# **Scatterbrain**

Jan 24, 2025

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Hi there!

I have a major case of writer’s block this week. Instead of a cohesive note for your inboxes, I am going to allow my scattered brain to scatter for your entertainment and, hopefully, for your education.



artist unknown

**Thought** **#1: What am I going to wear?**

A major freakout that I had this week was over what outfit I would bring with me to wear to a meeting that I am organizing in New York City for some folks in the financial sector. Saying that in the past tense feels insincere. I am still freaking out about this. In certain professional situations, I feel like I radiate otherness. This meeting is likely to be one of those situations. However, I am convinced that with the right outfit, I may not stand out as the rock-climbing anthropologist and activist that I am.

Luckily, I am not alone in fretting over what to wear to work. There are copious listicles and viral videos about this issue. This has been a topic of concern for as long as women have been in the workforce. That is because, though it may seem superficial, it matters.

In my fretting this week, I have gotten a lot of advice. It is my habit to pick at advice until it fails me. For instance, a coworker suggested I “dress for the job I want”. I like this because it pushes a level of togetherness that I don’t always hold myself to in my day-to-day office looks. However, I am terrified of coming off as cocky. I think that if I show up to this meeting to run around and set up signs and name tags in a suit, I will look absurd. One of my friends suggested that I wear black on black on black. I actually like this idea and will probably attempt to follow this advice. The issue here is that I am terrified that my clothes will be obviously cheap in this wealthy setting. Does it matter? To me, it does.

Perhaps all of this rambling is just coming to one point: I will do my best work if I am not worried about the clothes on my body. By this logic, I should wear something functional, something that I already have in my wardrobe, and something that will not be the star of any show.

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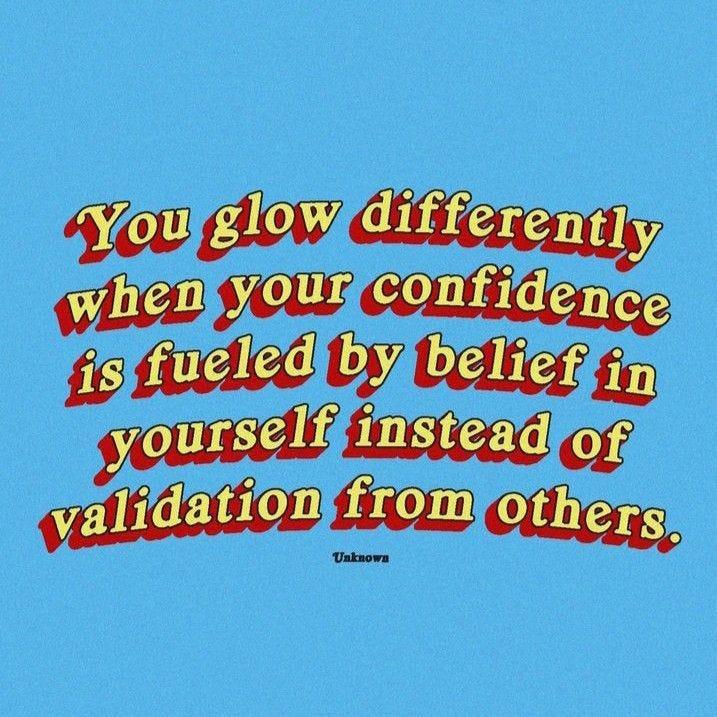
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**Thought # 2: I am constantly aware of how I am being perceived and I fear that I will never know how I am actually being perceived.**

I live a lot of my life as if I have an audience. I think about my appearance and my work performance constantly. Do I look like I am working hard? What do people think of my work? Is it crap? Is it exceptional? What if it’s just short of exceptional? What if it’s totally average? What if I am totally average? What if I am a rising star?

For work this week, I hosted a webinar/talk-style event that had about 30 attendees, the bulk of whom were strangers to me. If people were looking at anyone, they were looking at me and our guest speaker for a full 50 minutes. For those 50 minutes, I had my “bubbly-yet-professional” facade locked into place. I think that I was perceived as kind, funny, respectful, and sometimes even knowledgeable. What I perceived about myself was my stuttering and the fact that my mic was turned on the whole time, so everyone could hear my murmurs of ascent. I said the same phrase so much that now, I never want to say “that makes sense” again. When I got off the call, my boss texted me and congratulated me on a job well done.

Maybe this is what it means to be human or maybe this is just what it is like inside my head. How does one wrap their head around these two experiences of reality?



**Thought #3: If we are supposed to rest, why does it feel like breaking the rules?**

How many times have I been advised to slow down or take it easy and get some rest this weekend? How many articles have I read citing the research proving that stepping away from your work makes you more productive and going for a walk or getting fresh air will make you feel better?

In my mind, I love the idea of winter being a slow season filled with naps and slow days spent reading and puzzling. It snowed where I am this week and Wednesday was a surprise WFH day for me. My victory for the day? Going on a walk in the snow when I got too overwhelmed with work to think clearly.

Why does stepping away from my computer and my work tasks feel like breaking the rules? I know that I should do it and that not only will it serve my personal well-being but my productivity at work as well. Why, when I stepped away from my computer today, did I need to reassure myself that everything that I am doing can wait a bit?

I think that the answer might be capitalism and the fear of being a bad cog in the machine. The answer might also be my intrinsic need for perfection and recognition. Perhaps it is about proving myself to those around me that I am worthy of the place that I hold. Likely, it is all of those things.

Do I push back, or do I let myself be a good cog?

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I would be curious to hear if my thoughts sparked any thoughts in your minds. Email me back!

All my best,

Zoe



artist unknown

P.S. Now that we are on Substack, there are a couple of new features I wanted to share with you. (1) You can like and comment on my notes! (2) All of my archived posts can now be found [here](https://femmefuturescooperative.substack.com/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=profile_page), and (3) I am playing around with moving from Discord to Substack and adding some bonus content.