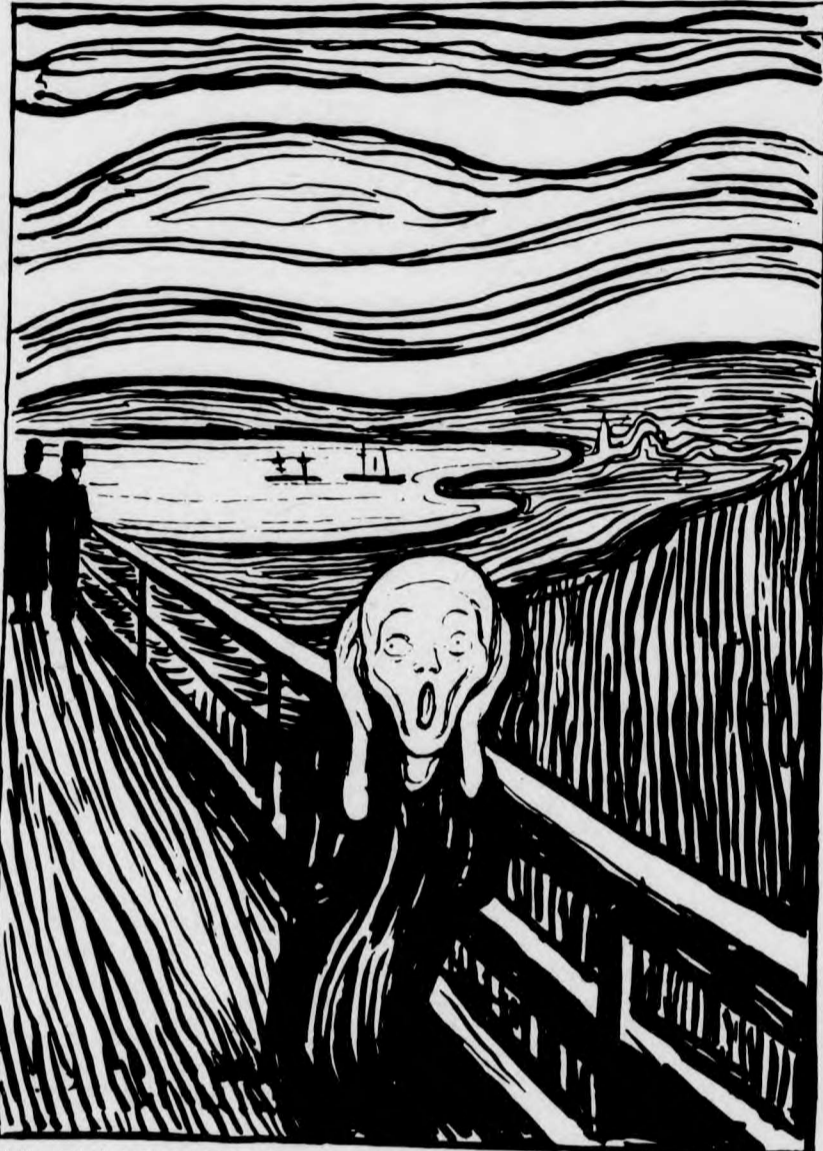


UNIVERSITY NEWSBEAT

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HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH ANXIETY?



"The Shriek," a 1895 lithograph by Norwegian Edvard Munch shows the fear and isolation anxiety can cause.

Tonight's the night, right? Paper's out, pen's poised, all your notes and references are sorted out carefully on the side of your desk. And like each of the past seven nights you try to get into that English essay that's almost overdue.

Like each of those other nights though, the same horribly panicky feeling starts to take over. Your breathing becomes shallow and rapid, your heart starts beating faster, your hands go numb with cold, perspiration beads up on your forehead, you feel slightly nauseous, and concentration vanishes as those 747 butterflies take flight in your stomach. You've got so many prickly details floating around in your head that you've forgotten what the whole looks like.

Relax. Slow down. Take it easy. You know you've done the work, and that it's only a matter of sorting through it all to find what's important. You are suffering from a temporary, but intensely frustrating, case of anxiety overload.

ANXIETY A GOOD THING

Anxiety in small doses is a good thing, according to Prof. Norman Endler, Chairman of the Psychology Department: "It's a warning signal that you'd better get off your seat and do something." For each individual though, there's an ideal level of anxiety (not too much, not too little) and anything beyond that

level upsets the system, and minimizes efficiency.

Prof. Endler explains that anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state "directed towards the future and generally out of proportion to the real threat." Characterized by feelings of trepidation, fear, terror, horror, alarm, and dread, its anticipation of impending doom can make life pretty miserable for almost everyone from time to time.

FOUR KINDS

There are four kinds of situations that tend to make people anxious. In order of the distress they cause, they are: a dangerous situation where you may be threatened by physical harm; a strange new situation where you don't know what to expect; a social situation where you feel you'll be judged by others; and lastly, an innocuous or mundane situation.

So how do you master anxiety? How do you make it work for, rather than against, you? How do you let it motivate, but not block you when you're facing exams or essays?

Separate conversations with Prof. Endler, and with Chris Holmes, counsellor at the Counselling and Development Centre and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology, reveal a number of answers, all of which are related to lowering the level of anxiety through dealing with reality.

ANSWERS

• **Focus on the task at hand.** Sometimes anxiety sufferers feel like their mental or emotional wheels are spinning on ice. They become so preoccupied with how much there is to do, that they simply can't get down to doing it. Worrying about themselves suddenly becomes the real problem rather than dealing with the task itself. The traction they so desperately need to get back onto the road again can be found in simply bringing attention to the actual job and accomplishing it in a step-by-step, inch-by-inch way.

• **Get a grip on the present.** Anxiety of what may or may not happen in the future robs you of enjoyment and participation in the present.

"So many people today", says Prof. Chris Holmes, "live their lives in the future. It's really a shame but they can hardly wait till the end of a test, or a course, or a degree. When they actually finish university they can hardly remember their experiences on campus." It seems they hurry so fast into the future, that they miss the value of time in the present.

• **Get the situation into its proper perspective and realistically appraise what's the worst that can happen.** Dread with no name attached is much more difficult to deal with than a problem you know exists. Distance yourself from the crisis long enough to evaluate its real importance to your life. How critical will this panic seem six months from now? How does it relate to other so-called critical moments in your life? Are your feelings out of proportion to the real danger?

• **Remember your past successes.** Feel good about them, and believe you can be successful again. If

necessary use some positive suggestion like "In every day in every way I'm getting better and better." Corny though this may sound, it's important to counteract the self-accusation of "You're a dunno" or "You're useless" that often accompanies the state of anxiety.

• **Relax.** Get in touch with the physical symptoms like stomach tension and focus on easing out the knots. If you get very 'up tight' physically you may want to investigate some of the yoga relaxation classes given by the Counselling and Development Centre and/or borrow their cassette tapes to train yourself to relax your body through autosuggestion.

Often only once the physical agitation has been calmed can you clear your head and focus on the work you have to do.

• **Physical Activity.** Not only do sports work a lot of the tension out of your body, but they also redirect your attention away from yourself and onto an object, such as a speeding squash ball. While playing, if you are playing well, you are firmly rooted in the present, and anxiety for the future has little hold on you.

• **Get yourself a good model.** Choose someone you admire who is able to keep cool under stress, find out how he/she does it, and try it yourself.

• **Desensitize yourself from opinions.** Prof. Endler has found that students who get most anxious in preparation for exams are fearful of being evaluated by other people.

The solution is to work on making your own evaluation of yourself count much more than that of others.

• **Share your feelings.** You're not the only one feeling this way. Comparing notes and broadening your perspective with a friend just may help sort your way out of your anxiety and let some of the steam off. Prof. Holmes had some interesting comments about the effect of drugs in relieving anxiety. He felt that while in a time of crisis tranquilizers could serve a useful function, they were used much too much. "People should learn to deal with their problems and not need to rely on something external", he said.

YORK COLLECTION

A selection of items from the vast York University Collection of art officially opens at York University Fine Arts on Markham, 596 Markham Street, on Saturday, March 10 from 2-4 p.m.

The pieces for this exhibition were selected by the curator of the Art Gallery of York University, Michael Greenwood, and include sculpture, wall-hangings, modern Canadian paintings, nineteenth century French posters, photos, Inuit prints and Inuit sculpture.

The York Collection exhibition will run from March 7 to April 1. The Inuit artwork will be on display until March 18.

Gallery hours at Fine Arts on Markham are noon until 6 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.

WOMEN AND THE LAW

This three night mini-lecture series deals with current legislation as it affects women. Included will be an historic overview; an examination of the legal aspects of employment for women and related issues; family law and family property reform. Registration fee is \$10.00. For further information contact the Centre for Continuing Education at 667-2525.

DANCE CONCERT

York's Dance Department is offering its annual dance concert in Burton Auditorium on March 8, 9, and 10 at 8 p.m., with a matinee performance Friday, March 9 at 2 p.m. Featuring dance students and faculty, the program includes eight works in modern and ballet. A donation of \$1.00 towards the Scholarship fund will be requested at the door.

CHAMBER MUSIC

The Community Chamber Orchestra of York University performs on Sunday, March 11 at 8:00 p.m. in the Dining Hall at Glendon College, and on Monday March 12 at 8:30 p.m. in Burton Auditorium. The program includes works by Albinoni, Barber, Mozart, and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

HIGH SCHOOL ART SHOW

Paintings, drawings, photography, and crafts done by some of the most talented students

in North York high schools can be seen Feb. 27- March 10 in McLaughlin Hall. Gallery hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday noon - 6 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday, noon - 9 p.m. Saturday 2-5 p.m.

SNOLYMPICS FOR THE RETARDED

In just a week from today 75 retarded children, ages 12 to 19, will be enjoying a winter sports day at York. Included in the March 8 program will be snow-shoeing, outdoor soccer, cross-country skiing, hockey and skating events.

There will be a competitive spirit, but there will also be instruction clinics for those children who don't feel confident in a particular activity.

Harold Minden, Professor of Psychology and Physical Education at York, and his students, have been responsible for the organization of Snolympics. He says the goals of the day are: 1) fun and enjoyment; 2) to demonstrate that retarded children can and should be involved in winter sports; 3) to know that it is important for these children to be integrated into the community, and 4) to encourage students and faculty to move into the area of teaching retarded children.

In connection with the event, York is working with the Metropolitan Toronto School Board to develop motivation and skills in retarded children.

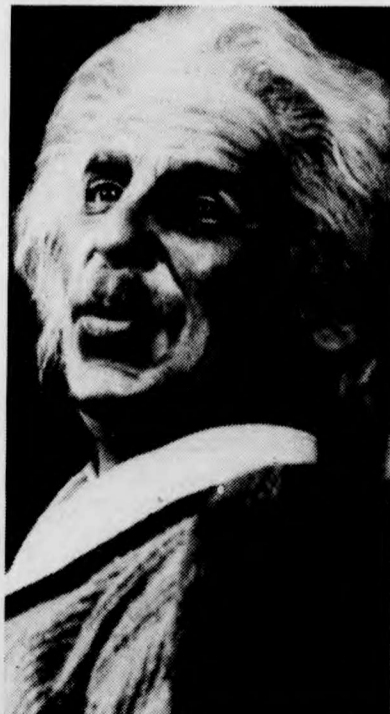
In case of bad weather, the Snolympics will be moved indoors.

EINSTEIN'S COMING TO CAMPUS

In the tradition of Hal Holbrook's "Mark Twain," actor William Landry will present "Einstein the Man" on Friday, March 9 at 4:30 and 8:00 p.m. in Curtis Lecture Hall I.

Critics have said that Landry, 26, manages to capture and portray the genius, humaneness and humility of Einstein with a sensitivity that is remarkable. The actor shows Einstein as philosopher, humanist, founder of the theory of relativity, and passionate lover of violin music.

The presentation is in celebration of Einstein's 100th birthday. Admission is \$2.00.



Landry as Einstein