The woes of a critical thinker



I have to fight the impulse to point out problems with anything I try to get really absorbed in. I turned into the worst nightmare of any fandom a walking compendium of irrelevant facts and contradictions. So, there I was, heading to the theatre with my squad, ready to

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My friends have told me that they can no longer watch or discuss movies and TV shows with me, so I am effectively barred from movie nights and Netflix parties. My tendency to overanalyse situations and be overly critical seems to be the root of all my problems. It has turned into a curse that taints everything I do, from my favourite pastimes to daily activities.

Being able to analyse critically has been given a lot of weight in academic circles. It is the cornerstone of intellectual growth and new discoveries. To make good decisions and come to well-informed conclusions, you need to be able to question, analyse, and evaluate



how I approach every situation. Critical thinking has become second nature I couldn't help but scrutinise the work on to me at this point. I just can't help myself. It's not that I enjoy being a buzzkill, it's just how my brain works. I find it fascinating to analyse

every nuance, be it through entertainment or academia, but doing that robs me of the simple pleasures of life. Initially a refreshing break from the humdrum routine, this activity has devolved into a tedious game of "flaw-fishing". My analytical mind is constantly at work, whether I am trying to decide what to eat for

breakfast or trying to decipher the hidden meaning of a friend's casual remark. When I keep turning choosing a restaurant into an exercise in analysing online reviews, menus, and dietary preferences, or reading between the lines of a text message into a mental workout looking for subtexts, my brain has little space to process how this affects my surroundings.

I have to fight the impulse to point out problems with anything I try to get really absorbed in. I turned into the worst nightmare of any fandom – a walking compendium of irrelevant facts and contradictions. So, there I was, heading to the theatre with my squad, ready to catch a flick. Despite their

enthusiasm for the story and the characters, microscopic level, looking for flaws in the characters, holes in the storyline, and delving deeper into the premise. I noticed that the storyline didn't make sense and that some of the characters didn't seem to have good reasons for what they did. In a valiant attempt to preserve peace, I succumbed to an overwhelming urge to voice my thoughts about the missing pieces immediately, which ended up dampening the whole evening.

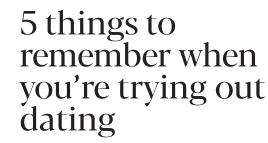
Unfortunately for my emotional and mental health, I have no idea how to get out of my own head. As a result, I question and secondguess everything, which can seem off-putting to those around me. I tend to get carried away

pursuing topics that pique my interest, but I sometimes forget that not everyone shares my enthusiasm. I am still getting better at knowing when to say what is on my mind and when to just listen in a casual conversation. While introspection essential development, it is easy to wear oneself out by dwelling on whatifs and conspiracies. Critical analysis is like a double-

edged sword because nothing in the world can be defined by predetermined standards of perfection. Prioritising logic over emotions can dismiss subjectivity, which limits our

vision. Therefore, despite being a selfproclaimed critic, I am trying to find balance and enjoy simple pleasures. It is okay to be spontaneous and suspend disbelief sometimes not everything can be put into a pros and cons list or a colour-coded spreadsheet.

Joyeeta has been yelling a lot lately; pacify her at



PUJA SARKAR

Dating isn't easy. Everyone is either too heartbroken to date or going through a glowup phase where they're not even thinking about dating. However, when you do find someone who belongs to neither of these categories, someone who you actually like and maybe even they like you back, take the leap and ask them out.

When you do, look back here for these helpful reminders

Rejections are okay

Not everyone you like is going to like you back, and not everyone you think likes you will LIKE-like vou. Unless feelings are explicitly expressed, it's very difficult to pick up on how another person feels about you. Are they sending

> playing hard to get? Are they just being friendly? It's confusing. The best way to handle it is to simply ask them out. If they say no, you don't have much to lose. The most

mixed signals? Are they

you come out with is a story to tell your friends. Dating isn't as being in

official

relationship If the person you asked out says remember that it's only a date. A first date doesn't ensure a second one. Also, just because they agreed to go on a date with you, it doesn't mean that you're in an official relationship

or that you two are partners. The dating phase is where you get to know one another to get to the labelling part, and getting to the labelling part takes time.

Maintain your boundaries on the first few dates. Don't jump straight into questions like, "Tell me about your relationship with your dad" or start talking about how unfair your life is. Start with the basics and get to know their hobbies, what common interests you two share, what they're passionate about, and so on. Here's a pro tip it's never too early to make your intentions clear about what your expectations are from them or the relationship between the two of you.

Consider going on fun dates

Going out to eat or for coffee is a classic date idea. But that can cause awkward silences. Go to an art gallery or play laser tag. Do activities together and sometimes, with others. This gives you the chance to see how your date handles stressful situations, if they get along with your friends, how they react in public spaces, and so on. Some things might appeal to you, some might not, but that is what dating is all about - finding out things about your date.

Don't talk about your ex

The last thing your date wants is a detailed manuscript of how your ex "ruined" your life and how you've supposedly recovered from it. You wouldn't want to hear it either. Save the talk involving your exes for when you're further into the dating phase. If you begin the early stages of dating by talking about your exes and break-ups, it really does nothing but give off the impression that vou're not over your ex.

Dating isn't easy but it doesn't have to be complicated either. Start by getting to know the person at a surface level and let everything play out. You'll eventually get to the heavy existential talks of life, family, exes, and if you two are compatible and want to make things official.

Puja does nothing but read Gaiman and drinks unhealthy amounts of coffee. Send her cat photos at fb.com/pspspspspspspspspspuwu/

How to fall back in love with music

NADERA NAEEMA OHI

Picture the scene: your bio is always a song lyric. You wouldn't be caught dead without your headphones, and your breakdowns are *always* to the tune of Stranger in the Alps.

Simply put, you love music. Just seem to enjoy listening to anything chore, not a fun hobby. anymore.

It can feel saddening, isolating, and frustrating to not feel fulfilled by something that's usually very important to you - an outlet for and reflection of your emotions that you can't live without.

To deal with this loss of fulfillment, happening.

just be sensory overload. As good as it feels to listen to album after album, learning more about your own tastes and giving unsolicited reviews to your best friends, this might result in each individual track not being so special anymore.

other aspects of our lives. Even though music can often serve as a reprieve and sanctuary from tough situations, it's possible to just feel so tired and low that we can't enjoy a lot of things that we used to.

Finally, your mindset might just one small catch. Lately, you can't have shifted to consuming songs as a



Now that we know what's going on, we first have to understand why it's how does one get back to the usual?

Firstly, if this experience is getting The simplest explanation might frustrating or upsetting for you, try to be a little kinder to yourself. When something is a huge part of our identities – in other contexts, say, being a dancer or an excellent student it's natural to feel down when it

doesn't come as easy to us anymore. If not that, then it might be the can be at a hundred percent all the

who you are to anyone. Especially if forcing yourself to do so hurts you. If you can give yourself a bit of space music-discovering self! to relax and accept that it's not the end of the world if you're feeling bad, almost all the battle is already won.

Once you've done that, try dipping your toes back into the world of music by relistening to favourite songs. There is a lot of comfort, familiarity, and love in songs that

have already gotten through hard times before - let yourself revisit those emotions and feel

After that, it might be easier to try out new and exciting albums from these genres. You're checking out something new that you know you'll

Give yourself some time to absorb

effects of stress and burnout from time; and you do not need to prove each song, and don't over-consume if you don't want to, and hopefully soon you'll be back to your usual voracious,

> On a final note, to go back to my first piece of advice: be kind to yourself. If you find that you really don't feel fulfilled or connected to any music at all at the moment, that's okay. Give yourself as much rest as you can from these worries and all the others. Maybe even try reading about musical theory or learning an instrument if you really want to feel connected to this world while

Art will always be there for you whenever you want to come back to it.

you're on a break.

Ohi recommends everyone give hyperpop And that's totally alright. No one probably like - it's a win-win scenario. at least one chance. Find her at fb.com/

