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# WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO GO (BUT YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD)

*What to do when you start fantasizing about a meteor hitting the venue*



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Recently, my workplace held a celebratory reception. It was the typical reception: bar, hors d'oeuvres, nametags, mingling.

I'm willing to bet that no one loves work parties. But no one loves them less than folks familiar with introversion or social anxiety.

There's a fierce internal resistance. Every little thing becomes a potential excuse.

**"You mean I have to find *parking*? Forget it, I'm not going."**

**"I don't want to miss dinner with the kids."**

**"I'm totally overdressed."**


**"I'm totally underdressed."**

**"But it's *cold* out."**

I once had a client who said he couldn't go out to dinner with friends because his dog might have a seizure (though he routinely left the dog while he went to work). Another turned down a date because she had a piece of fish in the fridge that was going to go bad unless she used it that night.

Our brains are good that way. They're trying to keep us safe. And while the reasons we come up with might seem a little far-fetched, I totally understand the reflexive NOPE. We come up with a zillion reasons not to go.





But consider this. What if the resistance is just part of the script? What if it's just what happens? We can expect the resistance, acknowledge it, roll with it, but not necessarily have to listen to it.

Think about going to a restaurant. There's a script: walk in, be seated, look at menu, order, wait for food, enjoy meal, pay, walk out. That's the order.

By the same token, for me, I've learned that having to show up at a mingling-heavy event has a script as well: agree to go, feel resistance beforehand, enter with a plan (in the case of the reception, talk to friends, supervisees, and/or bosses), do the plan, see if I'm enjoying myself (and see if the snacks are any good. Mmm, snacks.) If yes, stay longer; if no, I have full permission to vamoose after I've done the plan.

You'll notice that "feel resistance" is part of the script. It's just what happens. I know it's coming and I trust I can acknowledge it (shall we call this...mindfulness?) and keep chugging along.

Essentially, instead of, "This CANNOT happen," the resistance morphs into "Meh, this happens."

And that "meh," oddly, is a great accomplishment. "Meh" never felt so good.

So hang out with the anxiety. It doesn't feel good, but it's familiar, like an old but annoying friend.

So feel the resistance and head out the door anyway. I can almost guarantee it won't be as bad as your anxiety thinks.

As for me, I actually enjoyed the reception, and not just because of the snacks. I ended up staying and chatting for so long I was almost late for the babysitter!

Give it a shot and let me know how it goes!

