

2025: Recovering from Burnout

(31-01-2026, A'dam)

This is a story about previous 13 months: whole of 2025 + January of 2026.



I am grateful to my friends & family who share their love & let me love them; to my adult children who are (almost ready to be) having their own lives so I can stop caring for them first; & to the professional supporters in my recovery - who empower me to take care of myself.

I am still learning to treat myself with kindness (that I would usually extend to others), to meet my own needs, to focus on me, to love myself, to be accepting & brave!

All this time I have been struggling: fighting the "systems" of oppression: capitalism, patriarchy, urbanisation, anthropocentrism; fighting internalised ableism, perfectionism, workaholism, "vocational awe"; fighting trauma responses of people-pleasing, freeze, flight; poor interoception & alexithymia; struggling with the loss of identity as an "employee", someone with a career, a professional...

What helped me the most this year was NATURE: mostly in Lika, sometimes also in Amsterdam.

Here are 13 big things that happened / causes for celebration:

- after struggling for many years, finally - in March - I went on a sick leave: officially for "burnout", but it was ALSO: menopause, complex-PTSD (chronic anxiety & depression & 'somatisation'), possibly ADHD, possibly Autism)
- I joined a year-long anti-obesity group health programme (GLI), and lost 13kg
- I had many healing interventions: various therapies, gardening, physio, medical researches, emotional support animals, drugs (legal & otherwise), swimming & yoga & walking; art; & many other changes of habits
- I took part in a "whistleblowing campaign", which is not public so I can't say much about it
- I had 5 lovers, mostly friends / one-off / remote / unattached / polyamorous
- I've spent 18 weeks in Lika, took ~20 night trains, had many visitors, transferred Lika-Lodge from my mother to me, continued working on LikaNet & fell in love
- I gave one important online lecture (about internet activism in Yugoslavia, 1990-1999)
- I voted in Dutch national elections for the first time!
- The cat returned, after 13 months! He was found & taken care of & given back to us - now Arnd & me share him
- I finalized the divorce from Arnd
- I went to many concerts, and several protests;
- I posted a lot on Mastodon: @becha@v.st <https://social.v.st/tags/LikaLodge> & <https://social.v.st/deck/Grapje>
- I did reconnect with many friends (in person or online), and celebrated several family events

Mourning:

- People who died in 2025: Fearghas (from RIPE community), my tetka-Koviljka; & Nikola's mother
- People who died before their dream - to move to Lika - could come true: Bogdan, Shark's wife, Marko's sister...
- I'm mourning (with) other people who lost their health and/or their jobs and/or their friends...
- World events: wars, genocides, fires, floods, draughts, storms...

+ I mourn that I did NOT go to DNS hackathon, WHY2025, CCC nor any RIPE, SEE nor NOG meetings;

Plans (wishes!) for 2026:

- * To finish the recovery from burnout! (hopefully!)
- * To spend even more time in Lika
- * To co-organise WBMv18 (possibly 7-13.9.)

LINKS:

- * June: <https://wiki.techinc.nl/User:Becha/Lika/2026/WBM>
- * October: https://wiki.techinc.nl/images/6/6f/Mini_8pp_ieee_LikaNet_update_october_2025_vesna.pdf
- * November: <https://wiki.techinc.nl/User:Becha/babel-art>

*What I need from *you* in 2026 is to love yourself, love me & don't give up on me!*

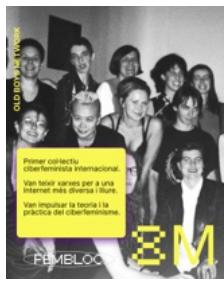
Vesna



Happy New Year, with the cat; voted; divorced; commemorated Olivia's 18th anniversary

Overcoming

✓ No Peace	➡ Activism
✓ No (personal) computer	➡ Mainframes / BBS / FLOSS
✓ No money	➡ Sharing (w. I&F) / Gigs / Pirating / Hitchhiking / Grants
✓ No diploma	➡ Hacking
✓ No penis	➡ Feminism
✓ No country	➡ Migrating



^^ From the [talk about cyberfeminism & activism](#) in March

FRIENDS and FAMILY



^^ Alisa's birthday (22), my birthday dinner (53), and Sinterklaas



^^ Charlie's birthday party (20th)





PROTESTS



8.March, Alisa, Antifascist March with Nana, 2nd Rode Lijn, (Alisa on greenpeace poster)

CONCERTS



Nemanja's band, Klezmatics (w. Alisa), Bozo Vreco (w. Nana&Iris&Natasa), Morcheeba (w. Charlie&Sofie)



Bajaga (w. Sladjana&Nana), DJ Shantel (w. Alisa), Morcheeba, Arc De Soleil (alone!)



Rover (at Charlie's party), Prljavo Kazaliste (w. Kaja), Servus (3 times, with many people!)

BURNOUT RECOVERY

Burnout sucks. I still can't accept that it might take much longer than a year to get better - or that I will NEVER get better?! Here are some illustrations of the process / suffering / wins!



The house, he thought. And the dog. And maybe Baiba too. An outward change is necessary. I'll start with that. Later we'll see what happens with me. My workload is too heavy. I can't continue like this.

It was past midnight. He paced the car park. The ambulance had left. Everything was quiet. He knew there were a lot of things he needed to think through, but he was too tired. The only thing he could manage to do was wait. And keep moving so he wouldn't freeze.

YOU'RE NOT BURNED OUT. IT'S ACTUALLY ADHD

It's not just exhaustion - it's your brain constantly battling noise, both inside and out. ADHD isn't about a lack of focus. It's about struggling to filter distractions, manage energy, and regulate emotions - all of which leads to overwhelm, then collapse. But on you understand why this happens - what's going on in your brain and where these patterns come from - things start to shift. For.

It starts with discovering your unique ADHD type...

Then putting a system in place that works with your brain, not against it.

The result?

Less chaos. More clarity. Real momentum.

It's crazy how easily it works...



● Live

find it difficult to know which came first: my 'tism or my achievement brain.

It's chicken and egg I think. Because I knew I was autistic I knew I had to over achieve to leave the country I grew up. But the more over achieved the more autistic people thought I was.

I don't mind. I'm at the time in my life where I'm re-negotiating my relationship with 'achievement' and 'productivity'. I no longer have the pathological and psychological need to do it, but I'll be lying if I didn't admit to how it still brings me psychological safety.

How: meditation and therapy and exercise :

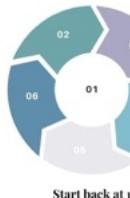
Advertisement

THE ADHD BURNOUT CYCLE

CreatingSelfLove.com

1) Commitment/ Hyperfixation

Excited to do the work because everything is going great



4) Retreat and guilt

Start to neglect many aspects of our lives to meet deadlines. Feel guilty and like a failure but too afraid to ask for help.

5) Overwhelm shutdown

Overworked and isolated. Can't do anything productive. Trouble with daily self-care activities.

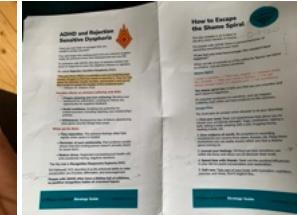
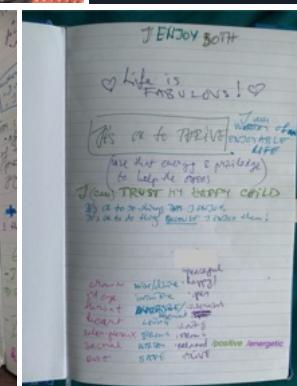
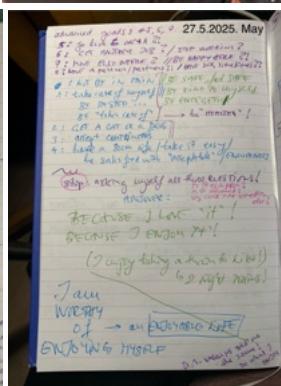
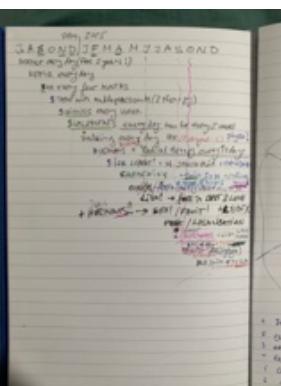
6) Quitting

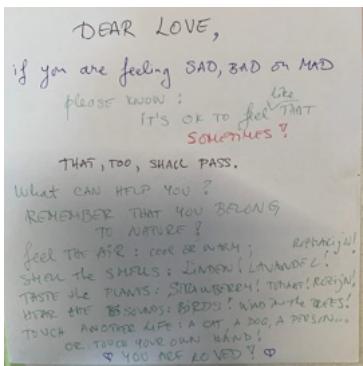
Abandon our goals and tasks. Feels immediately better because a weight is lifted off our shoulders.



I can either take a shower or respond to an email. Just not on the same day.

MybodyTryingForADHD.com





I am healing to be able to handle joy.

Prioritizing my own dreams, desires, health & capacities is a great formula for happiness.

I am thriving, in abundance, blessed,

- **alive (safe)** : I am enough / just being present is enough
- **relaxed (rested) / energetic** ; creative: abundant, sharing, worthy, receiving: there is enough
- **strong (effortless)** , have agency, powerful: **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**
- **loving & loved**
- **Expressive / interested**
- **Intuitive / open / positive**
- **Divine / peaceful / happy /**

I am (good) enough
There is enough
Enough is enough

What's going on?
I'm sick. My head hurts and I'm never getting better.
I'm just going to be here forever.
What are you?
I'm... I'm... I'm...
This is our life now.
I'm just crying all the time

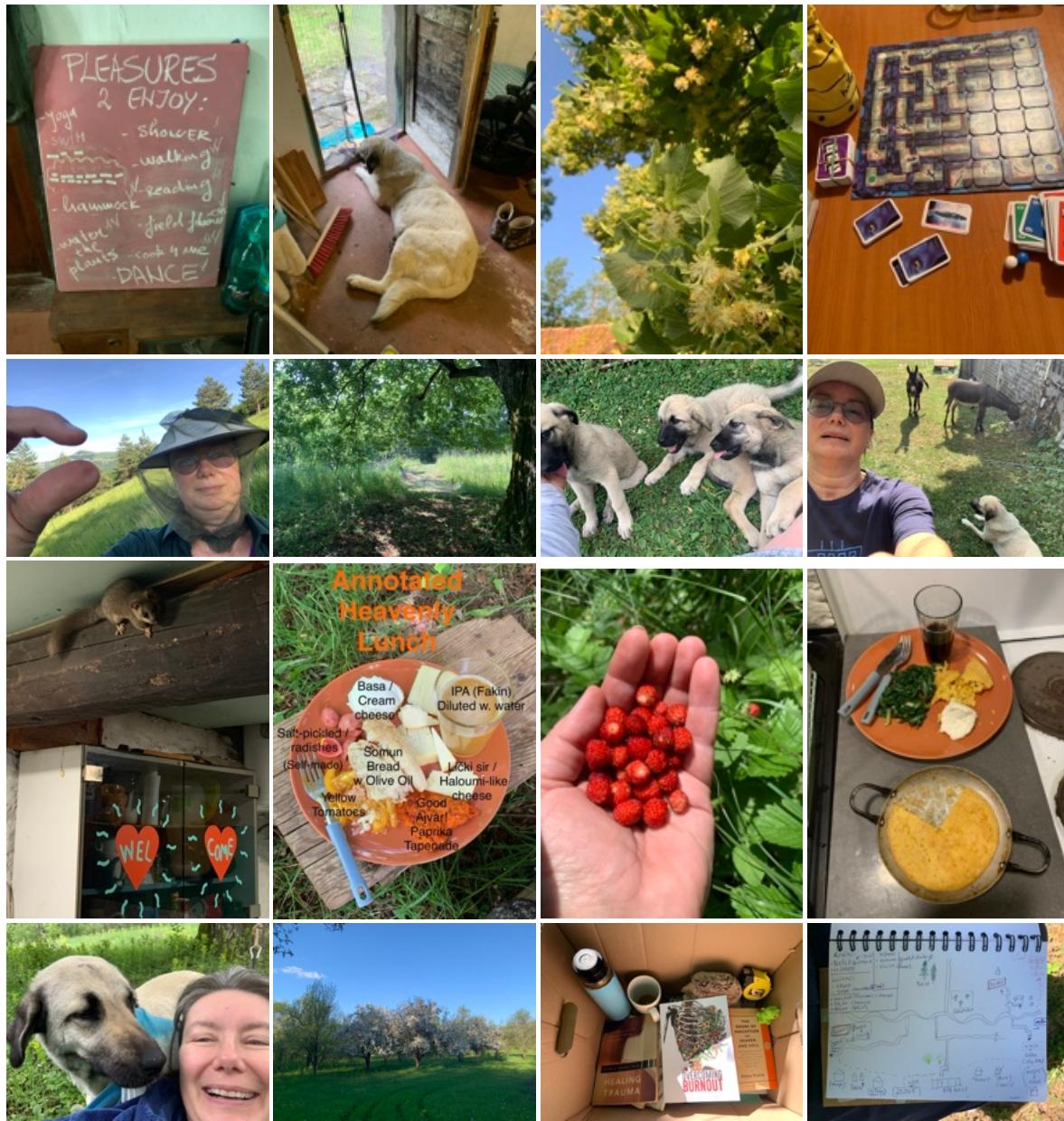
113 Chat
de hand is?
04:57

I'm thinking about death a lot... and maybe ... this is ... what "they" mean with ... having suicidal thoughts ... & I don't know that to do ... & how to ask for help ... because it's not that I want to do anything to myself ... but WTF is going on?? For days already... & I can't sleep - often between 3 & 5 - & "the thoughts" just keep coming back ... so I'm reaching out ... I guess .. asking for help ... or advice ...

Ja više nikada neću da spavam
Jer kada spavam ja gluposti sanjam
Krvna slika mi je lošija
I zato, živela insomnia
U gradu provodim noći i dane
Moj mesec ima dve tamne strane
I osećam se još umornija
I zato, živela insomnia

LIKA

In 2024 i've been in Lika 6 times for one week, to be alone & at peace; to rest ; in 2025 I went again but for longer: to let the contact with unspoiled nature heal me again. Here are the photos of that beauty - but there is also so much that can not be pictured: fresh air, SILENCE, smell of linden & apple blossoms, sounds of birdsong, DARKNESS, smell of wet earth & manure, rooster calling, plums falling, welcoming morning chill, PEACE, coldness of the river water, floating alone in a lake, warmth of sunshine on my skin, taste of wild fruit, touch of moss, love of domestic animals, SOLITUDE, no pressure...





^ Cave "Vranjaca" where Charlie, Vedran, Jura etc climbed



^ Theatre show "Lisica" that I saw in Split with VladoV, based on the novel by Dubravka Ugresic <https://www.hnk-split.hr/predstave/detalj/article/lisica-25-26>



^ It was the 7th anniversary of Bogdan's death on 5th August

VISITORS in LIKA

This year, there were many visitors; even more are not pictured: Djuro, Milodarka&Stojan, Nesha, Zoran...



Marijana; Iris, Julie, Pablito; Nikola, cat Virka



Charlie with Isha, Maron & Rens; E&A (not in photo); Milica's duckling; Vlado in Knin!



Big house: Miroslav&Jole; Brane with family; James Rice with a friend; Bojan



Nikolina, Vedran & caving-friends; Minh; WBM scouts: Chester & Eoin

LOVE in LIKA

in June, I've met someone in Gubavcevo Polje, and we fell in love; so when I visited again, I was not alone. Because he doesn't like to show his face on the Internet, I am mostly including the photos of my own happiness.



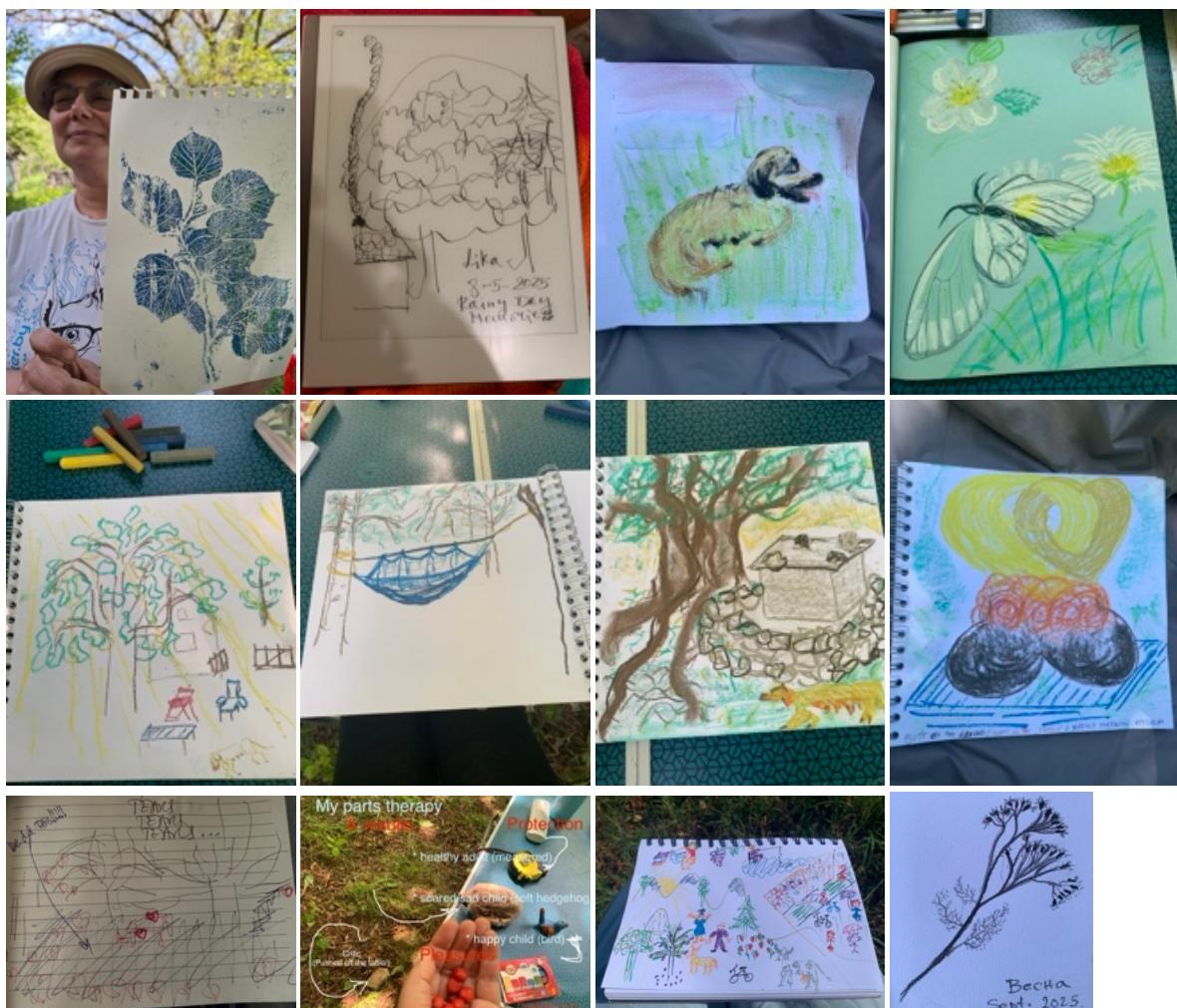
WINTER in LIKA

It has been my wish to experience winter / "white xmas" in Lika -- and, by some miracle, I/we have made it come true: first time after 40+ years / first time since I was a child; and also not possible in the Lodge... but in "his" house! It was as I expected: both wonderfully beautiful and painfully harsh! My visit co-incided with the winter storm that "froze" most of Europe, so we were, of course, also snowed in!



ART / THERAPY

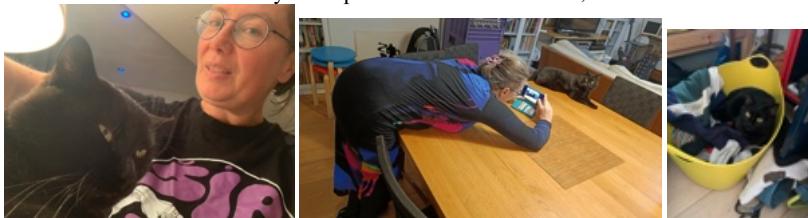
This year I have tried to express myself through drawing, photography, therapy/"play" of "parts", making memes... while my other creative outlets of publishing articles & making presentations & organising events have stopped, as part of my work. Therefore, I am sharing my "art" with you, as a part of healing process.





CAT (Grapje / Mrachak)

Our cat was lost in September 2024 - and "found" in October 2025!
Now we have "shared custody": he spends 2 weeks with Arnd, 2 weeks with Charlie & me.





AMSTERDAM

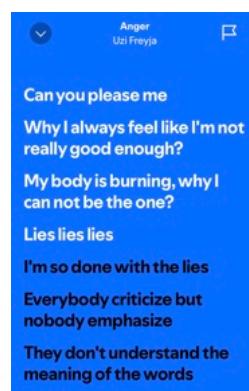


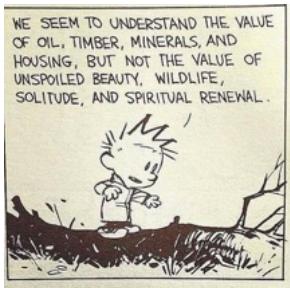


Before & after : fresh haircut!



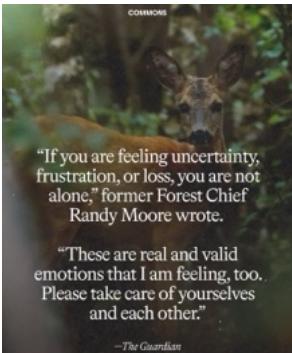
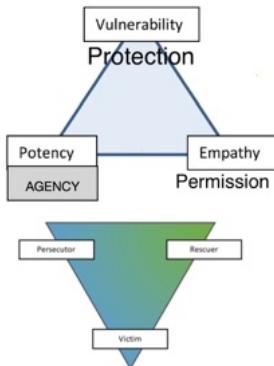
MEMES



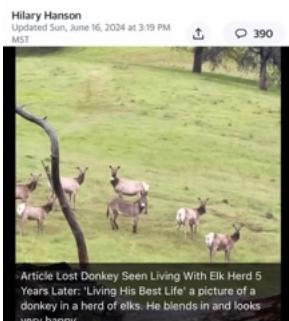


FuckingCrazy

It is possible to love my traumatized bodymind, this particular specific life marked by so much suffering, to move toward as much healing as is possible for me, and to grieve and rage and thrash against the limits of my capacity to endure this unbearable pain. While compulsive sexuality was an anesthetic, an attempt to repress or outrun unbearable pain, conscious sexuality is a space of healing and integration, an intentional reckoning with embodied experience. Conscious sexuality is a space in which I explore the edges and contours of pleasure and pain, the way these can bleed into each other, in which I express my frustration and my desire, my numbness and my wetness, my commitment to healing and my grief at what has been taken from me. Conscious sexuality is a space in which there is intentional communication about this process, in which there is language and time for processing and unpacking, in which



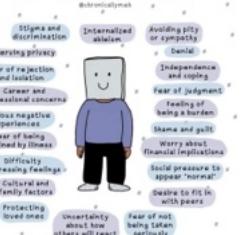
Lost Donkey Seen Living With Elk Herd 5 Years Later: 'Living His Best Life'



Emotionally Stunted	Emotionally Mature
People's behavior is how they feel about me	People's behavior is how they feel about themselves
Boundaries are offensive & selfish	Boundaries are my right to protect myself
When things don't go my way I yell, complain, or shut down	When things don't go my way I trust I'll find a new path
I have zero tolerance for anyone who disagrees with my beliefs	What people believe is their own perspective based on their conditioning
I cannot tolerate distress, delayed gratification, or my own mental resistance	I understand that difficult emotions/mental resistance is an integral part of growth
I seek external validation & use relationships, material things, or titles to get it	I know how to validate myself & use my relationships as connection



WHY WE HIDE ILLNESS



You weren't "high-functioning." You were masking.
You weren't "coping." You were dissociating.
You weren't "fine." You were in burnout.
They praised your performance. But never saw the cost.
You deserved care. Not applause.

"It takes strength to face our sadness and to grieve and to let our grief and anger flow in tears when they need to. It takes strength to talk about our feelings and to reach out for help and comfort when we need it." - MISTER ROGERS

STRESSLAXING
(v.) Being stressed that relaxing makes you more stressed because you're not working on what's making you stressed.

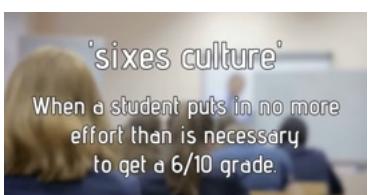
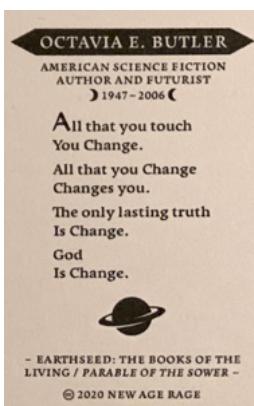
Saying "I Love You" in Neurodivergent

- I saw this article & thought of you
- Here is a thing about your favourite thing
- I would spend unstructured time with you
- You can share my silence
- I researched your problem, here are your options



Some great litanies from Tumblr:

- if it sucks hit da bricks <- litany against sunk cost
- take it easy but take it <- litany against burnout/apathy cycle
- fuck it we ball <- litany against perfectionism
- now say something beautiful and true <- litany against irony poisoning
- bigger idiots than you have done it <- litany against imposter syndrome
- holy shit two cakes <- litany against self-deprecation
- not [a] or [b] but a secret third thing <- litany against false dichotomies



Koyaanisqatsi

Definition: 1. Life out of balance. 2. Life of moral corruption and turmoil. 3. Crazy life. 4. Life in turmoil. 5. A state of life that calls for another way of living.

Origin: Hopi. According to Hopi Dictionary: Hopikwe Lovdytuvelu, the prefix koyaanis means "corrupted" or "chaotic", and the word qatsi means "life" or "existence", literally translating koyaanisqatsi as "chaotic life".



10 Signs You're a Leader (Even Without the Title)

1. People seek your advice.
2. You solve problems before being asked.
3. Your actions inspire others to do better.
4. You stay calm under pressure.
5. You empower others and invest in their growth.
6. You lead by example.
7. You take responsibility, owning mistakes and finding solutions.
8. You build trust because people know they can count on you.
9. You communicate clearly, making complex ideas easy to understand.
10. You celebrate the success of others.

— Daniel Abrahams

TRAUMA SHOWS UP IN YOUR LIFE AS:



Sad i zauvek

Song by Aca Lukas and Dragana Mirković - 2021

[Overview](#) [Lyrics](#)

Znam, ja biću jak za sve
Ali slab na tebe
Ko neko deče tu
Na tvoim ramenima

Pogledaj kako gledam
I dodla te ne dam
Jer duša trojka mala tvrdava je moja
Oči smeju ti se dok me gledaš ti
Kakva sreća

Tu si, ruke da u ruke staviš mi
Čuvaš ledu i svel, sad i zauvek
Znam, ja sam jaka za sve
Ali' slabla na febe
Marja od zrna sam
Kada te pogledam

Cuvaš me ko planina
Da bude jasno svima
Da duša moja mala tvrdava je tvoja
Oči smeju ti se dok me gledaš ti
Kakva sreća

Tu si, ruke da u ruke staviš mi
Čuvaš ledu i svel, sad i zauvek
Znam, ja sam jaka za sve
Ali' slabla na febe
Marja od zrna sam
Kada te pogledam



Not meeting our basic needs and either not noticing or feeling that our interoceptive signals are wrong is a massive cause of stress for Autistic people and this stress contributes to Autistic Burnout.

In order for interoception to result in regulation there are a number of steps:

1. First you need to notice and feel the sensation in your body.
2. Then you need to interpret this emotion.
3. You need to feel the urge to act on this emotion.
4. And then you need to select and execute the appropriate action.
5. All of these steps result in the outcome, whether you are regulated or not.

