

even movie stars have to deal with anxiety

Came across [this piece](#) recently in the *Hollywood Reporter*, in which the remarkable Chloe Grace Moretz is profiled. She's had a big year: she starred in [The Miseducation of Cameron Post](#), which won the Grand Jury prize at Sundance, and also in the much anticipated [remake of Suspiria](#). She is a truly gifted actor; if you've never seen [Let Me In](#), the British remake of [Let the Right One In](#), do yourself a favor.

Anyway, one of the things I liked in the profile was her discussion of coping with anxiety:

Do you still struggle with anxiety?

Meditation has really, really helped me, and just getting on a workout schedule. Working out is something that really helps with my anxiety. But I know that the minute I fall off of that, for sure.

But I think as a woman, it's very difficult to deal with the hormonal fluxes that we deal with monthly. I deal with so much anxiety hormonally from my cycle. Your cycle doesn't know when you are going to be on the red carpet for a gala. So partner that with a lack of sleep and jet lag, and it's like a total spiral.

So for me, I just make an effort to make sure that I give myself 30 minutes a day to walk away. That just means shutting a bathroom door and just standing there for a second and focusing on my breathing, and focusing on my brain, and reconnecting to my heart and understanding who I am. That gets rid of the anxiety for me. But I think that, yeah, as an adult, it's never not going to be a struggle. There's so much societal influx around you, and there are so many people who need something from you.

Performing is a kind of test: we want to be found to be a good actor when we're done. In that sense, our identity as an actor is at stake every time we do it. This produced anxiety in many of us, and we each have to go on our own journey in learning to contend with that anxiety. A former student and working actor I know created a whole regimen that she does before every audition to help her with her anxiety, a regimen that involves yoga, eating bananas (for the tryptophan), and even medication.

What I liked about Moretz's comments is that they remind us that success doesn't mean the end of anxiety. In fact, it can often exacerbate it: if I screw up now, everything I've worked so hard to achieve will be taken away. So finding out how to face down the demon of anxiety is something that most of us performers will have to contend with our whole lives long. It's not something that we graduate from. I remember hearing a story about Josh Brolin and George Clooney making plans to get together at Clooney's house to work on the Coen Brothers movie *Hail, Caesar!* together. Brolin, so the story goes, drove to Clooney's house, parked in his car, and then sat in the car for an hour trying to muster the courage to go in. When he finally did, he confessed his anxiety to Clooney, saying "I'm scared to work with you. You're George Clooney." To which Clooney replied, "I'm scared to work with you. You're Josh Brolin."

Moretz's open discussion of her struggles with anxiety is generous in that it makes room for the rest of us to feel ok about having similar struggles. If someone with her talent and skill still feels scared, then it's no wonder that we sometimes do as well.