

Shrink Rap: Hello. . . How Are You?

Really. How are you? As we embark upon a New Year, many are making resolutions, setting goals for things to accomplish and do. But, how are you? Really? Take a moment and be honest with yourself. How are you? Tired? Overwhelmed? Feeling like a Jack or Jill of all trades, but a master of none?

If you are easily worn out, on edge, having trouble sleeping, having a loss of concentration or what I call “pinball brain” – jumping from one thing to the next without finishing much – you may have anxiety. Anxiety commonly comes from being overextended. Bouncing from work, to household management, kids’ taxi service, homework and activities with the kids, shopping and cooking, church and community commitments, helping friends in need, all can lead to feelings of being unable to be efficient at anything. Then the feelings of depression start; no motivation, loss of energy and chronic fatigue, feelings of worthlessness and guilt for not doing “enough.” The last thing you need is another New Year’s resolution on your “to do” list.

Sound familiar? Change “pinball brain” by getting honest with yourself. Stop the Negative Nellie in your head that says how no one else can do everything you do, only you can do this or that, and “I have to . . . “ That voice only brings anxiety and depression. Be positive and talk back to Negative Nellie -- someone else really can take the kids to practice; the kids really can do much of their homework without your constant supervision; someone else really can step up to help with the fundraiser or event; you don’t have to stay at the kids’ practices, you can go shopping by yourself during that time. Oh, but Negative Nellie will try to tell you again and again all those negative, overwhelming, performance-pressured things that you, and only you, “have to” do. Keep talking back. Set those boundaries with yourself by not allowing Negative Nellie to take control. Learn to say ‘no’ to additional tasks and responsibilities. Learn to delegate tasks to others and ask for help. When you are not overextended, and you get Negative Nellie out of your head, the pinball slows down and rests.

So, how are you? Really?

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