

Zoom Fatigue is Real: Why Introverts Find Video Calls Hard | TIS Ep. 34



@THEINTROVERTSISTERS

WWW.THEINTROVERTSISTERS.COM



Speaker 1: Welcome to the introvert sisters, the podcast by introverts for introverts, hosted by Sharon and Lisa two INFJs with a lot to see,

Speaker 2: Hi, I'm Sharon and at Lisa and together we're the introvert sisters welcome back to our podcast.

Speaker 3: It's a pity. We're not doing this on with video. If people could only see how delighted we are to actually be recording together in the same space, even though we're still going to do our introverts uniting separately. Yes we are. We are, because coming back by the time

Speaker 2: Goes out, we will once again be in different countries. Yep, yep. Yep. You know, and so what, what what's going on, what's going on

Speaker 3: nothing much, you know, just kind of, seeing where the world is at seeing where the world is at right now. I did have an exciting, moment where I actually got paid, for some of my anti-racism writings. So that was very exciting. Awesome. Says it feels good. Doesn't it It's very encouraging. It's interesting because, you know, as I write, I don't know if it's like this for you as I write, I just write because I want to, you know, something inspires me and I feel like I need to, channel process communicate about it. And so I do it for me and whoever else wants to read without any thought of income, but income is always welcome. Always welcome.

Speaker 2: This is kind of how it started for me because I started writing because I couldn't be silent. Yeah. And then people started responding. And so I guess now I'm more in a phase where I'm thinking there's still a big part of me that responds to what is going on, but there's also a part of me that thinks about, well, here are some of the issues that we actually need to be talking about. Let me see, do I have any thoughts on this worth sharing And so some of my pieces come out of that. Right. But as you say, even, so I remember quite clearly towards the back end of last year when I got my first, anti-racism writing commission and how good that felt. So I, you know, hearty, congratulations. I'm so proud of you. I'm more and more and more, more, more,

Speaker 3: More than both of us. Yeah. It's very, it's very, very fulfilling, very fulfilling. The work itself is fulfilling. It is, it is. The recognition is also fulfilling.

Speaker 2: Yes. And the money in your bank account is just,

Speaker 3: Just fulfilling. So I had said in an early episode that one of the catch words for this year is grace. The other word is fulfillment and abundance.

Speaker 2: Well, my, my, my, my motto for 2020 was everybody gets paid and I'm carrying that through into 2021. I'm carrying that

Speaker 3: The little black creators. Oh yeah.

Speaker 2: I'm carrying that energy into 2021. Yeah.

Speaker 3: You've always been good with that though. I have to say, you know, it's like, you, you, you are just, you're just consistent with that kind of thing. Even when it's, you know, it's on a small scale or it's just me and a couple of people that, you know, any opportunity you have to sort of share whatever little you have, you know, if you will, if you have \$10 and it's not, you know, taken out of your family's pocket, you know, somebody else is going to get three or two or five and you've always been that way. Yes, yes, yes. Thank you, sir. I used her as amazing. I,

Speaker 2: No, I feel strongly about that. I feel strongly about not asking people to do unpaid labor and when that unpaid labor is also emotional, emotional labor and not just physical labor, I think it's even more important. And as we know, black communities in many, many countries have been going through some stuff. We don't need to recap it all now. Yeah.

Speaker 3: But all our episodes to everyone. But when you'll see, when we're tired,

Speaker 2: We've been going through some stuff. And I think the minimum that people can do is compensate those who are educating them for that educating for that knowledge, for that sharing, you know So yes, no more unpaid labor, no more unpaid labor. Yeah, exactly. But anyway, yes.

Speaker 3: Speaking of labor, you know, and I, you know, we're both, we're both grateful to have paid labor. Yes. We are. Indeed both have jobs. And, you know, as I always say it always, it wasn't, it hasn't always been that way. So that helps that, that, that helps. And so, but you know, this is a, well, this is basically we're calling it 2021, but I think it's just like an extended 2020, really. It feels a bit like that. Sometimes 10 to 2020 still. And so, yeah,

Speaker 2: One of the big things that happened in 2020 of course, is that everybody discovered zoom right now. I've been using zoom before for occasional meetings. And that was fine. But of course, because of the pandemic, it's like everything had to be on zoom, zoom,

Speaker 3: Slack T not Slack, well Slack, cause I've been doing, I've done Slack calls as well. Zoom, Slack, Microsoft teams, all of those. Yeah. There's a low meat Googled me. There's a plethora. Yes. We're tired. We're tired of zoom. It's just, it's just zoom. Zoom. Fatigue is real. We have touched on this topic of zoom fatigue before we have, but you know, as we go in for the end of the, you know, the sequel of 2020, it's just becoming more and more obvious that, you know, it's not going away. It isn't going away. Zoom, zoom, and the work from home lifestyle aren't going away. And yes, there are lots of positives to it, but you know, sometimes you have to speak about the downside of something.

Speaker 2: Yes. And you know, as introverts, you might think that, okay, we'll be better off because we're sitting at home attending a zoom meeting rather than in a physical meeting space. But in fact, that's not the case at all. You still have a lot of that emotional pressure. Yeah. That goes along with face-to-face meetings,

Speaker 3: Except except somehow it seems to be exaggerated and exacerbated somehow. you have to make more of an effort to appear friendly and switched on. I think that's one of the biggest reasons behind zoom fatigue. right, right. SIS, it's just like, you don't have to do so much performing. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yes. You have to be, you have to be kind of more you and because you're operating in that small square, you have to, you have to, you kind of have to overdo it so people will understand what you're feeling and thinking

Speaker 3: As I back in the day, performing in a theater, you know, you have to project to the people in the back of the room. That's how it feels.

Speaker 2: The amount of projection I think, is really hard for an introvert because you know, it would be very easy for us many times to just sit there and say nothing, camera off microphone off, you know, lending an air, but that's not, that's not where we are. You know, some places have cultures where the camera has to be on. And of course, depending on probably less so for me as a freelancer, but even so I would say that I now have three or four times the number of zoom meetings that I had before.

Speaker 3: Oh my gosh. How many, how many do you think you have on average per week or per day or

Speaker 2: Varies, but just adjust, to give an example in the coming week, I already know that I have three on one day, right. And I don't know what else is happening during the week. I haven't yet organized anything else. So, you know, I could end up with five meetings, which does not sound a lot for somebody that's in an office where you have constant meetings, but for somebody that used to have maybe one meeting a week to when you start getting into five and six, I had one week last year where I had more than one meeting every day. And you know, for me, if I'm, if I'm meeting, I'm not writing. So that affects my productivity. And also it affects my state of mind because, because I do feel tired after that constant effort to be on.

Speaker 3: Yes. And because it's sort of, there's science behind this and, you know, we can drop some links in the show notes, but there is science behind how the brain responds and reacts to this kind of interaction. And basically like the tires, your feeling is, is real tiredness. Yes. Right. The brain can't actually process all these different kinds of activity at the same time. And it takes more of an effort. So that's why you feel additionally tired. You're not just in a room sitting in a chair, possibly slightly checked out, depending on how active you have to be. But, but yeah, but even if you are active, it's, it's different because you're sort of in the room. This is another thing that, that, that takes a lot of energy and makes you exhausted is that the natural cadence of communication and conversation, is, is, is, is changed. And so you don't have those cues. You don't have those cues and you know, you're not literally in the room, your brain is working to compensate for that.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Brain is working harder to try and substitute for the cues that you normally

Speaker 3: Right. It's like a computer, sorry for talking over you. I apologize. It's like a computer searching for information that would ordinarily be there, but it's not there. Yes, yes,

Speaker 2: Yes. And then, you know, there's, there's the steering. Yes. There's a steering because you have to, you have to pay attention to the screen in a way that you would not, if you were face-to-face with someone and you stared at them like that, it would be weird. It would be creepy. It would be creepy but aggressive, but that's what you need to do when you're on a zoom call just to look like if you're paying attention. Exactly. And you know, for some people, I know people that work in academia and they could have like six hours, zoom calls, all hands meetings, you know, that sounds like, hell exactly. And so, so they're not getting a break or they, you know, they have a three hour call and they have a break and they go into another three hour call. That's really not natural. No. You know And so,

Speaker 3: so I think that, natural breaks would be a way to sort of mitigate against the fatigue, but you're not always the person that's in charge of getting the break or, you know, of deciding whether or not there can be a break.

Speaker 2: Another, another thing about zoom calls is constantly trying to find a place where you won't hear about grow noise, something, which if you were paying attention, you will have realized we have failed to do yes.

Speaker 3: So the Calypso ice cream truck made an appearance. Oh boy. Yeah. You have to also pay attention to your background noise and, and your background, your background period. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yes. And if you are a person of a darker hue, you may find that the green screen virtual backgrounds don't work as well for you.

Speaker 3: I had not heard that. Yes. Racism,

Speaker 2: Roy racism on a zoom call racist. I like,

Speaker 3: We always say, by the way, racism is everywhere, but that's not what this episode is.

Speaker 2: Well, this episode is about, but it's true. Something, something about the way their program, you know, means that it doesn't work. So now, for example, if you're using meet, you can blur your background very easily and it works. But in zoom itself, not green screen put in your virtual background, it always looks a bit weird. And for me, certainly, I just don't find that it works for me at all.

Speaker 4: Interesting.

Speaker 3: You know, I'm going to have to do more research on that.

Speaker 2: So that is a, that is another, can be another cause of stress. If you can't find a space where you want the background to be seen. Yeah. You know Okay. So then we were talking about, the flow of conversation, which, you know, as we say is, is it's pretty unnatural. Really.

Speaker 3: It is a natural and actually you and I have experienced it even, w what do we use, zoom, the zoom that we use. And so we talk over each other. Unfortunately we talk over each other a lot, not intentionally, but because it, you know, even for us, and we've known each other, obviously for decades, decades, for decades, I know each other's conversational rhythms very well. And even for us, it's hard to tell when the other person is ready to speak already to pause or whatever. And so just imagine, you know, a screen full of strangers, and you're trying to assess all that information and assess conversational flow, and you just can't do it.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly. And then there's the ever-present you're on mute because

Speaker 3: We we've all, we've all either said it or been that person.

Speaker 2: Yes. You know, it's just, and, and sometimes, you know, the technology doesn't work sometimes

Speaker 3: Conversational, lag, there's wifi not working. Yes. People drop off, drop off the calls entirely. Then if you, again, if you're not the leader of the meeting, sometimes you're not sure, you know, are we staying on while they, what is the etiquette What is the pressure The social pressure, the social pressure is real. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yes. And of course, if you are the leader of the meeting and your wife, I happens to go off and you drop out of the meeting and end it for everybody. Then there's the impact

Speaker 3: That as well. Oh, yes. Never feels good. Yeah.

Speaker 2: You know, so there is a, there's a lot, there's a lot going on when it comes to, you know, zoom calls that is hard. And then

Speaker 3: I think as well, because, you know, again, this is where we are in the world. And so it's not just work related meetings that are taking place on zoom. You know, everything is, everything is on zoom, which I know we touched on briefly at some point in our previous season, but it's everything from, you know, celebrations, to, you know, group, group meetings, group, social group meetings. I know your fitness group meets, right. We have a, a meditation group that meets associations

Speaker 2: Of different canes, you know, and, and friends who want to catch up. Right. So, so as I say, you know, all of a sudden you're doing a bunch of zoom calls,

Speaker 3: Right. So you're done, you might be done for example, with your, with your work zooms. And then here comes, you know, five 30, six, seven o'clock at night. I do have a whole nother, you have three, four more zoom set up

Speaker 2: And it's, it's exhausting. It's mentally exhausting, as we've said, so

Speaker 3: Know I need dinner. Can I go, I got

Speaker 2: A break. It can be difficult to, to wrap your mind around having to do another zoom call. And, you know, it's, it's funny because individually you might want to participate in all these things or talk to these people. But if you have had a day where you have had work meetings up to a certain point, and then there's an evening meeting as well. And then some, you know, it's just like, it's too much, because remember as introverts, we need some time to decompress and often back-to-back zoom meetings don't allow us that time. Yeah. And so it's, it's hard.

Speaker 3: This is how people get themselves in trouble though. Can I just see, because you know, people, sometimes, you know, we won't go into detail. People end up in embarrassing zoom situations because yeah. You might literally not have a chance to take a bio break in between. Exactly. And so, you know, you try to do whatever you can do whatever. I mean, and you know, if everything is a muted and you forgot to turn off your camera, it can go horribly wrong, go horribly, horribly. But part of that is, you know, you know, it's understandable because sometimes you literally have zero break. There's no time to do anything. There's no time for the rest of your life, the rest of the people in your life, regular, functions for, for, you know, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. There's just no time. No. You know, and, and, and we need that, you know, we're human beings. And so I think that there's a move towards, reminding people in general and employees, employers in particular and meeting schedulers to try where possible to actually scheduling a break. Exactly. Right. You know, really, really actually look at people's calendars and try where possible, just scheduling a break, or, or not, not, scheduled back to back

Speaker 2: And bearing in mind where we are now. It would be really good to recognize that with everything on zoom, these work meetings are not the only things people are going to be doing. And therefore, try to try to take that into account when you're working on when to shed your particular things. Yes. Yes. I think that'd be really helpful.

Speaker 3: That'd be very, very helpful, you know, and, keep the meeting short, keep the meeting short meeting short, you know, I mean, you mentioned just Noah, you know, a six hour, six hour or eight hour conference zoom meeting. And that, that just like gives me hives, just thinking that

Speaker 2: The way that I have my booking calendar set up.

Speaker 3: Yes. You're very gangsta booking calendar have, but

Speaker 2: I have a 20 minute meet and greet. I have a 30 minute meeting for people that feel longer or feel they need a little bit longer. Right. And although it doesn't appear on my calendar, I have the option to do a one hour meeting. But, you know, that has to be, we have had to have, have a discussion beforehand to say, I think I'm going to need more than half an hour. And then I will send you privately that link that does not appear as an option as an option. That is not an option. I love it. Okay. And I generally book meetings on two days a week, currently, Tuesdays and Thursdays, that may change.

Speaker 3: I am, again, like I said before, I'm in awe of that. Of course, you set up boundaries, you have to, you do,

Speaker 2: You do. And you know, as if I'm zooming, I'm not writing. And I am writing is how I earn a living. So I do need to limit the number of meetings of any kind that I attend.

Speaker 3: Yeah. I, that's another thing that I've found really, affects me, I guess, other people, it affects other people as well as that. It really SAPs my creativity, to be honest.

Speaker 2: Yes. I'm glad you said that because that's just what I was thinking. Timing is everything I tend to try and make my zoom meetings mid to late morning, early afternoon, after I've had a couple of hours to do my most creative work. Right. It doesn't always work out that way. But yeah, if I have been in a meeting at nine o'clock in the morning and I have back-to-back meetings between nine and 12, I'm not going to write anything worth reading that day. No,

Speaker 3: I already know this. Yeah. Like I can literally feel my brain turning to mush, turning to mush and being fatigued. You know, it's not going to happen. I can do editing stuff. Yes. I can do, you know, light, non, non brain intensive or not very creative work, but anything that is, that requires a lot of creativity or strategic thought or planning not going to happen. Yes. Or, or if you do it, I mean, obviously, you know, you're adults, you do what you, what you have to do, but, you know, at some point you have to pay the Piper at some point, you're either, you know, you're going to crash or, you know, you're, you're taking you using time from something else in your life and applying it towards zoom as a what's happening to that. Other thing, that thing is being left behind and not paid attention to exactly. Right. So,

Speaker 2: And of course the final, the final reason for zoom fatigue, I think is that it's a constant reminder of how much the world has changed.

Speaker 3: Yes. Yes. It's like every time, you know, a zoom meeting is thankfully wrapping up and, you know, everybody sort of does that awkward end of meeting wave. You know, when you think about it, have you ever in your life walked out of a meeting room and said, okay, bye. And waved to the participants. It will never happen. It wouldn't, it's just a reminder of the weirdness and of how much the world has changed. Right. Has changed the world

Speaker 2: Has changed and that we're not out of getting out of this anytime soon. No.

Speaker 3: Yeah. And so that is just, it's sort of, it's almost like a S a semi PTSD kind of reminder thing that yeah. Your, your life is not the same. It's, it's weird, it's stressful. And it's going to be this way for a while, so get used to it, but then, but then let your cat

Speaker 2: Exactly, exactly much as I, you know, much as I've always considered zoom a useful tool. And it is, it is a useful tool. I mean, we use it for our podcasts.

Speaker 3: Well, we could, we would not be as far ahead with our podcast as we are. We're not for zoom.

Speaker 2: You know, we also have to recognize the, the mental and emotional toll that can sometimes take. Yeah. Right. And, you know, I guess we need to limit our interactions where we can, if we are in a position to do

Speaker 3: Yes. As introverts, we need to do that generally. Yes. but I, and of course, all of the negative effects of what we're talking about, zoom, zoom, fatigue probably affect introverts even more than the general populace, I would imagine. But it really, it applies to everyone take breaks, set limits, set boundaries, as much as you possibly can. you know, and stay off zoom if you can.

Speaker 2: Yeah. I mean, you know, we're going to be, we're going to be in this situation for a while, so you need to do what you can to look after you

Speaker 3: Yourself. Yeah. It's, it's rarely about, mental health care and self care actually, and learning. Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah. So with that,

Speaker 3: No, we're going to get over this call cause I'm keeping it short

Speaker 2: And keep it short. And you will have noticed that there is no video because we are practicing what we preach. Yes. And so we did not do a zoom call today, not

Speaker 3: As called cohesive messaging

Speaker 2: Messaging. Right. Well, thank you so much for listening. We'll catch you on the next episode. You have been listening to the introvert sisters. We're happy you're here. Bye. Bye.

Speaker 1: You've been listening to the introvert sisters loved what you heard. You can catch all our episodes on Apple podcasts, Spotify, SoundCloud, and all other major platforms, subscribe, rate, and write a review. Find us online @ [theintrovertsisters.com](https://www.theintrovertsisters.com). follow us on Instagram and Facebook at the introvert sisters. See you next time. Peace.