



Stress, anxiety, and media

How to protect yourself from infobesity



Everything that stresses us can be summed up in four universal stressors: novelty, loss of control, unpredictability, and ego threat.



Obviously, the media use them massively to increase their revenues. They are already very good at juggling ego threats: the deadly virus, the war at the door, the climate change that will kill us all...

Then they are very quick to find "experts" to fan the flames and sow uncertainty: they parade, contradict each other, argue live and only add to our feeling of complete loss of control. We feel at the mercy of the first natural disaster or some narcissistic pervert dictator. And all this is obviously in continuous flow, one bad news chasing the other. And there you have it, the 4 stressors are there, and we continue to be addicted to information, desperately looking for a light at the end of the tunnel.



How to protect yourself from this infobesity while staying informed and without isolating yourself in a bubble?

Here are a few simple and easy to do tips:

1. Get out of the constant flow! Remove the alerts from your phone. Watch the news only once a day, preferably early in the morning to give your brain the day to assimilate the images and sleep well at night. If you have a sensible soul, give preference to the radio, you will spare yourself the shock of the images.
2. Don't use social medias. Instead, choose reliable and objective sources and form your own opinion.
3. Take « media breaks », e.g. on weekends. Take a break from all the bad news around the world and focus on the sources of happiness in your immediate environment.
4. Give preference to programs that take a step back rather than watching those that dramatize situations that are already dramatic enough without adding to them!
5. Learn to distance yourself: just because a stranger breaks a leg in China doesn't mean you should cry here.
6. If you are very concerned, make yourself useful. The action is very de-stressing and allows you to refocus. Helping will also make you feel in control of the situation.
7. Learn to distinguish between what is really serious, dangerous, important...and what is exploited to increase the TV station's revenue?

In short

Don't be overwhelmed by the avalanche of information but take charge: decide what, when and where you need to know something and stick to it.