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likeness

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a funny thing

Low Entropy is headquartered in Kwikwetlem First Nation Territory of the Coast Salish people, and in the shared territory of the səliłwətaʔt təməxʷ, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Stz'uminus, Qayqayt and S'ólh Téméxw nations.

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About Low Entropy: Founded in 2015, the Low Entropy Foundation is home to free programs and events that focus on personal and community growth through empowerment, authenticity and meaningful interpersonal connections.

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Foreword

Most of the time they aren't funny ha-ha, those moments in life that stand out as . . . hm! Intriguingly different. Of course, the moments of shared laughter that do occur—genuine, not polite or ingratiating—are certainly special, but I posit that they are surrounded by a multitude of more bite-sized oddities.

Every few measures, the assembly line of life moments produces an offbeat result, and yes, sometimes it's worth a giggle, but most of the time you just notice and it's . . . hm? Interesting. It's funny because it stands out and, in doing so, tells you a little something about the rest of the seemingly factory-formed world.

Will these sorts of things shake the very foundations of your understanding of the universe? Probably not. They're just little sideways perspectives, or takes that are slightly different. "Funny" probably isn't the best word for those sorts of things anyway, but isn't it funny that we use it for this purpose?

Eh, probably not.

But a pedantic, rigid view of funny isn't funny either. Lucky for us, our writers are perceptive, sardonic and creative, and they notice things. Slightly off-kilter observations and presentations are the lifeblood of our social interactions—that unexpected bit of curiosity in a world with chronic amnesia when it comes to how fascinating it truly is. And if you learn to appreciate them, then . . . hm . . . it's a funny thing, indeed.

Simon Cheung

Editor, Low Entropy

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“it irks me, rattles my eardrums with sounds I don’t like”

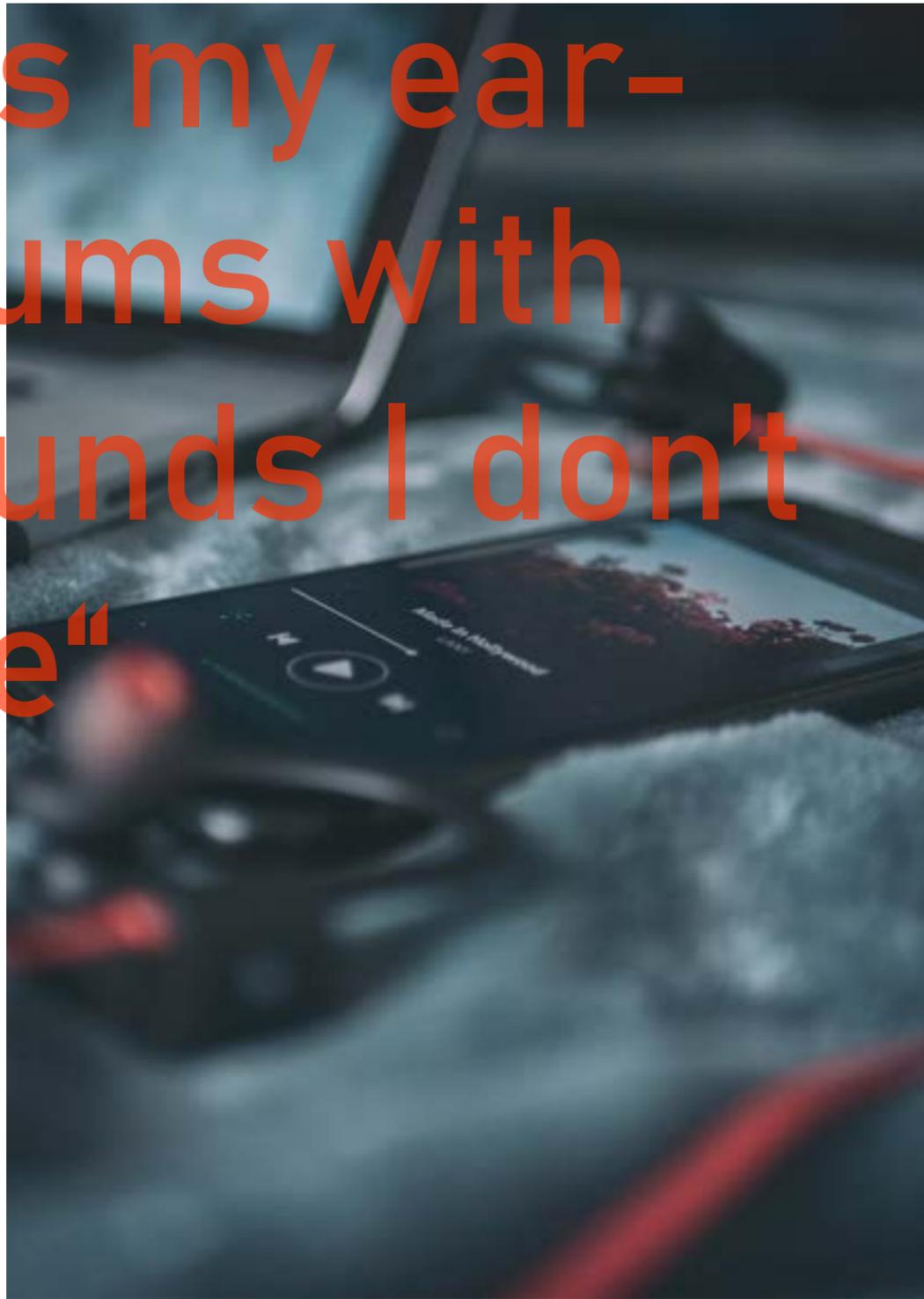


Photo by Mark Cruz

Misophonia and Why Chewing is Irritating

Tomas McGrath

Have you ever experienced an awkward silence in which all you could hear was people chewing, or eating yogurt? I know I have. It irks me, rattles my eardrums with sounds I don’t like and floods my brain with “When will this person just leave?!” But to understand why this happens and how it affects mental health, we must understand what it is.

Misophonia is when someone hears smaller sounds, such as chewing, breathing or other facial-based noises, and they, for some reason, cause the individual to experience a

fight-or-flight response,

the basic instinctual reaction in humans when faced with danger, anxiety-inducing situations or anger. Misophonia does not have a medical diagnosis, but may cause degradation of the mental health and social lives of those afflicted, as well as the desire to stay home from restaurants and other food service establishments. It may even tear apart relationships.

Misophonia has lurked in the shadows of mental health and caused discomfort

now and then

for those afflicted. I even struggle to eat some things when I hear people chewing, especially noodles (e.g. lasagna, macaroni, ramen), as those have to be boiled and, as such, have a higher moisture content upon consumption than most flour-based foods such as various types of bread. Another thing I struggle to do when someone else is chewing is, and I’m sure we’ve all experienced this at some point, focus on things such as writing.

A great way to spare yourself the burning hatred of other people eating is to listen to music or watch TV or a video during a meal or while working. All the better if you have a pair of noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds. This is just my two cents on the matter with a few counters to the irritation, and while I’m certainly no professional on mental health, I have some experience with this issue.

ALEX ANDY PHUONG Alex Andy Phuong became a poet after watching the movie La La Land. He now writes hoping to inspire dreamers everywhere.

The Beauty of Comedy

Alex Andy Phuong

On the way to a forum,
And after establishing a quorum,
A meeting filled with diplomacy
Broke out into hysterical comedy,
And laughter is fundamental
To cope with the reality
Of life not necessarily
Having fairy tale endings,
But listen to the heart
And soothe the soul
In a world that is truly whole,
And even after
A funny scene,
Choose to express kindness
Instead of being mean
By being a part
Of all things fundamental
To appreciate the beauty
Of timeless comedies

Lifting Weights with Caroline Girvan

Sajia Kabir

So I recently started a weightlifting program on YouTube called *IRON* by this insanely ripped influencer from Northern Ireland called Caroline Girvan. She's so ripped, a day of light lifting for her is using a pair of 15-lb dumbbells. Me, I try to use 2-lb dumbbells on squats and lunges and my knees send subtle messages to me, subtle messages like, "Are you out of your freaking mind?"

But it seems to work. The other day I did 30 minutes of leg day, and then I went with my mother to get groceries, and my knees actually felt better when I was carrying our purchases to the bus. Which was a good thing, because my mother gets on my case if I overtrain. It's easy for her to say. She's had thinner thighs than me even when I was a teenager. She has thinner thighs than Caroline Girvan, just by doing housework every day and tai chi every Tuesday.

Many years ago, I studied to become a personal trainer, even though I had minimal experience in the gym. What I really wanted to be was a fusion bellydance teacher, and all the other fusion bellydance teachers had lots of certifications in yoga and pilates, so I decided that

I wanted to stand out.

I'd joined a gym a couple of times before, but only did those circuit machines that they show the newbies around, not the real free weights that fitness superstars like Jillian Michaels use. When I joined the personal training academy, I'd had a lot of experience in bellydance and restorative yoga, some experience in Indian classical dance, ballet, contemporary and pilates, and I'd even gotten a fitness certification in a cardio program called Bellyfit, which was for women who were too cool for Zumba. I got the second-highest marks in my class in the fitness leadership test, but I was behind in my homework and failed the weight-training section not just once, but twice. I was dealing with ADHD and tried to design the most



Photo by
Scott Web

minimalist weight training program possible, with the fewest number of exercises. I would spend hours writing out weightlifting programs and only 20 minutes a week in the gym.

I was worried about injuring myself, like I had in the past

trying to do the bellydance hip drop and kick while straightening and bending the standing leg properly, like the teachers tell you to do. I aspired to the level of knowledge of my fitness instruction teacher, who had tons of certificates in weightlifting and yoga and pilates, and she didn't even like pilates. AND I wanted to master ballet and Indian classical dance and fusion bellydance and aerial arts and method acting and physical theatre and clowning. The thing about Vancouver is that you can train in everything but not get a job in anything.

I'm now thinking of using all my experience in movement arts and performance arts to become a life coach. So in the end I was left with a \$5000 student loan that I'm still using government assistance to pay off, and no certification and no job to show for it. But at least I know enough about fitness to follow Caroline Girvan's exercise videos with 2-lb weights.

“Mindful
eating,



binge
drinking”

Photos by Motoki Tonn and Parker Coffman

**BAL-
REET
SIDHU** I am expanding my horizons when it comes to writing with Low Entropy. This is just as much part of my life as #Nothankyou. Then again, I will be a different person by the next publication. Wishing everyone a great spring!

Untitled

Balreet Sidhu

Mindful eating, binge drinking
That time when the office faked it for months to afford daily Starbucks
Praising a meal when in truth someone's food is just ducks.
Returning to an empty fridge with your food gone, taken by brother unknown
Restaurant reviews and tips, still your stomach's all empty pits.
On a rainy stormy day, midnight hunger pang hits.
The special smoothie with jalapeno, government permission for insect fragments as true as godfather Pacino.
Food dates in space, enjoy the chase, I rest my healthy eating case.

Bon appetit!

Jayne Seagrave is a BC bestselling author. The ninth edition of her book *Camping British Columbia, the Rockies and the Yukon* was published by Heritage House in April 2023. Over 60,000 of her camping books have been sold. She also writes fiction, non-fiction and freelance articles, and occasionally teaches writing and publishing courses.

ONCE UPON A TIME A WOMAN MET A DIVORCE LAWYER

Jayne Seagrave

A Fairy Tale

Once upon a time, there was an insecure woman, who found herself needing to speak to a divorce lawyer . . .

The New Client enters the large, contemporary, fifth-floor legal office just before 10:00 a.m. for the much-anticipated scheduled appointment with The Divorce Lawyer, who comes highly recommended (you need nothing but the absolute best in order to successfully end your marriage, her well-meaning girlfriends stress). The New Client is a little apprehensive, having never met a divorce lawyer before. She knows he will undoubtedly be a man who has had numerous years of formal, university education, who will use words

she will not be able to fully understand,

let alone spell, and, inhibited, she will not have the confidence to seek clarification, even though she is the one who is paying for them to be used. Prior to the long-awaited meeting there have been many sleepless nights. She

is nervous, apprehensive and stressed, despite telling herself that, at her age, she should not be **suffering insecurities.**

Upon stepping onto the deep pile rug, she is put at ease by The Highly Recommended Divorce Lawyer's receptionist, who, with a wide smile and very trendy purple eyewear, greets her as if they were friends at high school, informing her that he will be a few minutes late. Immediately, another exceptionally well dressed, much younger woman with heels only the young can wear arrives and apologizes again for her employer's tardiness (why are women always tasked with making excuses for men?), and the three women start to bond. There is something reassuring in dealing with your own sex, even if the others are better-dressed and born decades after you. The Client's previous apprehension, while still palpable, has been slightly dissolved.

A few minutes later a smiling, suntanned man, full head of well-cut grey hair, in his sixties, enters the plush reception carrying a few papers. He is dressed in an open-necked, white, well-ironed shirt, blue jacket

and designer jeans. Informal dress, yet subtly stated affluence. He confidently starts his welcome with the assurance of a man who has undertaken such greetings on countless occasions over the years, knowing he needs to put The Client at ease, as it is this individual who will be responsible for his \$500-an-hour fee, in addition to numerous disbursements.

"Wonderful to meet you. Sorry, I had to finish a telephone call, but the next hour, I promise, is yours."

As he flashes his impeccable dental work, she is savvy enough to realise that, despite his greeting, she is

not special. It is an intrinsic part of his work to put clients at ease. He reaches out, offering a handshake.

But in this fairy story, the gods are on her side and decide to inject some humour into the tension.

First impressions count. This one will not be forgotten. The Client's gaze is immediately drawn from the face of The Highly Recommended Divorce Lawyer to his jeans. By his crotch there is a large yellow sticker positioned in the region where the penis can be found. As she advances nervously to take his outstretched hand she notices that this label is a directional sticky arrow, and in smaller writing, in clear, capital letters on the sticker, are the words "SIGN HERE."

The Client is now in a state of total confusion. Should she take his outstretched hand, ignoring the yellow sign directing her to "sign here," pretending it does not exist? Should she draw his attention to it, with the two other junior female members of staff present? And if she did choose this action, would it not be exceedingly embarrassing for all involved? Should she tell him when they are alone in his office, and if she did, would this mean the first few moments of the initial meeting would be tarnished, and he may be prejudiced and not work in her best interests? And what if the unfortunate positioning of the yellow arrow was not an accident, and instead the method he employs to greet new clients? This last thought causes her to smirk, then quickly correcting herself, she recovers her composure, reminding herself where and why she is finding herself alone with this man who is oblivious to the large luminous sticker pointing to his penis.

She realises this to be one of the stickers professionals like to use to highlight important information to clients whom they deem cannot understand clear instructions, and therefore need direction to iden-

tify simple information. The Client decides this was indeed his intention. In discussing her divorce, he did not want her to forget **his** genitals.

As he leads the way to his office, making small talk on her ability to find parking and the warm temperatures, all trepidation over the reasons why she is here—the emotional termination of a 35-year marriage—dissolves away, and her mind reflects on how often she suffered intimidation and felt nervous upon meeting another she believed to be more intelligent, wiser, accomplished or worldly.

Once upon a time—not that long ago—many men, and particularly professional men, intimidated her. With age, those feelings of insecurity had dissipated, and now only reappeared occasionally, generally occurring when she was tasked with doing something not attempted before. The yellow sticker and its unfortunate positioning is, for The Client, a reminder we are all equal. We all make mistakes and have embarrassing moments that others witness.

The Client reflects on an interview she heard on the radio while driving to this rendezvous, whereupon a famous female athlete was asked to give advice to "their younger self." If that question had been presented to The Client, she would have not hesitated to say, "Once upon a time there was a young woman who was intimidated by people she thought were superior to her, but now I would tell her no one is better, it is just that everyone has different experiences, different life chances and different aspirations, and that you should never doubt yourself when talking to anyone about any subject, even if this could be embarrassing to them."

"Now, please tell me in detail the circumstances that brought you to my office today."

The Highly Recommended Divorce Lawyer cuts into The Client's consciousness, and with no hesitation and complete confidence she starts to tell him her story. They are equals.

"why are women always tasked with making excuses for men?"

Cash Is The King

Shayan Afkari



**JUHI ME-
HTA**

Hi, I'm Juhi Mehta, a passionate creative and your friendly neighborhood wordsmith! I'm all about infusing passion and personality into every piece of writing I create. Whether it's crafting poems or spinning tales that leave a lasting impression, I'm here to sprinkle a little magic into your lives.

A meaning to life

Juhi Mehta

A meaning to life,
The one that I can't deny,
The story of me,
The only story on which I rely,

It's the instance of an experience,
An experience of life,
Reminding me where my roots are
Shaping me with every scar,
I thought I lost myself to the hour
But I knew the journey wasn't that far.
The night that gave meaning to me,
The night that gave,
A meaning to Life!

Diny Davis is an aspiring author who is passionate about fitness and a strong believer in the close connection between physical and mental health. She is a journalism, psychology and literature graduate, a loving wife, and a caring mother who maintains a balance in her work and personal life while giving emphasis to self-care.

Impacts of the Digital Word

Diny Davis



Photo by Rahul Chakrabort

“We live in a digital world, but we’re fairly analog creatures” - Omar Ahmed

Social Media Trends

Navigating through the ever-evolving landscape of the digital world can feel like a daily adventure. Today, I want to take you on a journey through the latest social media trends and explore how they are shaping our lives, opinions and connections. From the rise of short video content to the impact of the digital world, join me in analyzing these phenomena and uncovering the silver linings and shadows they cast on our virtual and physical worlds.

The digital world, with all its trends, is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it brings a lot of opportunities for connection, creativity and access to information. On the other, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy, disconnection and overwhelm from the physical world.

The Good Side: Connecting Worlds

In today’s bustling digital world, it’s easy to feel lost in the shuffle. Yet, amid the chaos, there’s a silver lining that has been subtly sewing us closer together, stitch by digital stitch.

It’s fascinating how someone in snowy Canada can share a moment with another in sunny India with just a click. Social media has made communication

rapid. Whether it’s a text, a video call or a voice message, we can now connect with anyone, anytime, anywhere.

There’s something uniquely powerful about personal stories, and social media has made it so easy for us to understand another person’s perspective.

The Dark Side: Dangers of Constant Connectivity

In today’s fast-paced world, it’s hard to imagine a day without logging onto our favourite social media platforms. Sharing, liking, commenting—

it’s all become second nature.

But have you ever stopped to think about the not-so-great parts of this digital world we’re so addicted to?

Social media promises to bring us closer to friends, family, and even strangers worldwide. Studies suggest that heavy social media use can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. In seeking connection, we might be drifting further apart.

The highlight reels of others’ lives can leave us feeling inadequate. It’s hard not to compare when every post seems to scream, “Look how happy my life is!”

This pressure to showcase a happy version of our lives can lead to anxiety and a constant chase for validation through likes and comments. Social media can be a massive time consumer, eating away at moments we could spend on hobbies, with loved ones or even just getting some extra sleep.

In the digital age, we’re flooded with information 24/7. It’s overwhelming and can lead to decision fatigue, or worse, spreading misinformation. Not everything we see online is true, and the constant flow of information can be more confusing than helpful.

How to Overcome the Impact of Social Media

We need to set boundaries on our social media use. Keep a timer when you start scrolling and keep no-phone habits while having a meal or when you are out with family. We need to give importance to making genuine connections beyond the screen. Let’s not forget the power of a good old-fashioned phone call or meet-up with friends. We still thirst for these interactions, but we assume they’re not needed because we are too busy in our lives.

We need to focus on our own journeys, rather than comparing them to others’. You need to find reasons to make yourself better than what you were yesterday. Remember, it’s all about finding balance. Social media isn’t really bad, but it’s how we react with it that matters.

Finding Your Balance

In the end, the digital world is ours to shape. It’s about finding a balance that allows you to reap the benefits of connectivity without letting it overshadow your real-world experiences. Whether it’s setting boundaries around screen time or cherishing moments offline, remember these principles:

- 1) Your worth is not measured by likes, shares or followers.
- 2) Real connections are more rewarding than digital ones.
- 3) Taking a digital media break is not only okay, it’s necessary.

The digital world is an incredible tool, but it’s just that—a tool. It’s up to us to use it in ways that enrich our lives, foster genuine connections and promote our well-being, both online and offline.

Conclusion

It’s crucial we take a step back and evaluate our relationship with social media. Here’s to making

intentional choices

about how we connect and consume in this digital world. Stay connected, but remember to disconnect every once in a while to indulge in the real world around us. Let’s continue to use social media, not just as a tool for connection, but as a bridge to a world where empathy, understanding and unity are at the heart of our interactions. Share your story, listen to others and remember that in this digital world, you’re never alone.

Untitled

Balreet Sidhu

Important people in our lives leave imprints.
Seasonal beings give hints

Most significant is you!
Real ones see you through.

Some rare kept close to heart
Know us best impossible to tear apart.

“That doesn't mean you're having an identity crisis”

A Love Letter To Myself

Cristina Crescenzo

Dear Cristina, I have been unfair to you, only seeing your weaknesses and none of your strengths. All I ever do is hurt you, even when I don't mean to do it deliberately. I am just angry about how things have gone, and I know a lot of it was out of your control.

I blame the world for its injustice, and then when I can no longer do that, I turn my talons toward you. When I can't source my happiness from other people, I assume that it is something you have done to make them turn away from us. I'll needle away at every little detail, every possible mistake you could have made, even down to the sound of your voice.

I spent so much time hating you and your brokenness when I should have embraced and loved you despite it, because the truth is you are strong. You have been strong for 23 years, even when I scream at you to let us both give up the fight. It just feels like we've experienced too much heartache and misery **for one person to bear,** but you've proved me wrong by taking each day in stride, even when the weight feels heavy enough to crush us to dust.

There is a lot about life that is unfair, so I have to stop claiming you're the sole cause of so much misfortune that takes place. You do not have that kind of power.

Another fact I know is **all we really have is ourselves.**

I am sure if you could, you would have deserted me and my cruelty a long time ago, and I would have done the same with you and your ignorance. So, though we can get irritated with each other, there is so much I don't want to change about you.

I like being romantic; I like that you still romanticize your life, even though there has been so much evidence to prove that things will never be all sunshine and rainbows. I like that you're a Disney adult and have a weird obsession with *Frozen*, because I know it must feel good to hold onto childhood joy when adult life is rough. I like that you read Jane Austen, even if you can't see yourself in those heroines. It's cool that you enjoy reading those spicy historical romances you find in the grocery store. It's good that you appreciate old movies and music, even if you have few people with whom to discuss them. Also, don't worry. It doesn't mean you are perpetuating

the “I’m not like other girls” trope just because you like to dye your hair, haven’t gotten entirely comfortable wearing makeup and don’t naturally gravitate towards popular clothing trends.

It’s okay that you don’t know how you want to represent yourself to the world. One day, you might want to wear an anime shirt, beanies and sweats, and then another day, you might want to wear a dress with heels and a bow. That doesn’t mean you’re having an identity crisis.

I also really like your obnoxiously loud laugh. It’s genuine, and the world needs more of that. It’s okay that sometimes you feel like you are ready to be in a relationship, and then the next day you become self-deprecating while acting like it’s the last thing you want.

Being scared of the future is normal; not being proactive towards your goals every day doesn’t make you a lazy person. It’s just something we need to work on together.

We don’t need to be surrounded by people every second; being alone, just us, is a good thing. We

need to be able to recharge, but it doesn’t mean that we are unlovable.

In the end, I just want to do right by you. I have to stop looking at people in black and white, all good or all bad, because people are filled with a lot of gray areas and we will never really know the truth about everything and everyone’s feelings and motives. Hence, we need to focus on what we do and how we can improve ourselves and this relationship from this point. I don’t want to hate you anymore. It’s exhausting. I want to be able to connect and trust myself at all times.

Most of all, I want to truly love who I am today and who I could be.

Sincerely, Yourself.

CRISTINA CRESCENZO My name is Cristina Crescenzo (she/her/hers) and there are many days when I have no idea what I am doing, but writing for this blog makes me happy as I try to figure things out.



