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On the Twitter account So Sad Today, American writer Melissa Broder has been sending out snippets of her daily inner life since 2012. Broder writes about the mundane sadness-wake up today was a disappointment or what you call a nervous breakdown I call oops, accidentally saw things as they are - and she's brutally honest about her own flaws (Whoops, hurt yourself according to socially accepted beauty standards that I know are false, but still feel compelled to fit in or just a flicker of self-esteem and was like that). The account became a sensation, winning her more than 675,000 followers, and Broder's book personal essay on her mental health battles, also titled So Sad Today, appeared in 2016. It striking that Broder's unabashed expression of sadness and all the crappy emotions struck such a nerve in a world where people on social media profiles are immaculately curated to show their happy self. But it is clear that the increasing rate of depression around the world means that we are struggling to be happy. Are we doing something wrong? Broder's popularity should make us take a fresh look at the sadness of her cousins. Perhaps we should think about regrouping with romantics who, as a group, found solace in the free expression of emotions in poetry. In his Ode to Melancholy (1820), for example, John Keats wrote: Yes, in the very temple of Pleasure, / Vuaf'd Melancholy has its own sylv. Pain and joy are two sides of the same coin - both are necessary for a full life. Keats may have been referring to Robert Burton, a 17th-century priest and scientist whose hefty volume Anatomy of Melancholy (1621) described how sadness can go into overdrive (something we understood as clinical depression) and how to deal with it. Or various 16th-century self-help books, which, according to Tiffany Watt Smith, a research fellow at the Centre for the History of Emotions at the University of London, are trying to encourage the sadness of readers by giving them lists of reasons to be disappointed. Perhaps the path to true happiness goes through sadness? Recent studies show that experiencing not very happy feelings actually contributes to psychological well-being. The study, published in the journal Emotion in 2016, took 365 German participants between the ages of 14 and 88. For three weeks they were handed a smartphone, which for six daily quizzes on their emotional health. The researchers tested in on their feelings- whether negative or positive moods-as well, how they perceived their physical health in a given moment. Prior to these three weeks, participants were interviewed about their emotional health (the degree to which they felt irritable or anxious; how they perceived negative moods), their physical and their social integration habits (have they had strong relationships with people in their lives?) after the smartphone task was over, they were asked about their life satisfaction. The team found that the link between negative mental states and poor emotional and physical health was weaker in people who considered negative moods beneficial. Indeed, negative moods correlate with low life satisfaction only in people who do not perceive unfavorable feelings as useful or pleasant. These results resonate with the experience of clinicians. It's often not one initial response to a situation (primary emotion) that is problematic, but their response to that response (secondary emotions) is usually the most difficult, said Sophie Lazarus, a psychologist at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. This is because we are often sent messages that we do not have to feel negative emotions, so people are very driven to want to change or get rid of their emotions, leading to suppression, rumination, and/or avoidance. According to Brock Bastian, author of The Other Side of Happiness: Embracing a More Fearless Approach to Life (2018) and a psychologist at the University of Melbourne in Australia, the problem is partly cultural: a person living in a western country is four to ten times more likely to experience clinical depression or anxiety in life than a person living in eastern culture. In China and Japan, both negative and positive emotions are considered an integral part of life. Sadness is not an obstacle to experiencing positive emotions and, unlike Western society, there is no constant pressure to be joyful. This thinking can be rooted in religious upbringing. For example, the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, which has been widely studied by Western psychologists such as Paul Ackman, calls for the recognition of emotions and the acceptance of pain as part of the human condition. It emphasizes an understanding of the nature of pain and the causes that lead to it. Many modern psychological practices such as dialectical behavioral therapy now use this approach of recognizing and naming emotions in the treatment of depression and anxiety. In a study published in 2017, Bastian and his colleagues conducted two experiments examining how this social expectation of happiness affects people, especially when they encounter failure. In the first study, 116 college students were divided into three groups to perform the anagram task. Many anagrams were impossible to solve. The test was designed for everyone to fail, but only one of the three groups was told to expect failure. Another group was in the happy room, whose walls were attached to motivational posters and hilarious post-it notes, and they were given wellness literature, while the final got a neutral room. Once completed Challenge, all participants took a worrying test that measured their responses to the failure to complete an anagram task, and filled out a questionnaire designed to assess whether social expectations to be happy affected how they handled negative emotions. They also underwent a test for their emotional state at the time. Bastian and his team found that people in the happy room worried far more about their failure than the people in the other two rooms. The idea is that when people find themselves in context (in this case a room, but in a generally cultural context) where happiness is highly valued, it creates a sense of pressure that they should feel that way, Bastian told me. Then, when they experience failure, they reflect on why they don't feel like they think they should feel. Reflections, the researchers found, worsened their state of mind. In the second experiment, 202 people filled out two questionnaires online. The first asked how often and how much they experienced sadness, anxiety, depression and stress. The second, in which people were asked to rate suggestions such as: I think society accepts people who feel depressed or anxious - measured the extent to which social expectations seek positive feelings and discourage negative influences on their emotional state. As it turned out, people who thought that society expected them to be always cheerful and never be sad experienced negative emotional states of stress, anxiety, depression and sadness more often. Painful times give us other benefits that make us happier in the long run. It is during adversity that we communicate most closely with people, Bastian notes. Surviving adversity also creates resilience. Psychologically, you can't get tough if you don't have to deal with the toughest things in life," he told me. At the same time, he warns that the latest findings should not be misunderstood. It's not that we should try to be sadder in life, he says. The fact is that when we try to avoid sadness, see it as a problem and strive for infinite happiness, we are not really very happy and therefore cannot enjoy the benefits of true happiness. This article was originally published in Aeon and republished under Creative Commons. Turn on the news these days and you'd be forgiven for thinking the world is about to end. From politics to climate change to the economy, negative and bad news surrounds us everywhere we go. The problem is not only that terrible things are happening all over the world. But also that our brains are just connected to pay more attention to unpleasant news. Psychologists call it negative bias and have found that this is one of the first things we develop in childhood. And while this bias may have our ancestors pay attention to the potentially life-threatening situations today work in the way of our happiness, well-being and even productivity. Why reading or watching bad news first that morning is so bad for you there are a few questions in play here. First, it's a problem when we consume news. Study researchers Sean Ahor and Michelle Gielan along with Thrive founder Arianna Huffington found that just three minutes of negative news in the morning (against more uplifting content) can ruin your mood for the rest of the day. Next comes the problem with consuming bad news itself. According to the scientist Kalev Litaru, who used a method called feeling extraction to assess the emotional tone of articles published in the New York Times from 1945 to 2005, as well as an archive of translated articles from 130 other countries, the news has become increasingly gloomy since the 1970s. Far from being better informed, heavy news consumers end up wrong and irrational because of cognitive biases called affordability heuristic. This bias explains that people estimate the probability of an event or the frequency of some sort of thing by the ease with which cases come to mind. This is why people rank tornadoes (which kill about 50 people a year) as a more common cause of death than asthma (which kills closer to 4,000). To combat the negative news cycle, slow down and choose your fights Everyone wants to feel informed. However, too much exposure to news, especially negative news, can seriously affect our mood and ability to be rational and logical. So what do we do? On the one hand, we can start by slowing down our personal news cycle. Smartphones, push notifications and news apps keep the latest news (which are usually negative) at our fingertips. Or, worse, send it directly to us without our consent. To break this cycle, hooked author and behavioral designer Nir Eyal invites us to read printed newspapers rather than online news. So, he explains, he stays up to date, but also gets closure only to read as much as the daily newspaper provides. He trusts newspaper editors to curate only top stories every day and doesn't have to contend with the urge to click on the next story in a constantly updating flurry of new news. But slowing down the news cycle is not a complete solution. We still have to deal with misinformation and the reliability of news sources. The threat of fake news and news cycles too quickly to verify the facts places the responsibility on the reader to discern what is reliable and what is not. Distinguishing reliable news from misinformation is a skill, according to freelance journalist Jihii Jolly, that all readers need: Choosing what to read, when and how to skill news literacy. That's right just as financial literacy requires knowledge of how money works and how to manage it most effectively, news literacy requires familiarity with how journalism is made and in the most effective ways This is. Blindly following a news cycle can also make it difficult to change your mind when new information emerges. Brendan Nyhan, a political scientist who studies efforts to correct inaccurate information once it has been circulated, found that in general: Once factually inaccurate ideas take hold in people's minds, there are no reliable strategies to dislodge them, especially for those for whom misinformation is most ideologically convenient. So if it's so hard to correct misinformation, even if presented with the truth, perhaps Gillmore is right, and we should be more skeptical from the start. As we deal with the overload of news on RescueTime, the intended goal is on RescueTime to help you spend more time on meaningful work. However, even if we work on it every day, most of us struggle to fight free from capturing the negative news cycle has on us. Here are some tips from the RescueTime team on how to stay informed without becoming overwhelmed. While many of us have abandoned Facebook, software engineer Brian points out why it's a struggle to keep up with the flurry of information published in his News Feed: Facebook in particular has become a source of news for most peoples, at least as far as I can tell. The question for me is that if I scroll through 100 posts from friends/acquaintances, there are quick one clicks of shares from news organizations, usually the headlines and content of these posts are negative, rebellious, angry, etc . . . and the more important the question, the more shares you will see from different people. After all, it can feel overwhelming, and make me absolutely reluctant to engage in a real debate or discussion because I'm tired of talking (reading) about it. Software developer David says he's just started adjusting his approach to news: My morning routine over the past year is accurate . . . was, awake, make sure the world didn't destroy itself (checking the headlines on CNN, the New York Times and the Washington Post) and then looking at Twitter and Facebook to see what different communities I belong to think of the disaster of the day. He's wearing REAL thin now and I'm trying to figure out ways to dial it back but not turn it off. I started to fight it, first, choosing to take a walk in the morning (before I look at the iPhone) and rowing during lunch. I've included breath reminders on the Apple Watch as well. They help me stay calm. For me, getting a rowing machine and an Apple Watch came at the right time. Not just to get back in shape and keep an eye on your health... but as a way to have something more personally productive, to focus on rather than stream regarding the news. For a data scientist, Madison is best at limiting news consumption to her phone alone. And then that it's not near during the workday: Most of my news and general consumption of content is done on my my I stay away from visiting news or social media sites on my computers to focus on work or learning when using devices. Lately I've been leaving my phone outside my office to avoid picking it up for viewing when I'm trying to be productive. Chief Operating Officer Mark, like David, focuses on a healthy balance during the day: the world has changed over the past couple of years, and some news invasion feels inevitable. I feel the need to stay more relevant than in the past, but still try to avoid the news before lunch. My strategy for a while was: Leave the phone on the mute most of the time and always put your face down when out of pocket. I quit Facebook many years ago and only log on maybe two to three times a year for some family news. Changing the intensity of the light environment and the distance of the subject's eyes at least every hour (go outside, let the eyes focus on something distant for a long period of time, like a 10-30-minute walk) Exercise in the middle of the day. While our senior software engineer Hank is also trying to cut down on consumption overall, he found focusing his online reading of non-news helps: I'm pretty much aggressive about ignoring things. I only include notifications from very few apps. I've never had Facebook. Don't check email or Twitter outside of a certain time (or when I'm stuck and need a context shift). And I try to keep a fair bit of my reading online focused on technology etc. The break for physical activity is also a great helper. It is a relief to know that we are not alone in our fight against the relentless flow of bad news. Everyone, from journalists to well-known authors, seems to be grappling with the fine line between being informed and overwhelmed. However, if we want to be happier and more productive, we cannot allow negativity bias to take over our days. A version of this article originally appeared on RescueTime and has been adapted with permission. Resolution. how to resist negative peer pressure and bullying. describe how to resist negative peer pressure and bullying. how to avoid and resist negative peer pressure

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