

Emotional knots and overthinking

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ABSTRACT

Overthinking is a loop of unproductive thoughts. Overthinking can also be considered as an excessive amount of thoughts that are unnecessary. Overthinking can be associated with anxiety.

To prevent or treat overthinking disorder and anxiety, knots of negative emotions have to be disentangled. Positive emotions such as love, joy, gratitude balance with intellectual capacity of mind so that overthinking does not happen all the time. People that have enough positive emotions can better deal with everyday difficulties and can also be more prepared for stressful events.

INTRODUCTION

Overthinking is a loop of unproductive thoughts (1). Overthinking can also be considered as an excessive amount of thoughts that are unnecessary. Overthinking can be associated with anxiety.

Overthinking and anxiety symptoms and signs are insomnia, alcohol abuse, excessive food intake, drug abuse,

smoking, hypercontrol in life, obsession about failure, fear and anxiety about the future, tension headaches...(1).

In this article I would like to write about knots of negative emotions and their association with overthinking and anxiety.

LEVELS OF OVERTHINKING

In this section I would like to propose possible levels of overthinking.

First level of overthinking is mild level that normal people sometimes experience, especially during the stressful period of life. Healthy people usually do not have severe problems with overthinking.

Second level of overthinking is moderate level characteristic for people with anxiety disorder. People with moderate level of overthinking are realistic, but can not stabilize their emotions and, thus, have significant problem with overthinking. These people are often stressed about their life more than they should be and might have problems such as insomnia, excessive food or alcohol intake, smoking...

Third level of overthinking is severe level. People with severe level of overthinking might experience falling out of reality.

These people have severe anxiety disorder and/or psychotic elements. When there are so many obsessive thoughts that are organized in mental constructions, we can consider these thoughts as psychotic element. Mental constructions are unrealistic, obsessive thoughts organized in a false reality that exists in individual's mind.

EMOTIONAL KNOTS

Knots of negative emotions might be associated with anxiety and depression. When there is no healthy balance between positive and negative emotions, knots of negative emotions form. Negative emotions have their function, but should always be balanced with positive emotions to maintain healthy emotional life.

Five main categories of negative emotions are sadness (depression, despair, hopelessness), anxiety (fear, worry, concern, nervous, panic), anger (irritation, frustration, annoyance, rage), guilt and shame/embarrassment (2).

Negative emotions are normal in the negative situation. For example, it is normal for the person to feel anger when in dangerous situation. Anger and aggression have an important function for triggering fast and efficient reaction on the dangerous

situation. When the dangerous situation is terminated, there should be the positive emotion that balances anger and aggression, for example, gratitude that the dangerous situation is terminated.

When there are no positive emotions, knots of negative emotions form and may lead to pathological anxiety and depression. Knots of negative emotions might trigger overthinking. When there is a lack of positive emotions, mind tries to compensate this defect with intellectual overbalance. This neurotic compensation leads to overthinking. Overthinking can trigger formation of more knots of negative emotions and the vicious circle is closed.

DISENTANGLING THE KNOTS OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

To prevent or treat overthinking disorder and anxiety, knots of negative emotions have to be disentangled. Positive emotions such as love, joy, gratitude balance with intellectual capacity of mind so that overthinking does not happen all the time. People that have enough positive emotions can better deal with everyday difficulties and can also be more prepared for stressful events. Positive emotions can help to maintain the health of reflection and to create productive thoughts.

Positive emotions are (by Courtney Ackerman):

Joy, defined as a sense of elation, happiness, and perhaps even exhilaration, often experienced as a sudden spike due to something good happening.

Gratitude, defined as a feeling of thankfulness, for something specific or simply all-encompassing, often accompanied by humility and even reverence.

Serenity, defined as a calm and peaceful feeling of acceptance of oneself.

Interest, defined as a feeling of curiosity or fascination that demands and captures your attention.

Hope, defined as a feeling of optimism and anticipation about a positive future.

Pride, defined as a sense of approval of oneself and pleasure in an achievement, skill, or personal attribute.

Amusement, defined as a feeling of lighthearted pleasure and enjoyment, often accompanied by smiles and easy laughter.

Inspiration, defined as feeling engaged, uplifted, and motivated by something you witnessed.

Awe, defined as an emotion that is evoked when you witness something grand, spectacular, or breathtaking, sparking a sense of overwhelming appreciation.

Elevation, defined as the feeling you get when you see someone engaging in an act

of kindness, generosity, or inner goodness, spurring you to aspire to similar action.

Altruism, usually referred to as an act of selflessness and generosity towards others, but can also describe the feeling you get from helping others.

Satisfaction, defined as a sense of pleasure and contentment you get from accomplishing something or fulfilling a need.

Relief, defined as the feeling of happiness you experience when an uncertain situation turns out for the best, or a negative outcome is avoided.

Affection, defined as an emotional attachment to someone (or even a pet), accompanied by a liking for them and a sense of pleasure in their company.

Cheerfulness, defined as a feeling of brightness, being upbeat and noticeably happy or chipper; feeling like everything is going your way.

Surprise (the good kind of surprise), defined as a sense of delight when someone brings you unexpected happiness or a situation goes even better than you had hoped.

Confidence, defined as an emotion involving a strong sense of self-esteem and belief in yourself; can be specific to a situation or activity, or more universal.

Admiration, defined as a feeling of warm approval, respect, and appreciation for someone or something.

Enthusiasm, defined as a sense of excitement, accompanied by **motivation** and engagement.

Eagerness, defined as a less intense form of enthusiasm; a feeling of readiness and excitement for something.

Euphoria, defined as intense and all-encompassing sense of joy or happiness, often experienced when something extremely positive and exciting happens.

Contentment, defined as peaceful, comforting, and low-key sense of happiness and well-being.

Enjoyment, defined as a feeling of taking pleasure in what is going on around you, especially in situations like a leisure activity or social gathering.

Optimism, defined as positive and hopeful emotion that encourages you to look forward to a bright future, one in which you believe that things will mostly work out.

Happiness, defined as a feeling of pleasure and contentment in the way things are going; a general sense of enjoyment of and enthusiasm for life.

Love is perhaps the strongest of all positive emotions, love is a feeling of deep and enduring affection for someone, along with a willingness to put their needs ahead of your own; it can be directed towards an individual, a group of people, or even all humanity (3).

Love is the strongest positive emotion and it might be the strongest cure for overthinking and anxiety.

CONCLUSION

To prevent or treat overthinking disorder and anxiety, knots of negative emotions have to be disentangled. Positive emotions balance with intellectual capacity of mind so that overthinking does not happen all the time. Strong positive emotions, especially love, are very important for the health of mind, health of reflection and creation of productive and well organized thoughts.

REFERENCES

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