Association of America

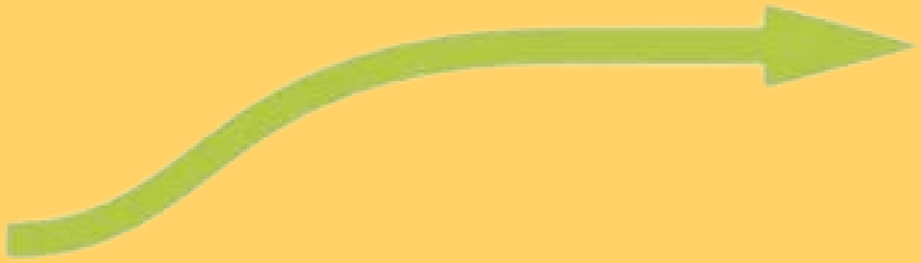
STRESS VS ANXIETY

"STRESS IS A RESPONSE TO A THREAT IN A SITUATION. ANXIETY IS A REACTION TO THE STRESS."

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

STRESS VS ANXIETY





	STRESS	ANXIETY
SPAN	**short term**	**can linger**
CAUSE / ORIGIN	**in response to a recognized threat**	**may not have an identifiable trigger**

MedicalNewsToday

HOW ANXIETY AFFECTS OUR BODIES

- Memory
- Concentration
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- A bunch of other things...

“THE CULTURE OF WORK RIGHT NOW KEEPS US ACTIVATED, ELEVATED, AND DRIVES ANXIETY. URGENCY RULES.”

Anxious Achiever

OTHER THINGS THAT AFFECT OUR ANXIETY/WORK

TECHNOLOGY

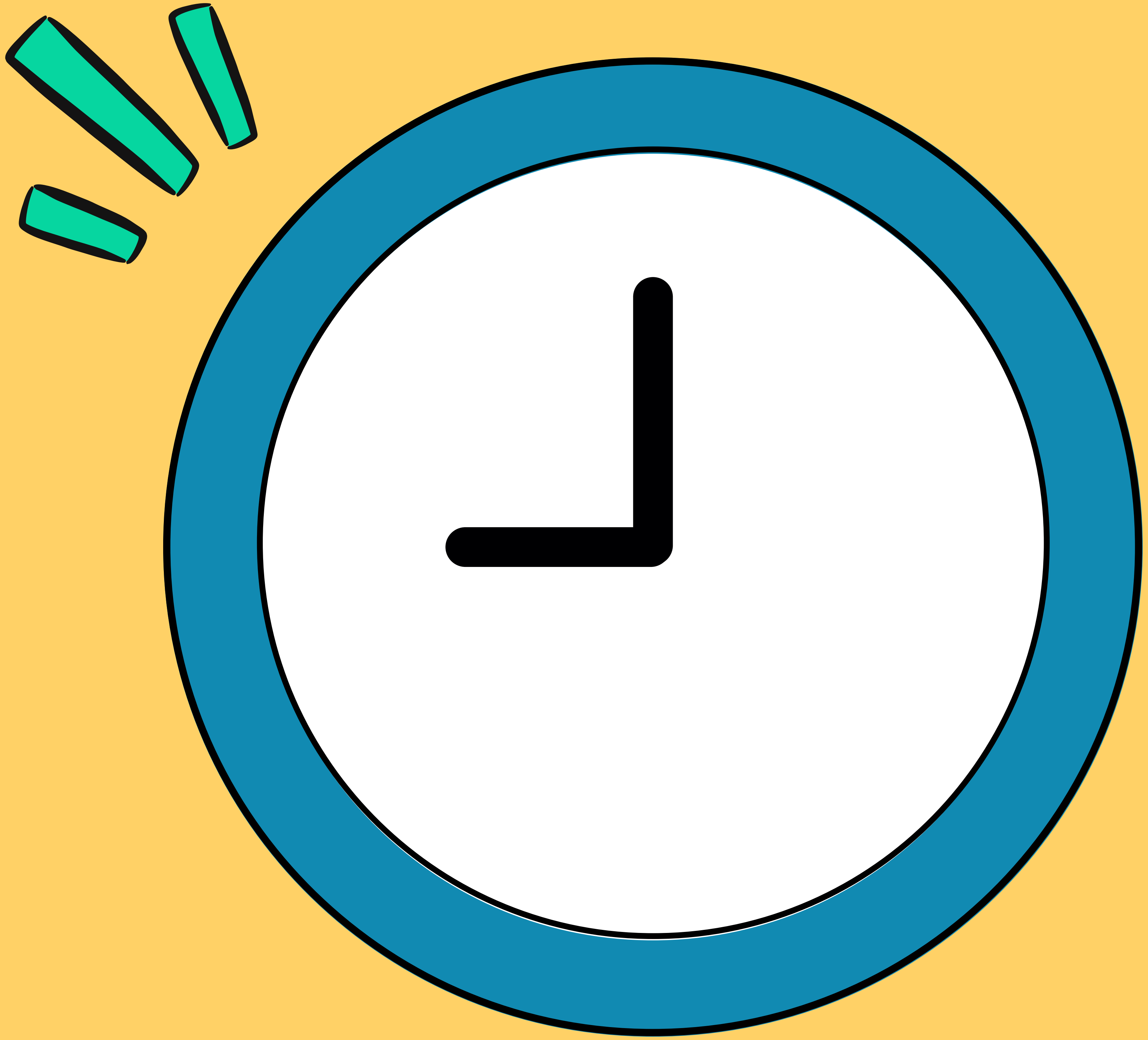
MULTITASKING

WORK/LIFE BOUNDARIES

CONTEXT SWITCHING

THAT NONPROFIT LIFE

OUR AMOUNT OF WORK

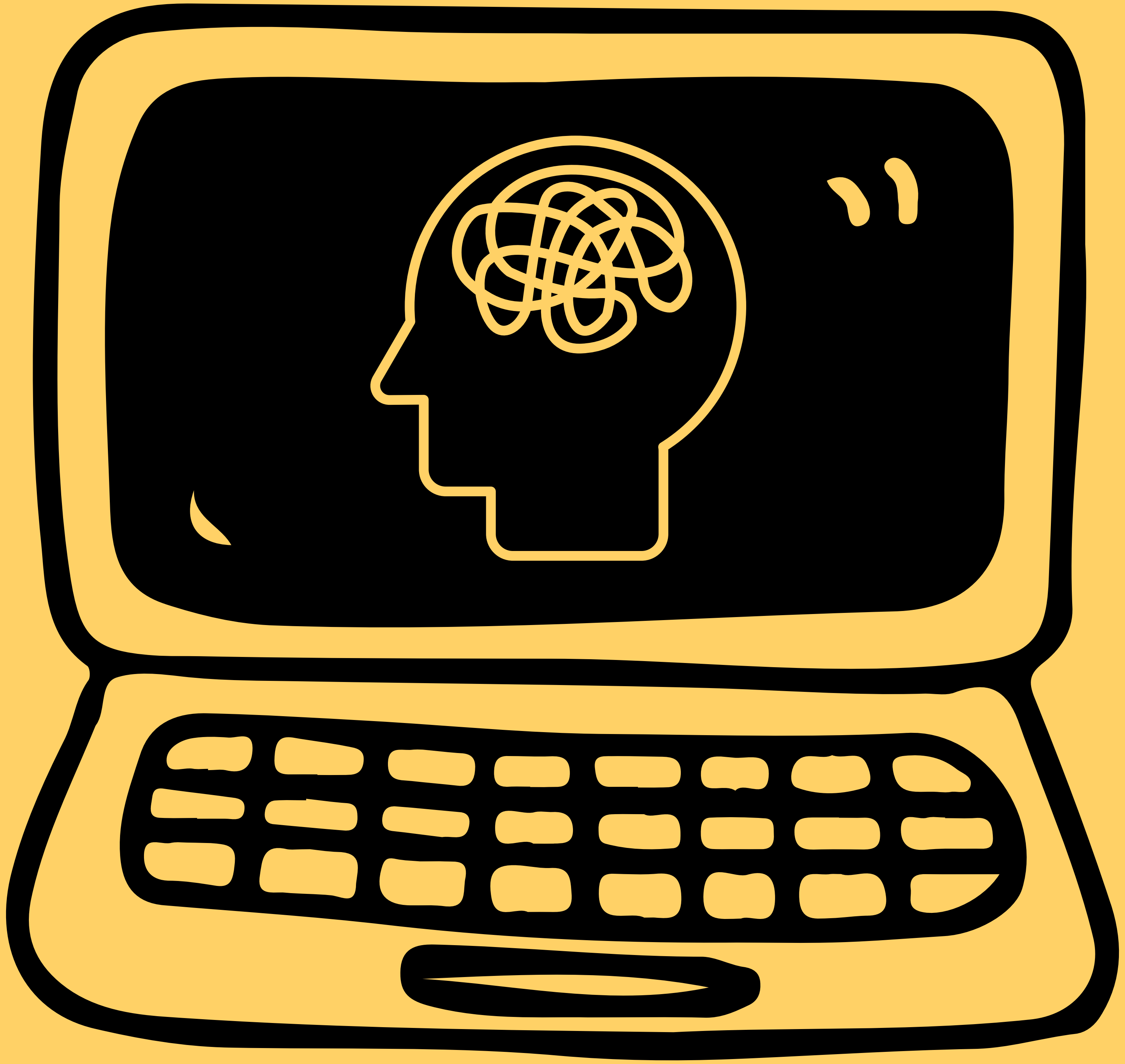


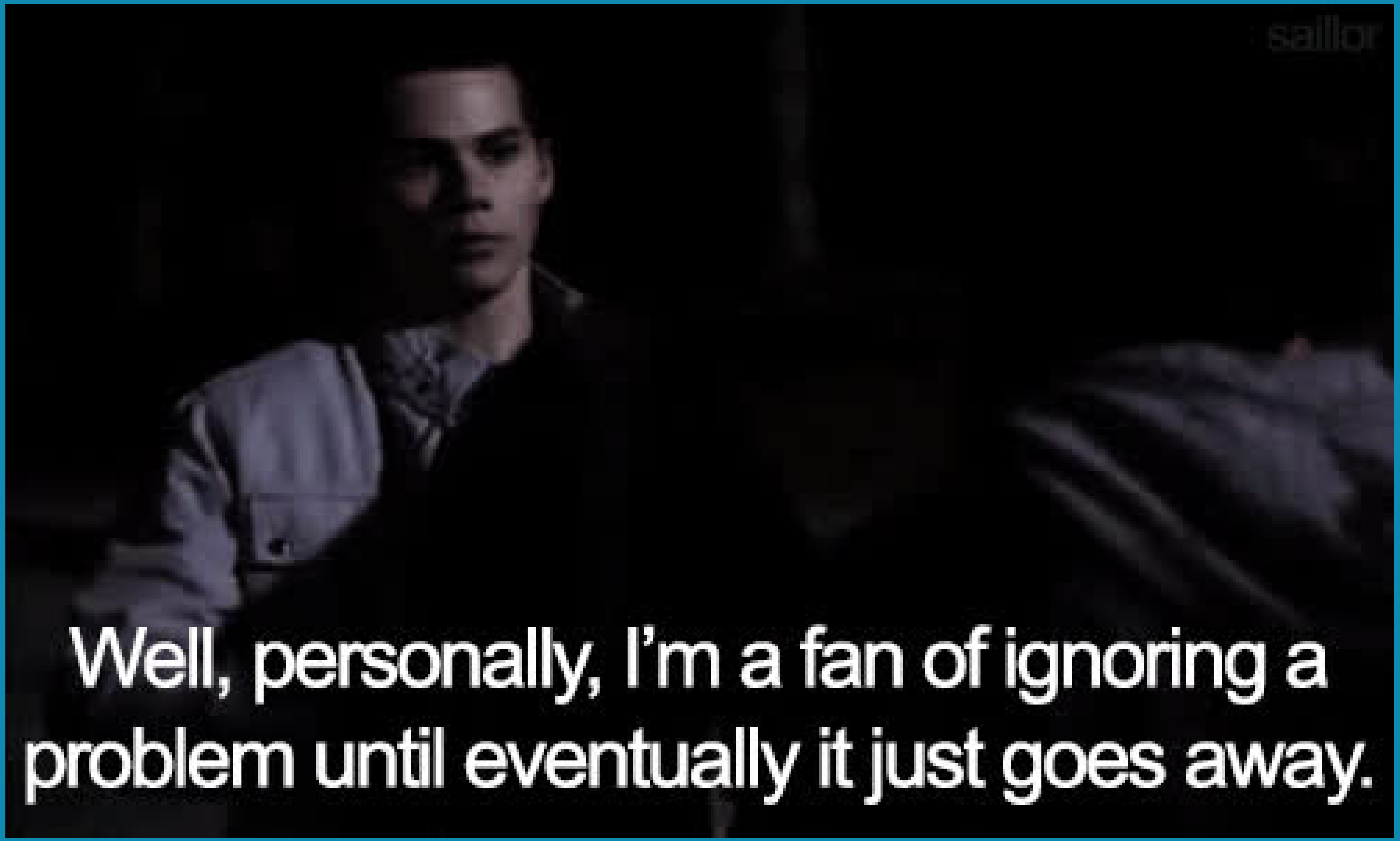
9.5

MINUTES TO GET BACK INTO A GOOD WORKFLOW

Workgeist Report | Qatalog

> “If your brain is a computer, ongoing anxiety and stress are those programs that run in the background and use up tons of memory and make everything else run slowly.”
>
> Healthline





Well, personally, I'm a fan of ignoring a problem until eventually it just goes away.

"AVOIDING ANXIETY TENDS TO REINFORCE IT. YOU CAN BE ANXIOUS AND STILL DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO."

Anxiety & Depression Association of America

CHECKLISTS

A CHECKLIST IS:

A TOOL

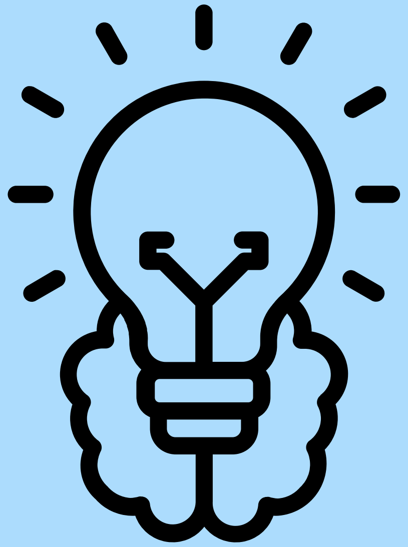
A SET OF REMINDERS

"A STANDARDIZED LIST OF REQUIRED STEPS FOR REPETITIVE TASKS"

WHY CHECKLISTS

WE'RE HUMAN

MEMORY & ATTENTION



"WE ARE BY NATURE FLAWED AND INCONSISTENT CREATURES."

Checklist Manifesto

CHECKLISTS

BAD CHECKLISTS

- Vague & imprecise
- Too long
- Hard to use
- Impractical
- Treat users as dumb and try to spell out every single step

"THEY TURN PEOPLE'S BRAINS OFF RATHER THAN TURN THEM ON."

GOOD CHECKLISTS

- Precise & Efficient
- To-the-point
- Easy-to-use in difficult situations
- Don't spell everything out
- Practical
- Evolving until it meets your needs

"A CHECKLIST IS ONLY AN AID. IF IT DOESN'T AID, IT'S NOT RIGHT."

Credit: Checklist Manifesto

CHECKLISTS AT THE START

Getting clear on expectations is a great way to reduce anxiety.

Anxious Achiever

YOUR JOB AS A WHOLE

EXPECTATIONS	What's expected of you? What roles are you expected to fill and what responsibilities do you have in the team?
TRIGGERS	What sets off your anxiety or anxious feelings?
URGENCY	What classifies as urgent and who gets to request that?
HELP MENU	What helps you? Think of it as a menu to consult when you need to calm down.
BOUNDARIES	What are the boundaries most important to you?

PROJECT CHECKLIST

WHO

- Who is the lead of the project?
- Who is generating the content?
- Who is the approver?

WHAT

- What's the project?
- What are the outputs?
- What are the graphic design needs?

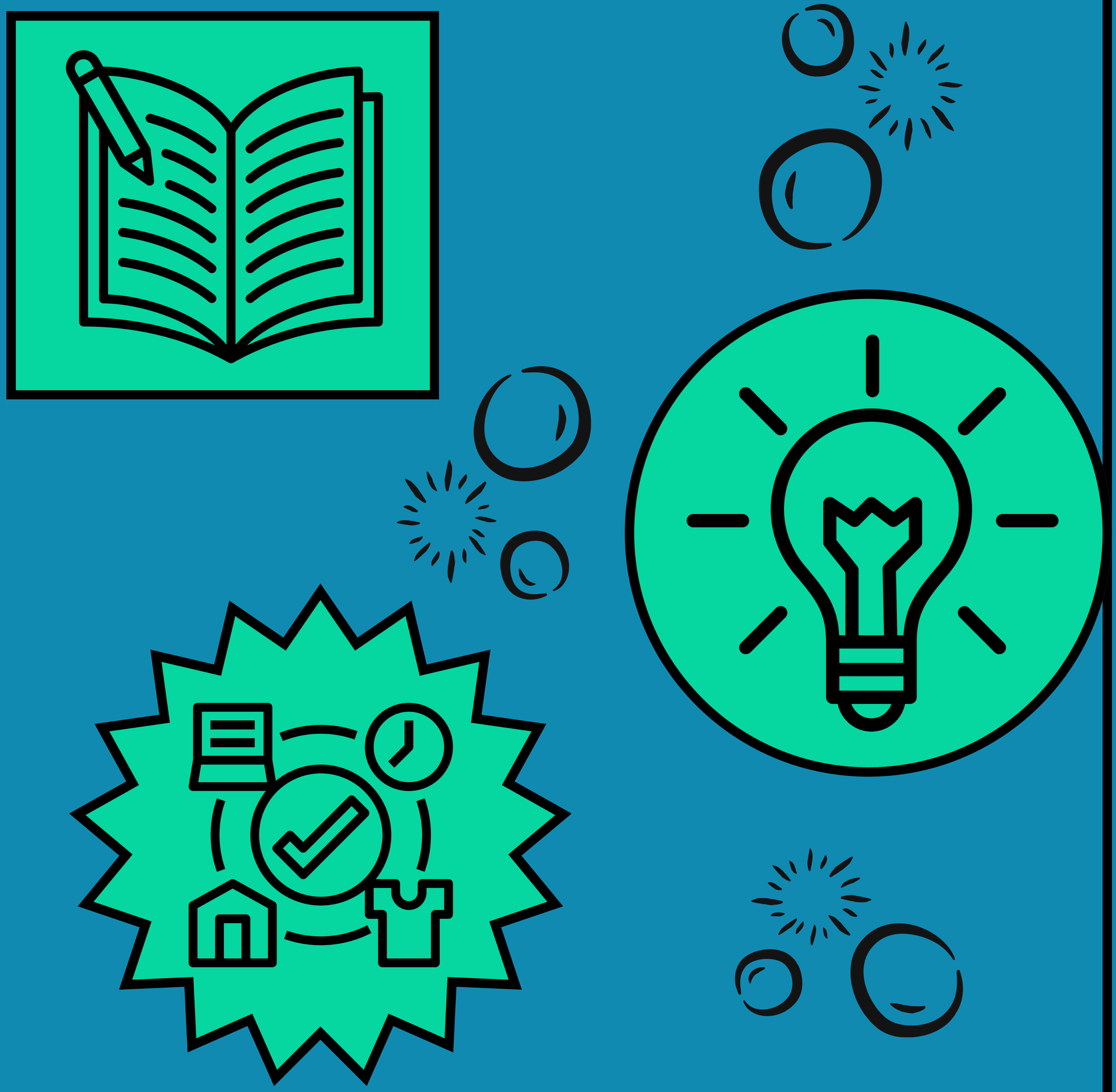
WHEN

- When is it due?
- What are the deadlines - soft and firm?

WHY

- How is the project helping your mission?

CHECKLISTS DURING

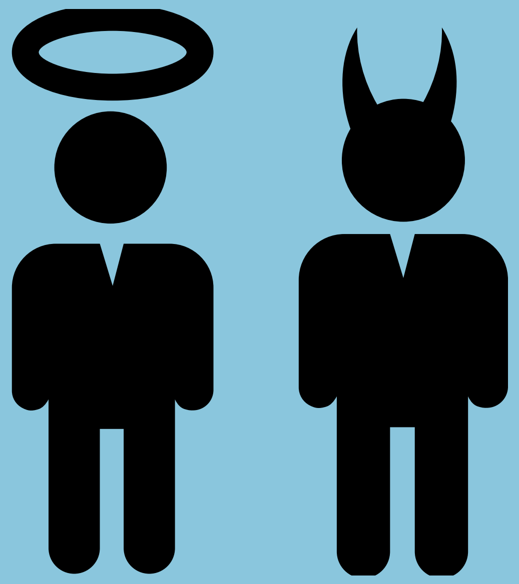


CHALLENGING ANXIOUS THOUGHTS - SOCRATIC QUESTIONING

1. Describe the situation you are worried about.
2. What specifically do you fear might happen?
3. Rate the likelihood that this will happen (from 0 to 100%)
4. What evidence supports your thoughts? What evidence does not support them?
5. If it did happen, what actions could you take?
6. What's the worst that could happen? The best? The most likely?
7. Are there any useful actions you could take now?
8. What would you tell a friend who was in your situation?

Madeline Shaw/Sarah Edelman

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA



BLACK & WHITE THINKING

Seeing things as either 100% good or 100% bad.

EXAMPLE

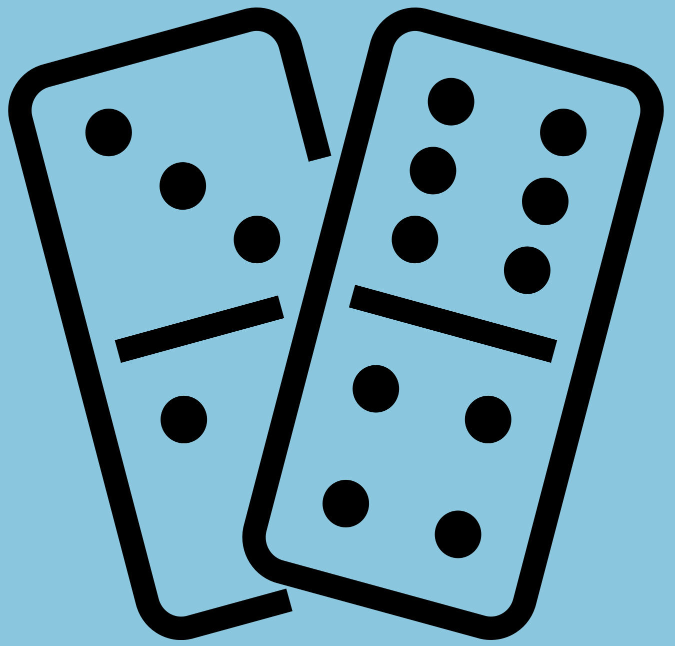
I made a big mistake and can’t accomplish a certain deliverable. Now my project is ruined.

SOLUTION

Look for shades of gray. Situations are rarely either perfect or totally worthless — try to find at least one silver lining.

Credit: Asana

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA



OVERGENERALIZING

Viewing a mistake as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Credit: Asana

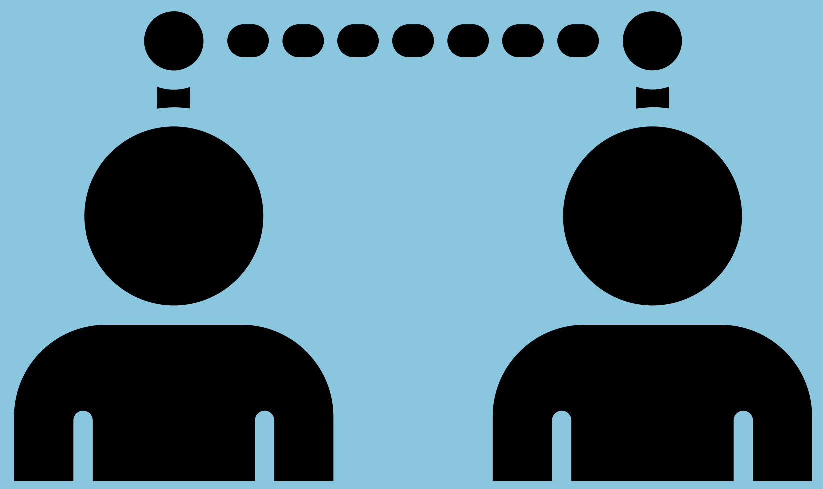
EXAMPLE

I missed another deadline. I'll never be able to complete projects on time, and nobody will trust me again.

SOLUTION

Remember past successes or positive events. What are things you've accomplished in the past that you're proud of?

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA



MIND READING

Assuming that other people will think about you negatively because of your mistake.

Credit: Asana

EXAMPLE

I was nervous during a presentation and misspoke. Now people will think I’m incapable or unprofessional.

SOLUTION

Remember that you’re not at the center of the universe, and people have other things to do than sitting around thinking negative thoughts about you. When other people made mistakes in the past, was it such a big deal?

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA

EMOTIONAL REASONING

Assuming that if you feel something is true, it must be true.

Credit: Asana

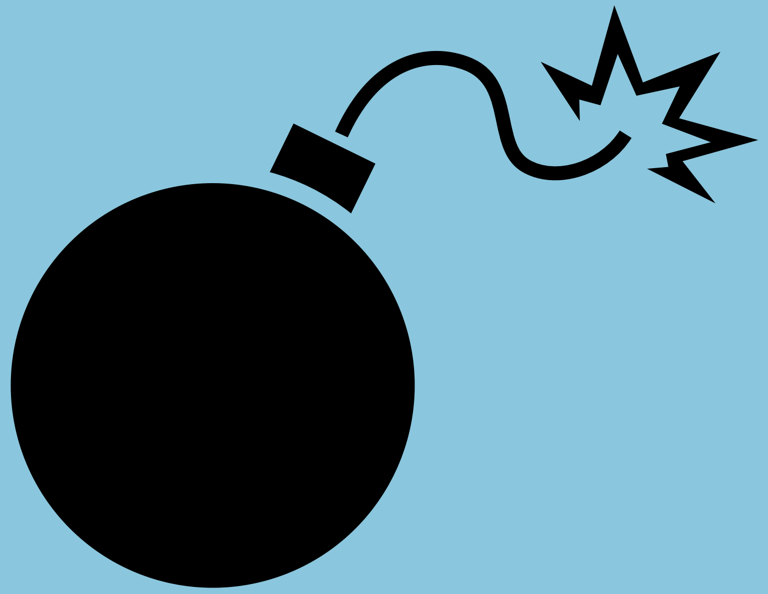
EXAMPLE

I forgot to bring my notes to a client meeting and got completely flustered. Now I'll never get the promotion I wanted, and I can't show my face at work tomorrow.

SOLUTION

Get some distance. How many times in the past has the worst-case scenario actually happened? If 0=breaking a fingernail and 100=nuclear holocaust, what rating would you give the event you're dealing with right now? Will you remember this mistake in a week, a month, or a year?

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA



CATASTROPHIZING

Imagining the worst-case scenario and thinking you wouldn't be able to deal with it.

Credit: Asana

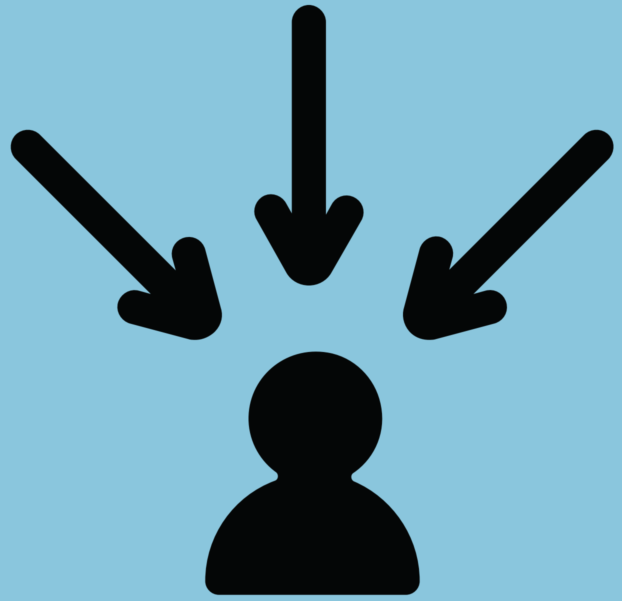
EXAMPLE

I just bombed a job interview, and my job search is dragging on. Now I'm never going to find a new position, and I'll lose my apartment when my savings run out.

SOLUTION

Think of all the resources you have available to you—people, places, or things. What's the first thing you would do if the worst happened? Then what?

TYPES OF THINKING | ASANA



PERSONALIZING

Blaming one person (like yourself) for a situation that has many causes.

EXAMPLE

My initiative failed because I'm bad at project management. I should have managed stakeholders better to make sure tasks were completed on time.

SOLUTION

Remember that nobody is perfect. Focus on creating solutions rather than placing blame.

Credit: Asana

CHECKLISTS AFTER

EDITING PROCESS

SUBSTANTIVE EDITING

- Flow, organization & pacing
- Logic
- Sentence & paragraph structure
- Voice & tone
- Repetitive phrases, incomplete sentence, clarity

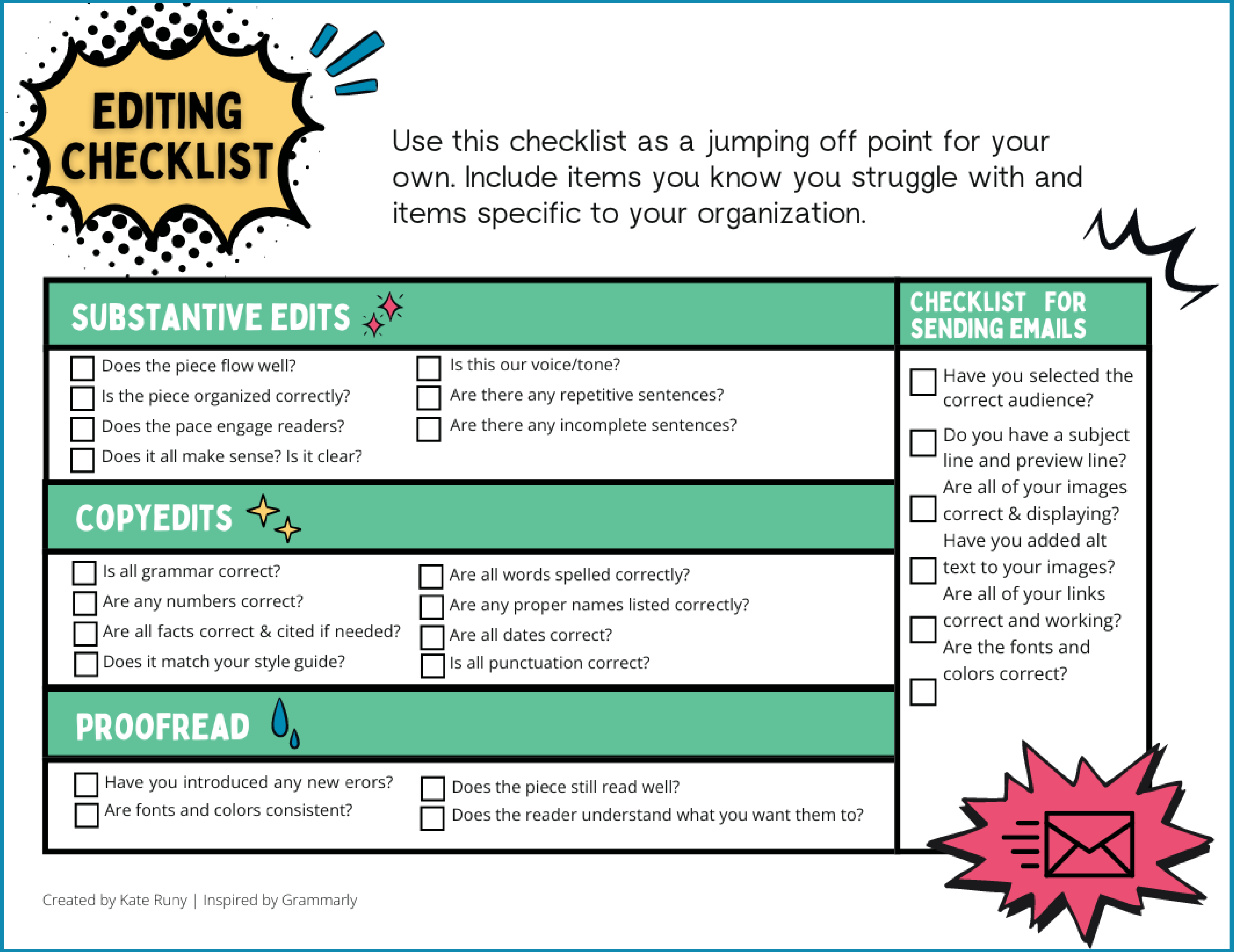
COPYEDITING

- Grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
- Check against your style guide
- Accuracy: Facts, dates, etc.

PROOFREAD

- Last look
- Technical check

DETAILED CHECKLIST



EDITING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a jumping off point for your own. Include items you know you struggle with and items specific to your organization.

SUBSTANTIVE EDITS

- ☐ Does the piece flow well?
- ☐ Is the piece organized correctly?
- ☐ Does the pace engage readers?
- ☐ Does it all make sense? Is it clear?
- ☐ Is this our voice/tone?
- ☐ Are there any repetitive sentences?
- ☐ Are there any incomplete sentences?

COPYEDITS

- ☐ Is all grammar correct?
- ☐ Are any numbers correct?
- ☐ Are all facts correct & cited if needed?
- ☐ Does it match your style guide?
- ☐ Are all words spelled correctly?
- ☐ Are any proper names listed correctly?
- ☐ Are all dates correct?
- ☐ Is all punctuation correct?

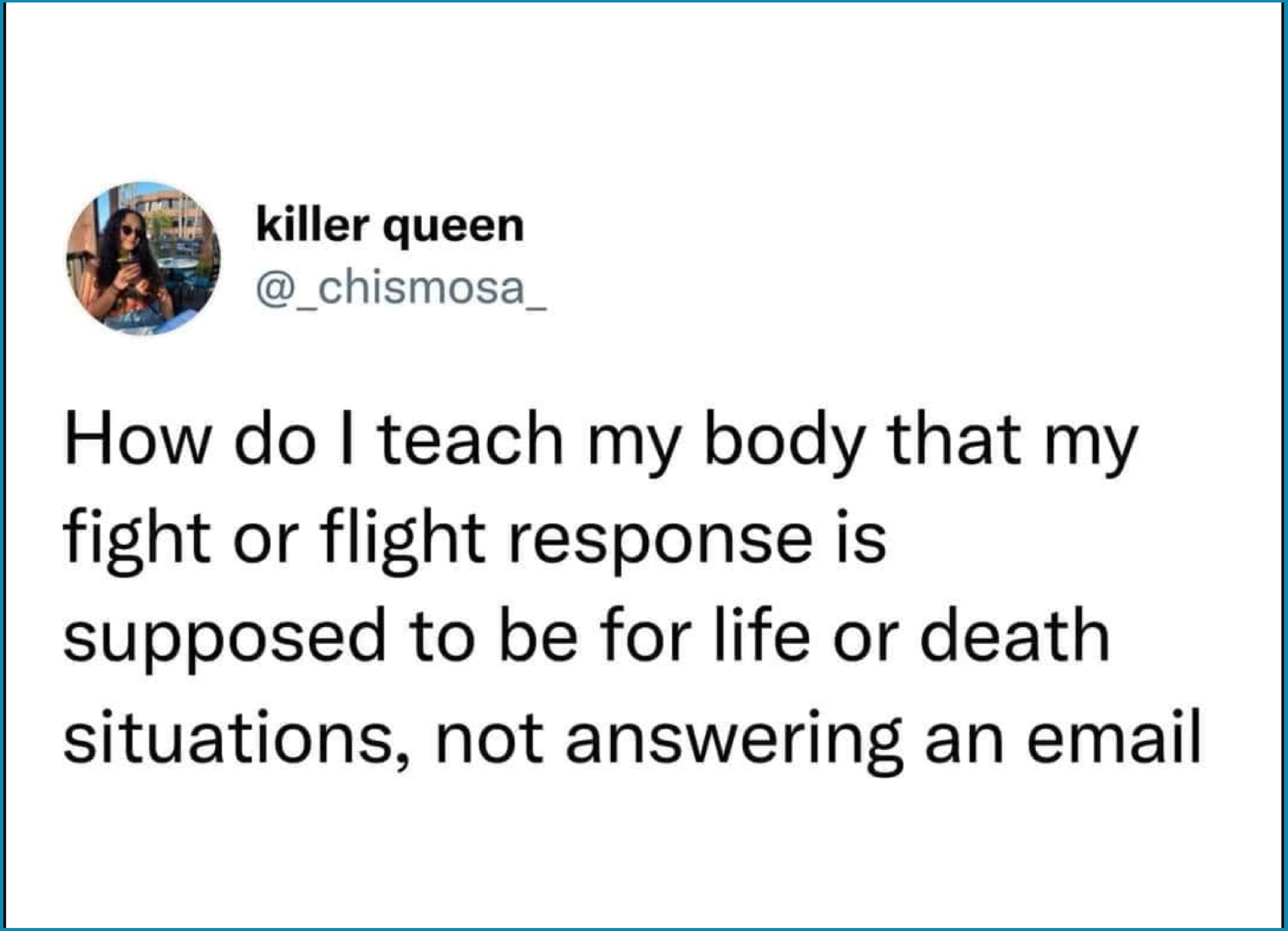
PROOFREAD

- ☐ Have you introduced any new erors?
- ☐ Are fonts and colors consistent?
- ☐ Does the piece still read well?
- ☐ Does the reader understand what you want them to?

CHECKLIST FOR SENDING EMAILS

- ☐ Have you selected the correct audience?
- ☐ Do you have a subject line and preview line?
- ☐ Are all of your images correct & displaying?
- ☐ Have you added alt text to your images?
- ☐ Are all of your links correct and working?
- ☐ Are the fonts and colors correct?

Created by Kate Runy | Inspired by Grammarly



killer queen
@_chismosa_

How do I teach my body that my fight or flight response is supposed to be for life or death situations, not answering an email

EMAIL CHECKLIST

- Is your audience correct?
- Do you have a subject line and preview line?
- Are all of your images displaying?
- Do you have alt text on all of your images?
- Are your links working?
- Are the fonts and colors correct?
- Do you have the correct send date and time?

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

OTHER THINGS THAT CAN HELP

TASK BATCHING

- Group like tasks together to avoid context switching

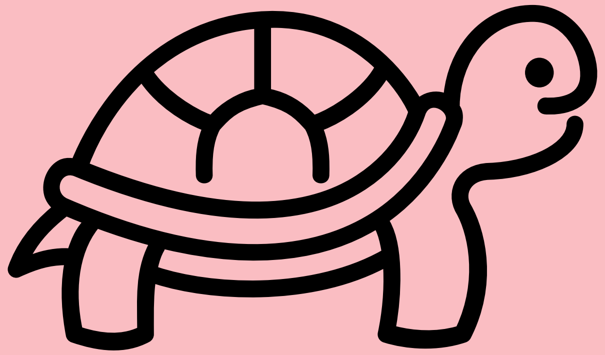
BOUNDARIES

- Stop taking on more than you can do because of expectations/difficulty saying no
- “I will set the to-do list for MY capacity, not everyone else’s desires or priorities.” (Nonprofit Marketing Guide)

SET TIME TO ORGANIZE/PLAN

- Block off time on your calendar to look ahead

OTHER THINGS THAT CAN HELP

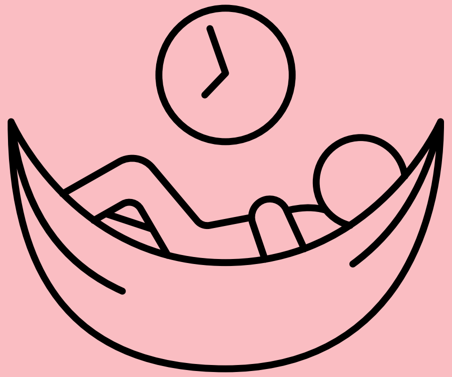


SLOW DOWN

- Take a beat before responding to knock yourself out of the loop of hyperresponsiveness.
- Overestimate the amount of time required.
- Embrace asynchronous communication.

ASK FOR HELP

- Asking for help isn't weakness or incompetency



TAKE TIME OFF & REST

- Things will get along fine without you and if they don't, you can address it when you get back.

AN EXERCISE

EVERYBODY
CALM DOWN!
#SCHITTSCREEK
Pop TV

The 3-3-3 Rule

If you're feeling anxious, try to use the 3-3-3 method.

1. Look around you and focus on three things you can see.
2. Next, name three things that you can hear.
3. Finally, move three parts of your body.
4. When you're done, take three deep breaths.

(Bonus)

SelfLoveRainbow

The anxious armadillo

A LONGER EXERCISE

5-4-3-2-1 CALM

#5 List 5 things you can see.

#4 List 4 things you can feel.

#3 List 3 things you can hear.

#2 List 2 things you can smell.

#1 List 1 thing you like about yourself!

@TeletherapyTools

MAKING MISTAKES

SO YOU MADE A MISTAKE...

FOUR MISTAKES EVERYONE MAKES AT WORK

A-HA MOMENT MISTAKES

"A-ha moment mistakes happen when we do something as we intended, but later realize it was the wrong thing to do."

SLOPPY MISTAKES

"The errors we make when we know better, the ones we kick ourselves for because we've already learned the lesson."

STRETCH MISTAKES

"The errors we make when we're stretching ourselves beyond our capabilities."

HIGH-STAKES MISTAKES

"Those with significant consequences"

Harvard Business Review

POLL TIME!

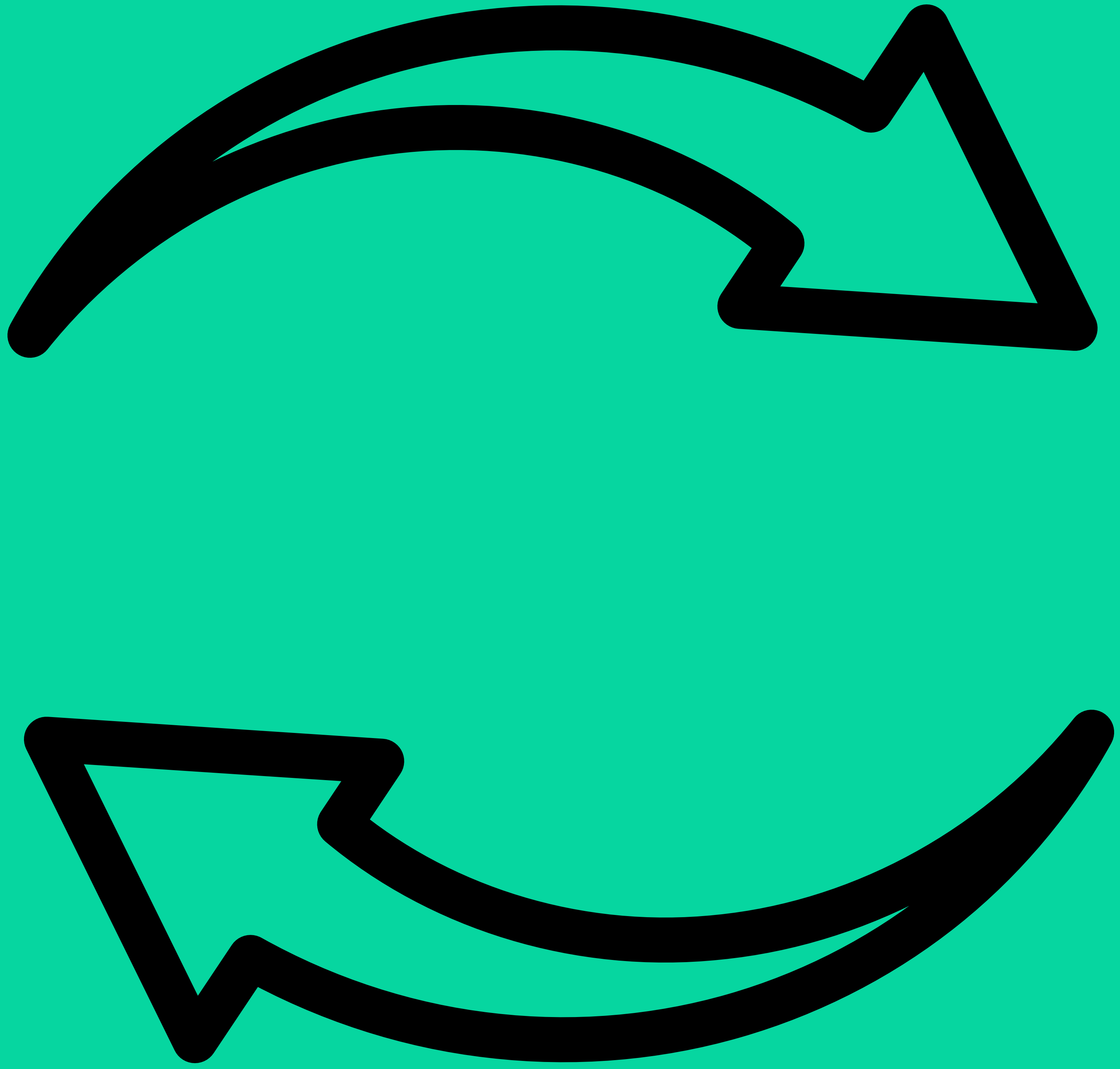
What type of mistake do you find yourself making the most?

https://www.menti.com/alriv635njuz

Mentimeter Code: 5109 0431

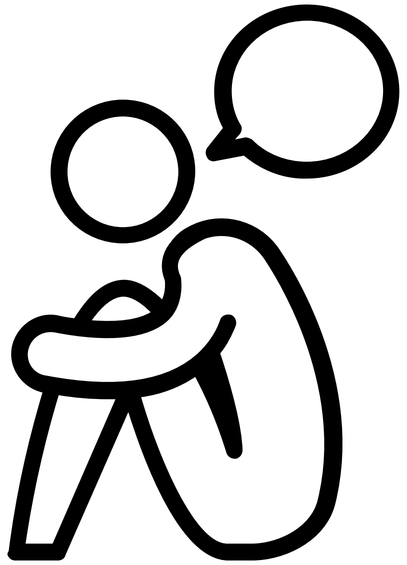
WHY WE MAKE MISTAKES

- DISTRACTED/ MULTITASKING
- TOO MUCH TO DO IN TOO LITTLE TIME
- RUSHING
- NOT FULLY UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE WE'RE DOING
- DISORGANIZATION
- EXHAUSTION



STRESS &
ANXIETY

MAKING
MISTAKES

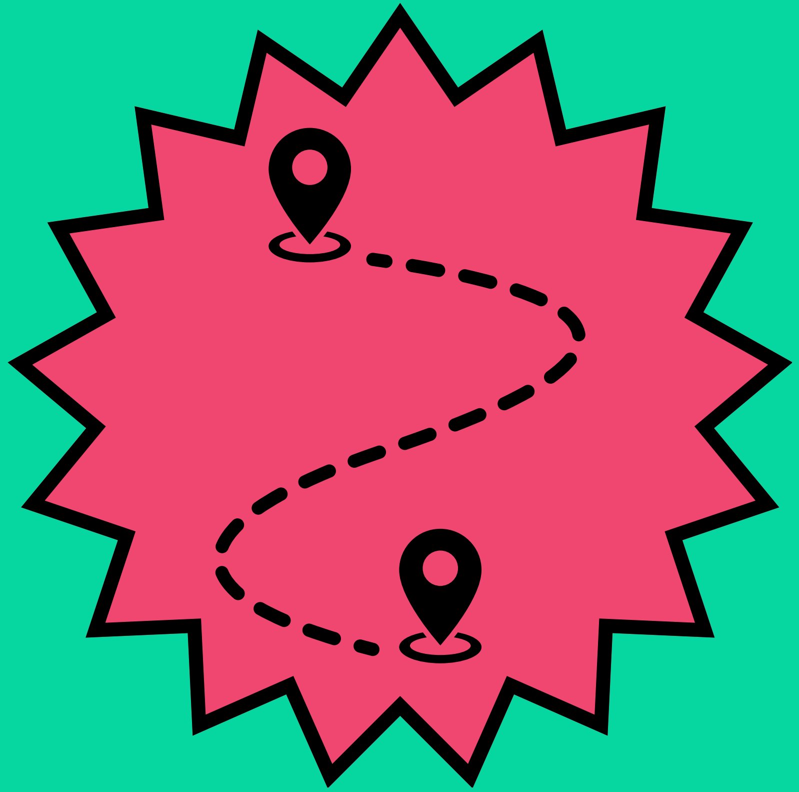


WHY WE'RE AFRAID OF MAKING MISTAKES

FEAR OF BEING JUDGED BY OTHERS OR CRITICISM

FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES

UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF OURSELVES



MOVING ON AFTER A MISTAKE

TAKE A SECOND TO FEEL IT & THEN STOP BEATING YOURSELF UP

PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE

APOLOGIZE/NOTIFY

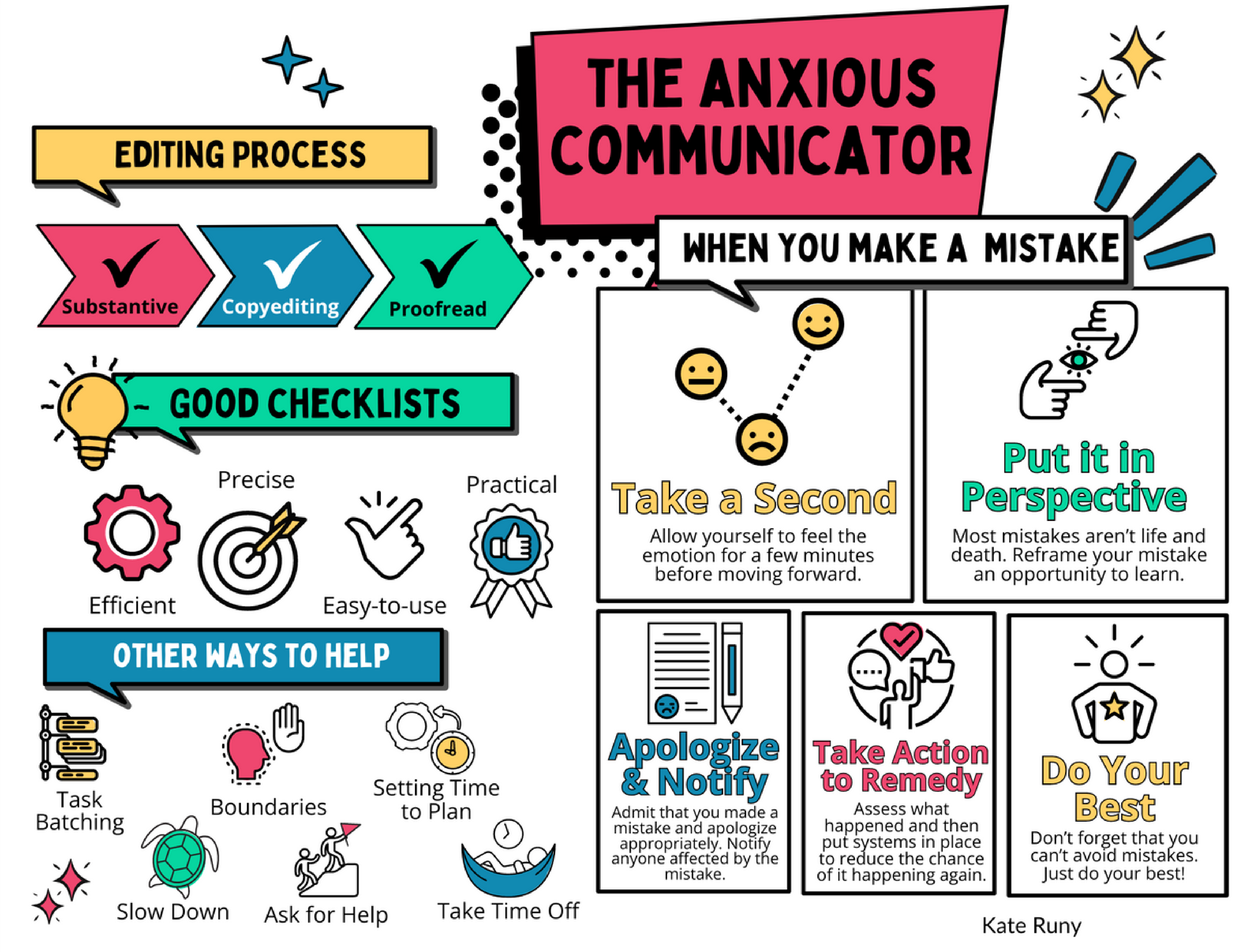
TAKE ACTION TO REMEDY

RECOGNIZE THAT YOU CAN'T AVOID MISTAKES COMPLETELY, JUST DO YOUR BEST.

WRAP UP

"WHEN WE LOOK CLOSELY, WE RECOGNIZE THE SAME BALLS BEING DROPPED OVER & OVER, EVEN BY THOSE OF GREAT ABILITY AND DETERMINATION. WE KNOW THE PATTERNS. WE SEE THE COSTS. IT'S TIME TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE. TRY A CHECKLIST."

Checklist Manifesto



THE ANXIOUS COMMUNICATOR

EDITING PROCESS

- ✓ Substantive
- ✓ Copyediting
- ✓ Proofread

GOOD CHECKLISTS

- Efficient
- Precise
- Easy-to-use
- Practical

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

- Task Batching
- Boundaries
- Setting Time to Plan
- Slow Down
- Ask for Help
- Take Time Off

WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

Take a Second

Allow yourself to feel the emotion for a few minutes before moving forward.

Put it in Perspective

Most mistakes aren't life and death. Reframe your mistake an opportunity to learn.

Apologize & Notify

Admit that you made a mistake and apologize appropriately. Notify anyone affected by the mistake.

Take Action to Remedy

Assess what happened and then put systems in place to reduce the chance of it happening again.

Do Your Best

Don't forget that you can't avoid mistakes. Just do your best!

Kate Runy

DOWNLOAD CHECKLISTS, SLIDES & RESOURCES

bit.ly/AnxiousCommunicator

CONTACT ME

kate@bcdcideas.com