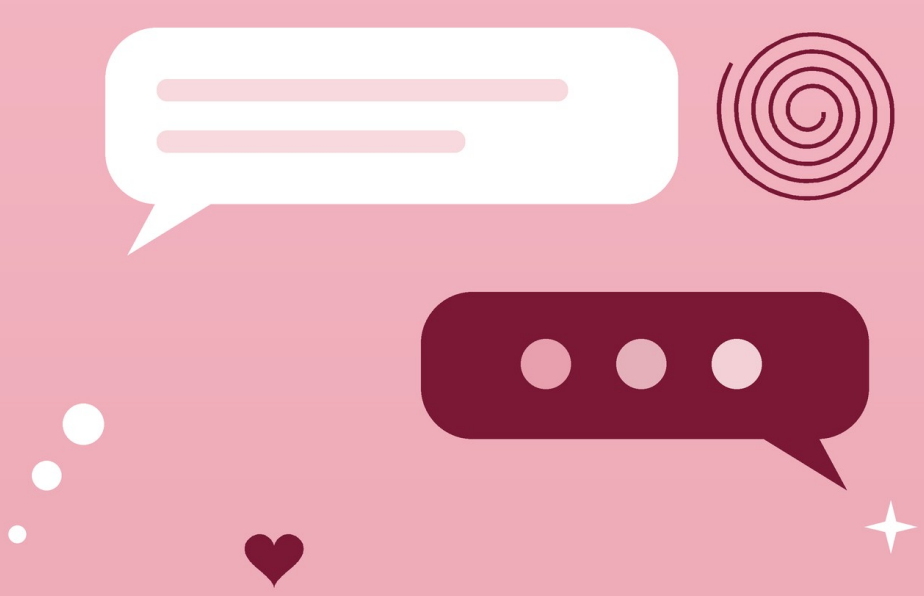
LOVE ADVICE FOR WOMEN



Overthinking the Text

A 7-Day Guided Journal

GUIDED JOURNAL

@loveadviceforwomen

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Hello, Fellow Overthinker

We have all analyzed a period at the end of a sentence as if it were a verdict. We have all reread a message ten times, screenshotted it for a friend, and drafted six replies before sending none of them.

This journal will not tell you to stop caring, or to be cooler. It will help you slow the spiral down, sort what is real from what is imagined, and decide what you actually need.

How it works

- Part 1 explains why our brains do this, in plain language.
- Part 2 is the Text Decoder, a worksheet you can use every time you spiral.
- Part 3 is a 7-day guided journal, about 10 minutes a day.
- Part 4 is your Calm Toolkit for the moment you are mid-spiral.

Overthinking Confessions

You are not alone. Here are a few that might sound familiar.

- ☐ I have waited to reply so I would not seem too eager.
- ☐ I have zoomed in on a screenshot to look for hidden meaning.
- ☐ I have read "k" as a declaration of war.
- ☐ I have checked whether he was online, then decided what that meant.
- ☐ I have written an entire imaginary argument in the shower.
- ☐ I have asked three friends what "haha" really means.
- ☐ I have decided we were doomed because he took four hours to reply.

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Part 1: Why We Do This

When someone matters to us and a message is unclear, our brains treat the gap as a threat. So they fill it, usually with the worst-case explanation, because the brain is wired to prepare for danger rather than to be accurate.

Three things worth knowing

1. Ambiguity feels unbearable. Your mind rushes to close the gap, and a bad answer feels better than no answer.
2. Text strips out tone, face and voice. We supply them ourselves, and we tend to supply the ones we fear.
3. Overthinking feels like being productive. It feels like problem-solving. It is usually just rehearsing anxiety.

> **The key idea:** Most texts are far less meaningful than they feel. People are busy, distracted, tired and bad at texting. Absence of information is not the same as a bad sign.

The 3 Questions

When you feel a spiral starting, stop and ask these three, in order.

Question	Why it helps
1. What do I actually know?	Separates facts from the story your mind added.
2. What are three other explanations?	Breaks the spell of the single worst-case reading.
3. What do I need, and can I ask for it?	Turns anxious energy into a clear, direct request.

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Part 2: The Text Decoder

Copy this page (or print several) and fill it in whenever you catch yourself spiraling. It takes five minutes and it works.

What he sent or did

Word for word. No interpreting yet.

The story I made up

What did my mind decide this meant?

The facts

What do I know for certain?

Three other explanations

Ordinary, boring, non-personal ones.

How I feel

Name the emotion honestly.

What I actually need

Reassurance? Clarity? Space? Time?

My next step

Reply, ask, wait, or let it go. Pick one.

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Part 3: Your 7-Day Journal

Ten minutes a day. Write by hand if you can. Answer honestly and do not edit yourself. There is no correct answer.

Day 1: The Story I Told Myself

Think of the last message you overanalyzed. What did you decide it meant?

What are the facts, only what was actually written or said?

Day 2: The Three Dots

When you saw him typing, then stop, what did you imagine he was thinking?

What are three other, boring explanations for what happened?

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Day 3: The Period at the End

Which tiny detail (punctuation, an emoji, a reply time) did you treat like a verdict?

If a friend sent you that same message, would you read it the same way?

Day 4: What I Was Really Asking

Under the question "what did he mean?", what did you actually want to know?

Can I ask him that directly? What would I say?

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Day 5: Why It Bothered Me So Much

Before asking "why did he do that", ask "why did that bother me this much". What did it touch?

Is this reaction about him, about the past, or both?

Day 6: What I Need

What would make me feel secure with him right now, in concrete terms?

Is it reasonable to ask for? Who will I ask, and when?

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Day 7: What I Am Letting Go Of

Which spiral am I ready to stop replaying?

What will I do the next time I catch myself starting one?

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Part 4: Your Calm Toolkit

For the moment you are actually mid-spiral, when journaling feels like too much.

The 24-Hour Rule

Do not send a long, emotional message you write while anxious. Write it, save it as a draft, and reread it tomorrow. If you still need to say it, say it calmly.

Five Quick Resets

1. Put your phone in another room for 20 minutes.
2. Take five slow breaths, longer out than in.
3. Walk around the block without your phone.
4. Text a friend about anything other than him.
5. Do one small, physical task: dishes, a shower, tidying a shelf.

Things To Say To Yourself

> *"I do not have to solve this in the next ten minutes."*
> *"Silence is not a verdict."*
> *"If it matters, I can ask. If it does not, I can let it go."*
> *"My worth does not depend on how fast he replies."*

> **A gentle note.** Everyday overthinking is normal. If anxious thoughts are constant, or are affecting your sleep, work or wellbeing, please consider talking with a therapist or counselor. This journal is a self-help tool, not a substitute for professional support.

You got through the spiral. Follow @loveadviceforwomen for more, and share this with a friend who overthinks.

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