

GETTING OVER
ANXIETY



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Introduction



Are you constantly afraid, worried, or perhaps nervous? Do you have trouble sleeping, or always feel tired and panicky? Do you often wonder why you can't stop worrying and why you're still fearful? Do you wish you could overcome these issues so you can start living the life you want?

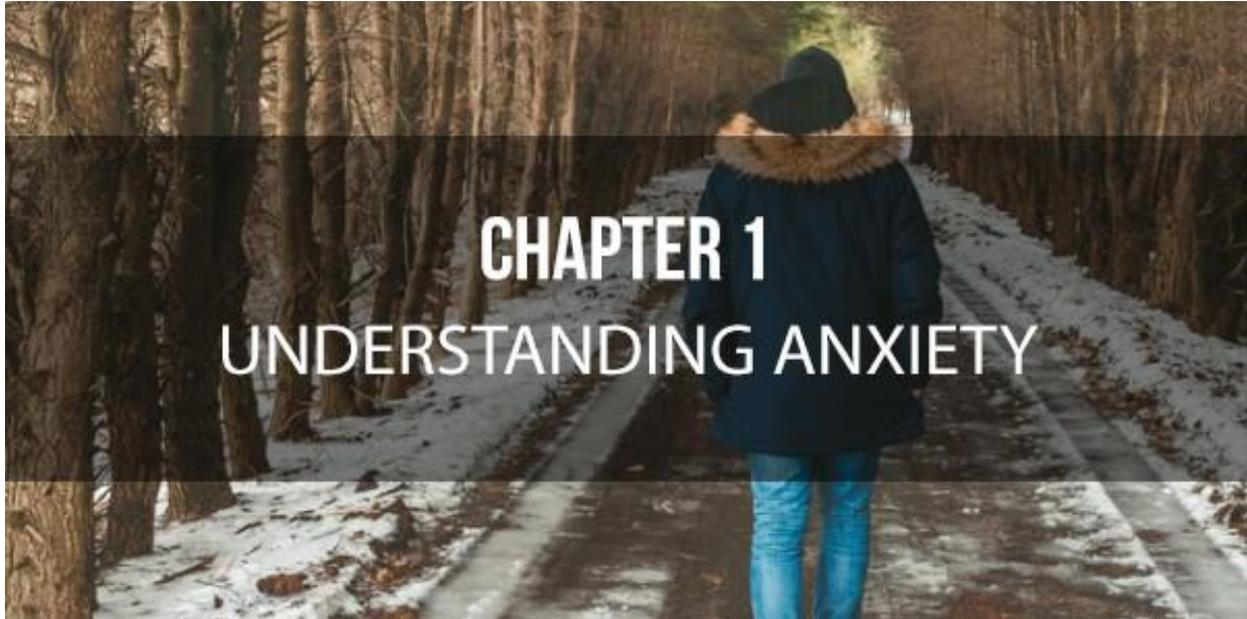
These types of feelings and emotions are often diagnosed as anxiety. These feelings of worry and fear are a normal reaction of the brain that is a result of many factors that are causing an imbalance or challenge to our daily routine. Everyone deals with moments in their life when they feel like the world is about to fall apart on us. During these moments, it can be difficult to describe the feelings of tension, helplessness, and anxiety that is running rampant through our minds. We feel that we would be ecstatic if

we could simply disappear and emerge when stressful situations in our lives have passed.

While this is a completely normal reaction to stressful situations, there are times when these emotions and thoughts become so common that they start to have a major impact on our lives. When this happens, you have crossed the line from normal into abnormal. If your feelings of fear become so frequent a debilitating that you have difficulties performing even the most basic of physical activities, then it is a much more serious problem that needs to be addressed. Many people experience this condition, known as an anxiety disorder. Generally speaking, if our reactions to certain situations are much more grandiose than the response of others, then you might be suffering from an anxiety disorder.

Fortunately, if you are suffering from an anxiety disorder, there is hope that you can be successfully treated and start to live a normal life once again. An experience that is free of constant fear, worry, and anxiety. By making some simple changes in your lifestyle and daily routine, you can start to overcome your anxiety and finally be free of the debilitating effects of the condition.

Chapter 1 – Understanding Anxiety



It is a normal reaction for your brain to send alarming signals to your body when it detects danger, leaving your body to react accordingly to that danger. To understand this a bit better, let's define stress and anxiety. While many believe that stress and anxiety are the same, contrary to that belief, however, stress and anxiety have several differences.

Defining Anxiety

Anxiety is often referred to as the uneasy feeling of worry or concern that is developed when you are deeply tense about something. Feeling a bit anxious when facing major life events is normal. However, if those concerning and worrying feelings persist, even when everything is under control, and you end up

becoming affected by the smallest of changes in life, then the chances are likely that you have a serious anxiety condition.

Defining Stress

Stress is the natural feeling that arises from the pressures we experience in our day to day life. Stress signals are sent through the brain when our body and mind are pushed to the limit. When the brain detects a sign of stress, it releases adrenaline into the bloodstream. This release of adrenaline causes the body to feel stress, or weary and tired. The body reacts to this increase in adrenaline, leading to the mind's logical solution of resting.

However, if your body refuses to stop, and the adrenaline remains in your bloodstream, it can cause depression, as well as increasing your blood pressure, which can cause other negative reactions in the body. Among these negative reactions is anxiety.

Statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health has indicated that more than 40 million American adults, about 18 percent of the adult population have one form of anxiety or another. This makes anxiety disorders the most common of all mental illnesses in the United States.

The Problem with Anxiety



When you can't control yourself when you are faced with different life situations, this means that you will tend to be more hesitant about making certain decisions, or life changes, because your anxiety can block you from reaching your full potential. When this is coupled with a negative mindset, that is often associated with stress, chances of you succeeding in life are slim. When you suffer from an anxiety disorder, your self-esteem and confidence are typically pretty low since your mind is filled with so many negative thoughts about your value and your abilities.

Besides having an effect on your confidence, the constant tension that you always have because of anxiety can often cause you to suffer from severe headaches and muscle tension that worsens over time. While the negative effects of anxiety might be enough to motivate you to overcome your anxiety, knowing some of the benefits of going through the process can help you want to change.

How Anxiety Might Affect You

For some people who suffer from an anxiety disorder, the physical symptoms associated with the disease will be much worse than for others. For others, feelings of fear and doom might occur for no reason at all, leaving them feeling scared and unsafe to the point they put up walls around them in order to protect themselves.

The problem with anxiety is that the constant worrying about what might happen to lead them to feel overwhelmed by the world around them. Not only can these feelings have a detrimental effect on their ability to concentrate, but also leaving them unable to sleep or eat. Eventually, this can lead to their confidence levels diminishing and decreasing their ability to keep a positive outlook on their life.

Still, others will choose not to talk about their worries when they are suffering from an anxiety disorder because they don't believe that others will understand what they are feeling. They not only worry that they will be judged by other people, but they also fear that they will be seen as weak.

Even though many people suffer from different forms of anxiety disorders, many will choose not to let others in on their secret because they feel like they will be misunderstood. There are certain cases where the sufferer from an anxiety disorder will blame themselves for the way they feel even though it is a natural part of life and helps to protect us from real danger.

The good news is that there has been a great deal of research carried out, and is still being carried out, into the different anxiety disorders. As a result, more medical professionals have a better understanding of anxiety disorders than they previously had, which allows them to treat the disease and help those who suffer from anxiety disorders cope better. While there are no cures for these kinds of disorders currently, the available treatments can help you feel better and teach you how to handle your anxiety disorder better.

Chapter 2 – Determining Your Type of Anxiety



Before you can begin to deal with your anxiety effectively, you will need to ensure that you have a good grasp of what you are up against. As opposed to mild anxiety that just about everyone experiences from time to time during their life, an anxiety disorder comes in various kinds.

General Anxiety Disorder

People, who experience general anxiety disorder, or GAD, are characterized by experiencing long lasting worry and fear over many things, which can be career, money, family, or even school. Their feelings become unrealistic, which can affect their performance in their daily endeavors. The problem with people

having GAD is their inability to point out the specific fear and the problem in controlling their worry.

Generalized anxiety disorder affects about three percent of the US population, and nearly half of those who suffer from GAD are women. Those who suffer from GAD commonly complain about being in a constant state of worry over things like finances, relationships, employment, and health. While this can be said about most folks from time to time, those with GAD feel anxiety regarding a specific situation far more strongly than the situation warrants.

The symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder are the same as common anxiety, except they are more chronic and severe. They include excessive and ongoing worrying, headaches, irritability, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, a feeling of being on edge, fatigue, sweating, trouble sleeping, nausea, upset stomach, and a sense of constant and impending doom.

Panic Disorder

A panic disorder is characterized by panic attacks. A panic attack is described as the sudden feeling of fear and rush to get away from something, scrambling to get to the nearest exit. It is the overwhelming feeling of anticipation that something bad is going

to happen. Panic attacks arise suddenly and peak to a panic level in a matter of minutes and can last for hours.

Panic attacks typically manifest as sudden periods of intense fear that can include trembling, shaking, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, hot flashes, a difficulty drawing breath, chills, a fear of losing control, numbness, tingling, a sudden extreme fear of death, and impending doom. These feelings are much more intense than those that are often associated with more traditional expressions of anxiety. During a panic attack, these symptoms can become so severe that those suffering from panic attacks might be paralyzed during the entirety of the attack.

One of the most significant differences between an anxiety attack and a panic attack is that an anxiety attack often takes place after experiencing a stressor, while a panic attack can materialize without a clear stressor around to trigger it. If you suffer from panic attack disorder, you may find yourself avoiding certain places, people, and situations over fears they might trigger a panic attack. There is no known cause of panic disorder, but it often runs in families, though it is unclear if this is due to genetic or environmental factors.

Social Anxiety Disorder

This kind of anxiety disorder is characterized by people who avoid socializing with a group, as they fear being judged negatively or embarrassed publicly. This type of fear includes people who experience stage frights, fear of displaying affection, and fear of humiliation. Individuals with a social anxiety disorder are known to experience extreme anxiety symptoms when they find themselves in situations where they are forced to interact with others in a social capacity. If they are unable to avoid a specific type of social function, they may begin to experience extreme physical symptoms like an increased heart rate, nausea, dizziness, and sweating.

To be diagnosed with a social anxiety disorder, a person must experience these kinds of symptoms a majority of the time for at least six months, and the symptoms must be strong enough to impede their daily lives. If the thought of asking a stranger out or giving a presentation at work is enough to get your heart racing, then you might be suffering from social anxiety disorder. There are approximately 15 million American adults that suffer from social anxiety disorder, and the average onset for the condition is during the teenage years.

Phobias

A phobia is defined as having an irrational feeling of fear of something or a situation believing that it may cause harm. People who have a phobia try their best to avoid specific objects or situations to prevent panic attacks triggered by these irrational fears. When a fear has been triggered, the resulting anxiety can become uncontrollable.

To be diagnosed with a phobia, the excessive and persistent fear of an otherwise innocuous object or situation must last at least six months and be severe enough that avoiding the situation or object has a negative impact on your day to day life. For example, not wanting to fall off the top of a mountain is perfectly normal, but if the thought of being in a high place is enough to get your heart racing, finding yourself on the top floor of a tall building can leave you paralyzed.

Around eight to ten percent of the western world suffer from specific phobias, though only about three percent of those are in Asia and India. A phobia can come into existence in a person as a direct experience with an object or place that went horribly wrong. It could also be a result of seeing someone else experience something traumatic. These kinds of fears typically manifest between the ages of 10 and 17.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or OCD, is characterized by the mere thoughts or actions that are distressing and repetitive.

People who suffer from OCD know that their compulsive reactions are irrational, but they can't stop the feeling, and so they act to satisfy their anxiety. They try to justify the reasons behind their actions with superstitious feelings of insecurity. People who suffer from OCD usually walk in the same pattern, obsessively clean their personal items, are conscious of dust and dirt to the effect of constantly washing the objects, or the constant checking of locks, gas stoves, and light switches.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



Post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, is an anxiety that is usually rooted from a previous life-threatening experience. Often, it is associated with the men and women who serve in the military, but it can affect anyone who has experienced a life-threatening situation. Panic attacks usually occur when these individuals are faced with a triggering factor that makes them remember a horrifying event, making them scramble to flee or fight.

Separation Anxiety Disorder

This disorder is characterized by an intense display of panic when separated from a person, place, or thing that gives them anxiety. Separation anxiety disorder symptoms are typically seen among toddlers when they are separated from their mothers or primary caregivers.

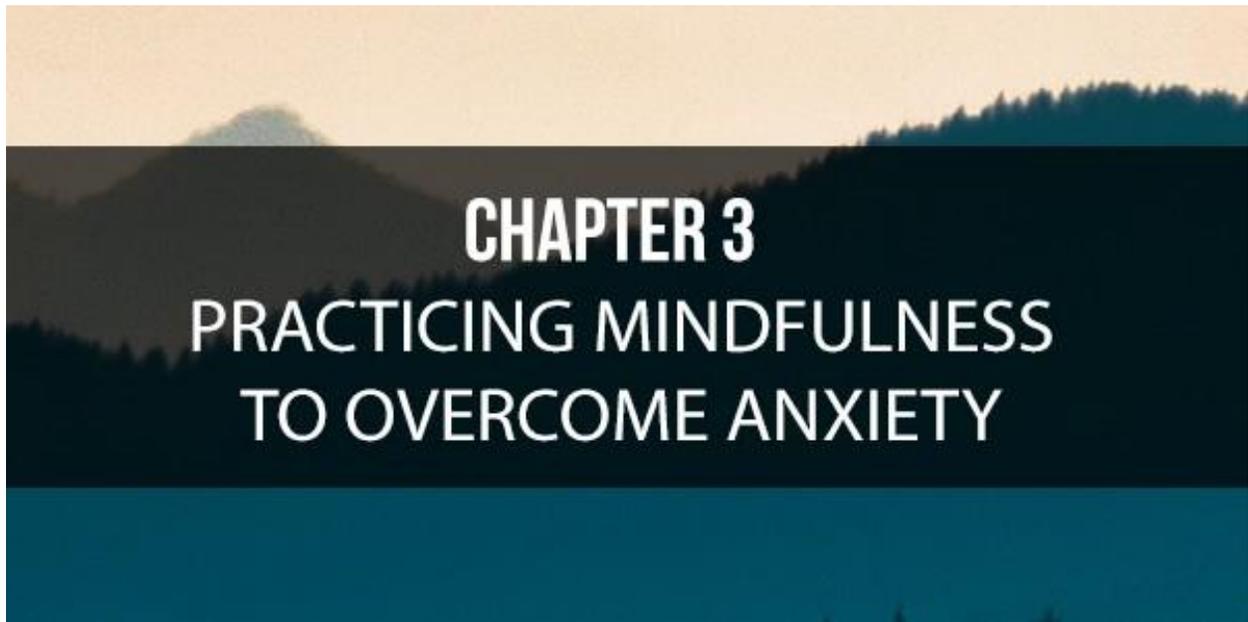
How to Tell if You Suffer from an Anxiety Disorder

The extent of anxiety's effect on an individual depends on various factors. Regardless of the severity and type of anxiety disorder, a number of symptoms are common. If you regularly exhibit any of the following symptoms, you should consult with your doctor to determine if you have an underlying anxiety disorder.

- Feelings of panic, fear, and uneasiness
- Worrying too much, especially about everyday things
- Not getting enough sleep
- Shortness of breath
- Tense muscles
- Indigestion
- Fatigue
- Being too conscious of your actions and behaviors
- Compulsive behaviors
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Cold or sweaty hands

The good news is that anxiety disorders, just like any other mental health issues, can be treated. Consulting with a doctor is the ideal first step in order to get a proper diagnosis of your condition. With a proper diagnosis, you can become clearer on the idea of what constitutes your anxiety, what triggers it, and most importantly how you can resolve the issue.

Chapter 3 – Practicing Mindfulness to Overcome Anxiety



You may be wondering, what exactly is mindfulness and how it can be used to overcome anxiety. In a nutshell, mindfulness is all about being fully awake and being fully active and present in our day-to-day lives. It is a method for approaching life on the knowledge that the present is the only time that any of us have to be alive.

The practice of mindfulness is the ability to pay conscious attention to our internal and external experiences through an open attitude that leaves unnecessary judgment aside. It is a way of directing our awareness to the present. This allows someone to make better use of their resources, insight, intuition, and creativity.

When you practice mindfulness, you learn how to observe your thoughts and feelings on a daily basis. This helps to create space between your feelings and reactions, which allows you to be able to perceive how to react reflectively over the situation rather than in an automatic, reflexive response.

Benefits of Mindfulness

The practice of mindfulness can help you cope with many different attitudes that can contribute to your ability to live a well- satisfied life. Focusing on the present makes it possible for you to worry less about what happened in the past, as well as what will happen in the future. This allows you to manage events as they occur and it will allow you to engage in activities of today, having full capacity to deal with events as they happen.

When you deal only with the events that happen today, you will find yourself less likely to worry over things or regret past actions. You will become less preoccupied with the future and make better connections with your social environment. Here are three beneficial purposes for why mindfulness works for individuals suffering from anxiety disorders.

Relieve Physical Stress and Prevent Health Issues

Mindfulness also aims to eradicate stress from your life. The world is full of stress-inducing triggers, but because mindfulness encourages you to think of the present reality, daily stress can be reduced, if not altogether relieved. Stress is one of the primary causes of several diseases like high blood pressure, obesity, and heart disease among others. When you practice mindfulness daily, you can greatly eliminate your stress. When you can eliminate your daily stress, you can significantly reduce your risk for developing many serious health issues from arising that are preventable.

Eliminates Worries

Practicing mindfulness helps you eliminate your daily worries. Worry is one of the greatest factors that can cause stress and jeopardize both your physical and mental health. However, if you practice mindfulness you can train yourself to focus on the present things and view things around you as they are and without judgment. Since you don't have to think of other things from the future or the past, there is nothing for you to worry about, so you can give your body a good rest, peace of mind, and happiness.

Eliminates Depression and Other Mental Disorders

Since mindfulness is considered to be a mental state of focus and concentration, it can help to eliminate a number of mental disorders like anxiety and depression. If you suffer from anxiety or depression, ignoring your mental state could make the condition

worse and result in even more serious conditions. However, practicing mindfulness encourages you to free your mind from worries that can lead to various mental disorders.

Chapter 4 – How to Use Breathing Techniques to Stop Anxiety



Breathing is defined as an automatic function of the body that is managed by the respiratory system and controlled by the central nervous system. Breathing can be noted as a response of the body when it is faced with stress, where there is a marked change in the breathing patterns and rates. This is a part of the body's fight or flight mechanism and is part of the body's response to stressful situations.

Humans have been given the power to control their patterns of breathing, and studies have shown that with our ability to control our breathing patterns we can manage and combat stress and other related health conditions like anxiety and depression.

Controlled breathing when used in the practice of yoga, tai chi,

and other meditation activities, is also used to reach a state of relaxation. Controlled breathing techniques can help to alleviate the following conditions:

- Anxiety disorders
- Panic attacks
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Asthma attacks
- Severe pain
- High blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Stress

The Relationship Between Stress and Breathing

The most fundamental role of breathing is to bring oxygen into the body and remove carbon dioxide from the body through the lungs. The muscles that surround the lungs, like the diaphragm, control the movement of the lungs, as well as the muscles that are found between the ribs.

A person who experiences stress changes their breathing patterns. Normally, when you are anxious, you make small, shallow breaths with the use of your shoulder muscles, rather than with the muscles in your diaphragm, in order to control the breathing behavior in the lungs. This type of breathing mechanism interrupts the balance of gases in the body. On the other hand, hyperventilation or shallow over-breathing can greatly prolong the

feeling of anxiety as it triggers the symptoms of the stress to worsen.

The Breath-Relaxation Response

If you are feeling stressed or anxious, you can relax your body by breathing slowly and gently through the nose to help even out your breathing patterns. Following the breathing pattern of a relaxed person can calm the nervous system that manages the involuntary functions of the body.

Controlled breathing can also change the physiological state of the person, which includes, reducing the blood pressure, decreasing the heart rate, lowering stress hormones, decreasing lactic acid buildup in the tissues of the muscles, and managing the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the bloodstream. Other physiological changes that can be affected when you learn how to control your breathing include increasing your physical energy and increasing feelings of calmness and wellbeing.

Sympathetic Nervous System vs. Parasympathetic Nervous System

Patterns of deep breathing, encourage the Parasympathetic Nervous System, or PNS, which is responsible for the bodily

activities when in a relaxed state or when you are at rest. On the other hand, hyperventilation encourages the opposite. The Sympathetic Nervous System, or SNS, is responsible for the physical activities that are related to the fight-or-flight response in the body when stress is detected.

You can compare these two systems in this manner; PNS is the calm sister, and SNS is the crazy, non-sympathetic sister that is always on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

When it comes to the functions of our body, the only one that we can readily control is our breathing, which is how we can heal our anxious bodies. By changing your breathing mechanism, you can help other parts of your body function normally to prevent the serious responses to stress.

Breathing Exercises to Reduce Anxiety

There are three deep breathing exercises that you can practice to help you overcome anxiety and depression. As discussed earlier, the act of hyperventilating can greatly increase and worsen the symptoms of stress and anxiety. The following breathing exercises can be used anywhere to help you reduce symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Coherent Breathing

This controlled breathing technique gets you to slow down your breaths dramatically and helps maximize the heart rate variability, or HRV, which is a function of the Parasympathetic Nervous System. The technique is simple and can be performed anywhere. Start by taking a deep breath in, while counting to five and then count to five again as you exhale. The technique has you breathing at a rate of five breaths for every minute.

Take note of how the changes in your breathing pattern affect the HRV, which is responsible for switching your nervous system from the PNS to the SNS, or the other way around. What it comes down to is the higher HRV means a healthier cardiovascular system and stronger response to stress.

Resistance Breathing

Resistance breathing, as its name implies, is breathing with a resistance in the flow of air in and out of the body. It is a manner of breathing where you narrow the pathway of air or use objects, like a straw, to breathe in and out of. An easier way to accomplish this is to breathe through your nose rather than your mouth.

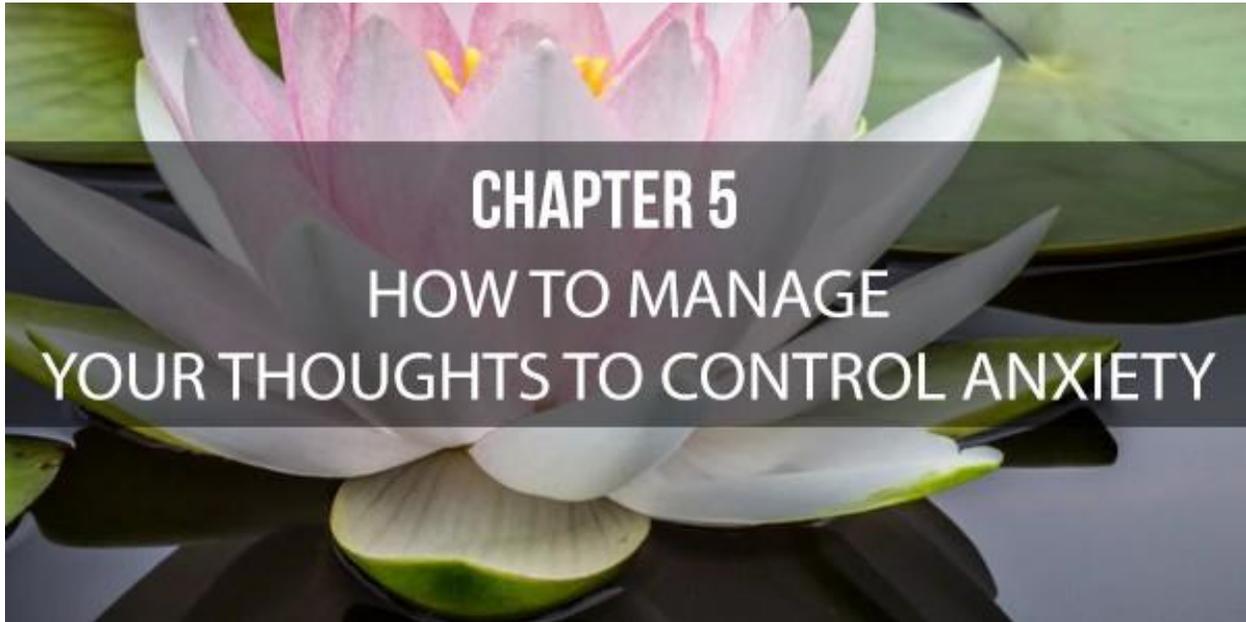
Another way you can practice resistance breathing is by breathing through the course of chanting or singing. This is an effective way to accomplish this exercise because the vocal cords effectively narrow down the air's pathway.

Breath Moving

Breath moving is the technique of breathing with your imagination. It helps you breathe like you are pushing oxygen to the top of your head and pushing out all the carbon dioxide from your body. As you breathe in, you need to imagine that you are moving your breath from your lungs to the top of your head.

Learning how to control your breathing can dramatically reduce your symptoms of stress and help you to overcome your anxiety disorder. Combining controlled breathing techniques, like the ones listed above, with mindfulness, can keep your mind calm and focused on the present.

Chapter 5 – How to Manage Your Thoughts to Control Anxiety



If you often experience strange and crazy thoughts that are disturbing and want to get these thoughts out of your head, then you'll be happy to know that you can do just that when you learn how to manage your thoughts to help you control your anxiety.

While it is normal to have crazy and strange thoughts from time to time, what makes it not normal and out of the ordinary, is when they reoccur often and when you have difficulties forgetting about them. These crazy thoughts can even cause fear because the thought is so disturbing in nature. If you want to be able to manage your thoughts, you'll need to understand the facts that surround anxious thoughts, their roots, and how to avoid them.

Manage Your Anxiety by Managing Your Thoughts

When you are experiencing crazy thoughts, you are experiencing anxious thoughts. A person who doesn't suffer from anxiety disorders will have difficulty understanding the various ways that anxiety can affect the body and the mind. The logical explanation to this is that all people experience anxiety at different times during their life. Some more common experiences that can bring on anxiety are just prior to a job interview, exam, or even asking someone out on a date. However, these instances of anxiety tend to pass right after the conclusion of the event. Nevertheless, people who suffer from anxiety disorders are so much different from the kind anxiety others experience

Anxiety disorders can make an impact on both the emotional and physical aspects of a life, which can lead to a significant imbalance. The creation of crazy and scary thoughts is one of the more common symptoms that people with anxiety experience.

Anxiety has the capacity to change one's thoughts and make you think, and believe, that you are losing touch with reality. It makes you think that you are losing your mind and thus, going crazy. If you are suffering from these symptoms, you don't need to worry, and they are just the effects of your anxious thoughts.

What Triggers Anxious Thoughts?

There are different anxious thoughts that may be considered crazy. These thoughts are not only rooted in worry, but most of them are rooted in the anxiety symptoms that you may be suffering.

Unwanted Images

People who suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder, OCD, are the ones that often experience unwanted images. These unwanted images are usually formed by their feelings of worry, insecurity, and the need to protect their lives and those they love. Sometimes these unwanted images can be triggered by what they fear the most. For example, those who suffer from OCD might imagine some form of severe violence, which can be extremely distressing. In response to this distress, they lock all of the doors. Or they might imagine a severe fire that might happen, so they continually check the gas for leaks. These actions are directly linked to their anxiety.

Unprompted Worries

Worry is the cornerstone of anxiety. In this effect, someone who suffers from anxiety experiences strange worries, which are often irrational. It makes them worry that something bad may happen. The worrying symptom can be extremely persistent and arbitrary, but it all boils down to the anxiety sufferer getting a strange feeling, which makes them uncomfortable.

Fear of Going Crazy

The actual fear that anxiety sufferers are going crazy comes from the symptoms of anxiety being so distinct that they might actually think they are going nuts. The distinct feel of anxiety can make your head spin with many undesirable and rapid thoughts that are extremely hard to control. This fear can be so irrational that it affects daily activities and can have a tremendous impact on the life of those with an anxiety disorder.

How to Avoid Anxious Thoughts

Anxiety is affected by your thoughts, and your thoughts are affected by anxiety. With one building on the other, the situation can become almost impossible to control. Here are some ways that you can start to avoid anxious thoughts and end the cycle of worry.

Face the Thought

The logic is behind the fear. You don't want to think of the thought because of the fear that comes with it. So, you will need to figure out how to set your mind not to fear the thoughts. No matter how crazy the thought you are having is, when you learn and practice to face it, the thoughts can no longer be a reason to fear the thought, and it doesn't matter if the thought reoccurs.

Create the Thought

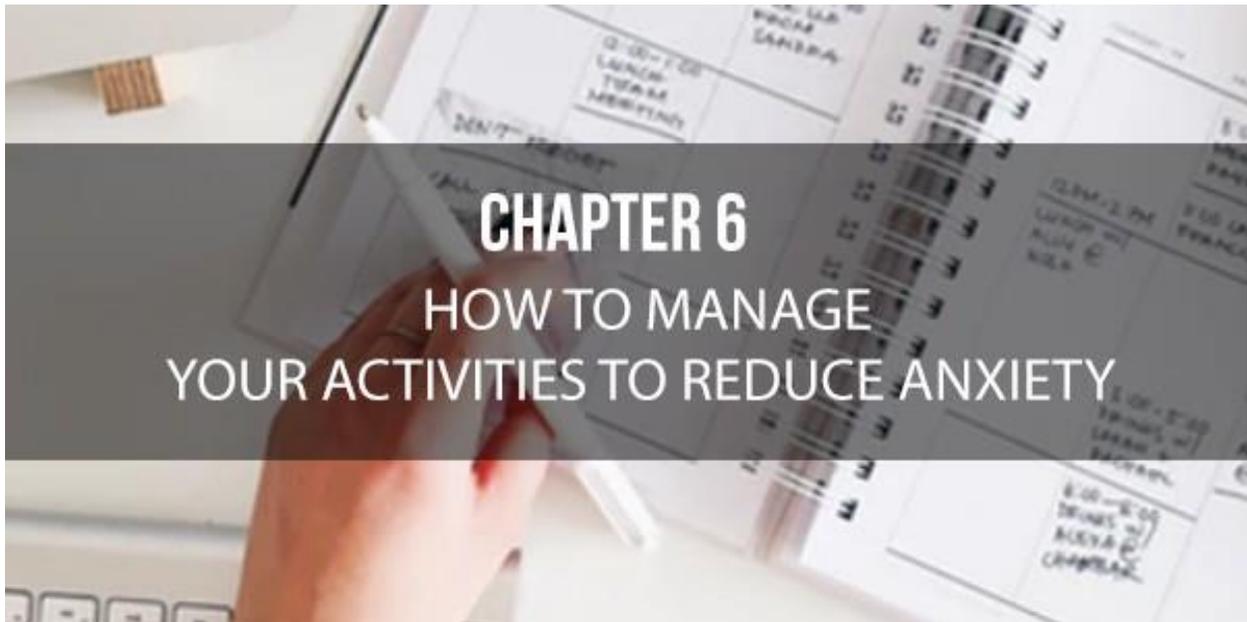
Another way that you can manage your anxious thoughts is by creating it before it even happens. When your mind is used to the thought, your fear will be suppressed. The reason behind this method is that when people fear something, they have to face their fears and will eventually learn how to overcome those fears.

Write the Thought Out

One way that professionals have those suffering from anxiety deal with their fears is to write down the troubling thoughts as a way to get it out of your head. When someone has anxious thoughts, writing those thoughts down on a piece of paper is like placing it somewhere permanent, which allows the mind to relax. This practice of writing down fearful and anxious thoughts tends to appease the mind and allows it to forget eventually.

These are just a few of the easy ways that you can begin to deal with anxious thoughts that appear randomly. While you will still need to deal with your underlying anxiety, these simple steps can help you stop the debilitating thoughts in their tracks.

Chapter 6 – How to Manage Your Activities to Reduce Anxiety



If you're currently living a hectic and non-stop life, you could be making your anxiety symptoms even worse. When you follow a strategic plan for everything in your life, you can reduce your stress and anxiety and still have more of everything. Our society has become increasingly busy over the last several decades. We are constantly surrounded by activities from the home to the workplace, not to mention the sports, travel, and time spent with family.

There is a very simple way that you can finally put an end to your anxiety and reduce the stress in your life. Strategic planning can help you put your life into perspective and put things in place where they are supposed to be. Here are some tips and proven

strategies to get you started with reducing your stress and overcoming anxiety.

Learn to Keep a Schedule

By keeping a schedule, you can learn how to maximize your availability. Your memory is not a reliable source for keeping track of everything you need to do throughout the day. Keep a planner with you and take the time to write down your schedule for the week. Carefully keep track of your schedule and do your best to stick with it. Managing your anxiety symptoms is nothing more than a matter of scheduling and diligently following a schedule.

Find Out Where You're Spending Your Time

Your schedule will help you keep track of where you are spending most of your time. Focus on tasks that you regularly do on a daily basis. This is where time management starts. Determining the amount of time, you spend on daily activities can help to reduce your stress levels and allow you more time for relaxation.

It can also help to take down notes for future references. Tracking your time spent will allow you to know how long it takes you to go grocery shopping, do the laundry, pick up the kids from school, or even cook dinner, and it can help you allot time that you need to

complete your work. It always makes sense to act on a purpose so that everything else will fall into place.

Time Management vs. Managing Activities

You've probably been hearing about time management your entire life. While it is always good to learn how to manage your time, it is even better to learn how to manage your activities, especially if you suffer from anxiety. We are all given the same amount of time during the day to get things done, what can really make a difference is learning how to allocate that time to get the most done during your day without becoming stressed or anxious.

How we allocate our time to the many activities that we have to do in a day, can make a huge difference in your life. When managing your activities, it is extremely important to prioritize your day. Take some time to make a list of all of your daily activities, prioritizing it with the most important activity at the top.

Prioritization

While it is always a good idea to keep a schedule and closely follow it, it is equally important to prioritize those activities. You need to make sure that you allocate plenty of time to complete tasks that are associated with your health, wealth, and

connections. By placing a high priority on these aspects regularly, you will be able to open the door to the living of life of grandeur and happiness without anxiety.

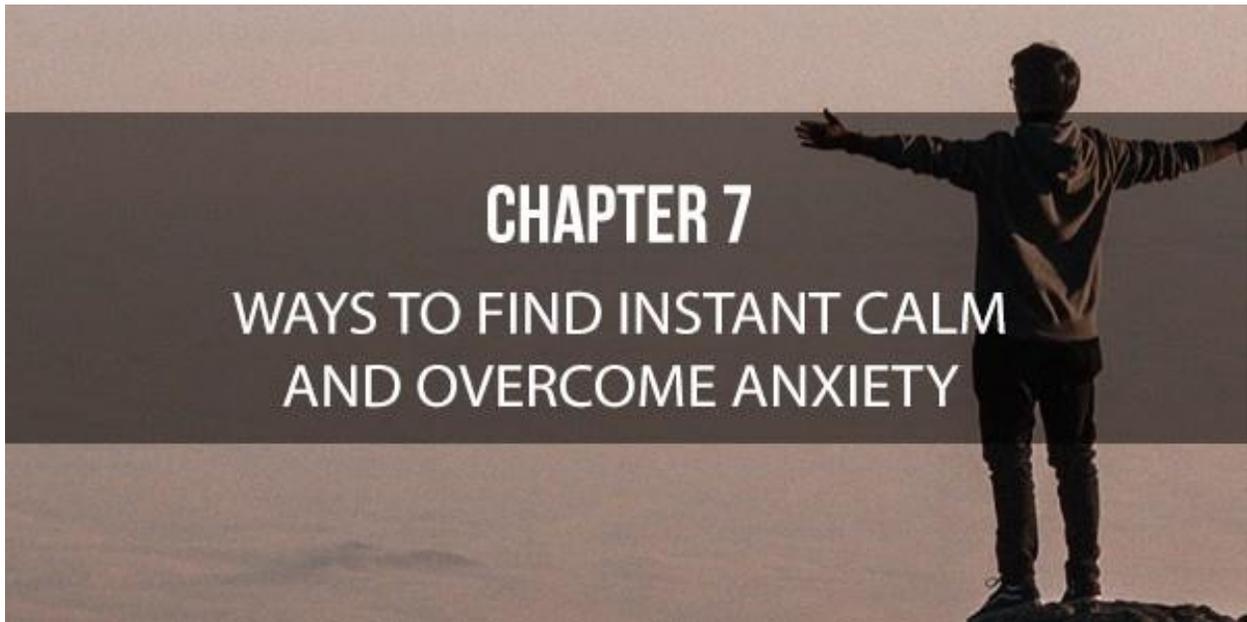
Plan and Practice

It isn't enough for you to simply plan your activities if you want to overcome anxiety. Planning should come with practice or putting your plans into action. Planning without action is just like wishing without doing. There should be a deliberate action to put plans into work.

Following a great plan and abiding by the plan is a great way to reduce anxiety and stress and have everything in place. There are instances that drafted plans may be hindered by unforeseen circumstance or factors of the environment. Having a backup plan can help you avoid these situations.

Backup plans are usually drafted when you create your original plan. It is a way of resolving the question “what if” that often plagues those with anxiety disorders. Having a schedule and plan in place to tackle your activities is a great way to reduce stress in your life.

Chapter 7 – Ways to Find Instant Calm and Overcome Anxiety



One of the most common problems that those suffering from anxiety must face is the increased intensity with their symptoms. For example, say you're on your way to a job interview and end up getting a flat tire. While the action of changing the tire can be easy enough, as is calling the person you were going to meet to explain why you're running late, the anxiety, however, can push your rational thoughts out of the way and direct you to more catastrophic ones. When anxiety is in the driver's seat, it can become all too easy to drive you and your rational mind right over the proverbial cliff.

Successfully managing anxiety has two distinct processes, the long term and short-term management of the disorder. The long

term process requires coming to an understanding what your particular anxiety stems from and can help to diminish and lessen the anxiety attacks that you are experiencing. However, this process will take a long time, and anxiety attacks are very much a part of the “now.” In the present moment, the goal is to find ways to calm yourself quickly, so that your rational mind can regain control of the runaway thoughts and fears that are exacerbated by the anxiety attack.

The Best Ways to Find Instant Calm



With more than 50 million Americans suffering from anxiety every year, it is considered to be the number one mental health

condition in the country. This estimate might be even more conservative because many people with anxiety don't seek a diagnosis from their doctors. It is believed that anxiety cost billions of dollars a year in lost work and damaged or destroyed relationships. The good news is that anxiety disorders are treatable.

There are many things that you can do to get immediate relief from the debilitating symptoms that often accompany an anxiety disorder. The trick is to find a place of calm in the midst of an anxiety attack is to put your mind back in charge of the moment. Anxiety triggers physiological responses like rapid heartbeat, labored breathing, increased blood pressure and any number of fight-or-flight responses.

The following are just some of the strategies that you can use to counteract the effects of an anxiety attack and find instant calm.

Positive Self-Talk

When you start to feel an anxiety attack coming on, it can help immensely to give yourself an empowering and encouraging talk. To prevent yourself from becoming overwhelmed by what you're feeling. Using positive self-talk will allow the more assertive side of your personality to take control. It can also help to whisper soothing words to yourself as you wait for your heart rate and breathing to return to normal.

Guided Imagery

When you feel an anxiety attack coming on, it can be helpful to imagine a situation or place that you find calming and peaceful. For example, you can imagine that you are resting on a secluded beach or mountaintop, away from the worries of the world, or you can imagine that you are enveloped in a bubble of safety and none of your anxiety triggers can touch you while you are in this place of solace. You can also try bringing to your mind a happy memory, like your first kiss, or a big win, or the first time you held your child. Transporting yourself to these times and places, even if it is temporary, can help you get a handle on the situation that is causing your anxiety.

For the best results, you want to make sure to engage all of your senses whenever you engage in a visualization exercise like this. You can, for example, imagine how a tranquil sea would sound and smell, or picture the colors present in a beautiful sunset or sunrise. The more vivid you can make the image, the better chance you have of finding the instant calm that you are searching for.

Prayer or Meditation

If you are religious, you might want to consider prayer as a way of experiencing instant calm. Research has shown that prayer is an effective way of soothing many negative moods, especially if the prayer involves the surrender of one's situation to a higher power. You can include in your prayer a specific request for better managing your anxiety.

If you have a specifically worded prayer in mind, like the Serenity Prayer, or the Lord's Prayer, it is important that you don't rush the words. Make sure you bring each word to your mind as if you've never said them before, or as if you are writing the prayer down on paper. This can help you shift the focus of your thoughts from the cause of your anxiety to the more rational mind, giving you the chance to bring the rational part of your brain back into focus.

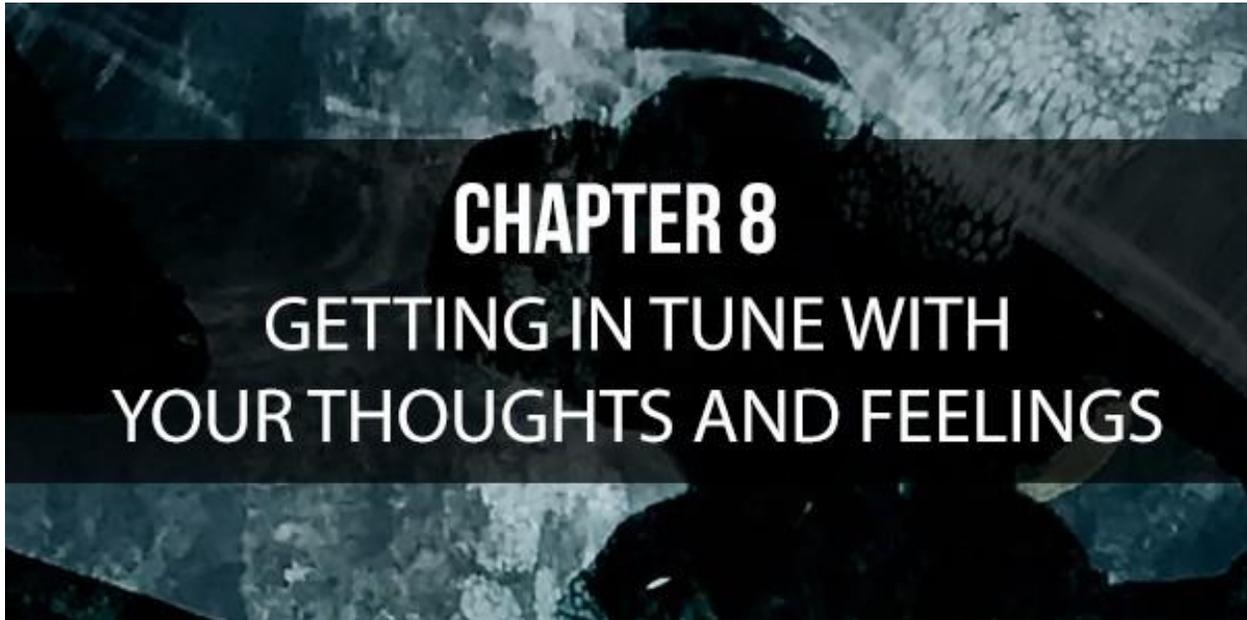
If you're not one for prayer but are looking for a similar experience, you can try some simple meditation, which is the technique of focusing on your inner self to achieve an altered state of consciousness. There are many ways that you can meditate to gain instant calm. Some like to meditate by repeating a specific mantra, such as "om" over and over again, while others like to meditate through physical exercises like tai chi or yoga, while still others find that merely sitting in contemplative silence is effective in bringing about instant calm.

Meditation is often successful because of the many cognitive symptoms of anxiety. When your mind is racing with an overwhelming amount of jumbled thoughts, a focusing exercise, like meditation, can be effective in cutting to the core of whatever is causing you to be anxious. Meditation can also promote mindful living and lessen the mind's reaction to stress.

Practice Gratitude

While the expression, "count your blessings" might sound cliché, it has been shown to be highly effective in bringing greater calm to mind. People have the tendency to think of the negative things during moments of extreme anxiety. Instead, you should try thinking about all of the things in your life that you have to be thankful for, and look at what is right in the world. The more things that you can place on your gratitude list, the better off you'll be.

Chapter 8 – Getting in Tune with Your Thoughts and Feelings



If you're prone to experiencing anxiety, chances are your mind is your greatest enemy. When you're faced with a situation that has the potential to provoke your anxiety, it's easy to start to imagine the worst or start to self-blame to the extent that the anxiety symptoms become magnified within mere seconds. If you really want to manage your anxiety, you have to be quick in catching your own self-destructive thoughts, as well as adept in transforming these negative thoughts into more facilitative ones.

How to Deal with Unhelpful Thoughts



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), is a school of psychotherapy that states that if you want to manage negative thoughts, you have to consciously exert the effort to stop the negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones. To do this, you need to employ the 3C strategy: cease, calm, change.

Step One: Cease

The first step for managing unhelpful thoughts is to actively, and consciously stop thinking the negative thoughts. The best way that you can stop focusing on the negative thoughts is to find a way to distract yourself.

This may seem a bit counterintuitive; after all, wouldn't controlling the runaway thoughts be better than not thinking about them at all? The keyword in this question is a runaway. Think about it this way; if an old-fashioned wooden cart is rolling down a hill toward you, it isn't likely that you'll stop it by standing in front of it; it will knock you down and keep going, and you'll be worse for the wear.

A more practical example would be to try not to think of a pink elephant. For those with anxiety, that elephant will start to push harder and harder into the mind until it is literally all they can think about. To stop thinking of the pink elephant, you need to try to divert your attention to something else. This distraction will work to derail the power of that overwhelming thought and give you the chance to regain control of your mental processes.

So, the question becomes, how can you distract yourself? A highly recognized technique is to snap a rubber band against your wrist when you start to think unhelpful thoughts. The sharp shock of the rubber band hitting your skin can effectively divert your attention. Another method that you can try is to engage in something physical, like jumping up and down, snapping your fingers in a complicated rhythm, or breaking into song. You might even try shifting your focus to a comical or strange image.

Step Two: Calm

When you can break free of the frantic emotional cycle, your thoughts become your own once again. At this point, the thoughts that you want are calming ones. In the previous chapters, you discovered several techniques that you can use to gain instant calm and begin to think more clearly. Basic stress-management skills, include, listening to calming music, breathing exercises, and visualizing being in a peaceful location. If you are religious, you might find that prayer or meditation can help. Let yourself surrender your worries and frustrations, trusting that you will be guided and given strength.

Step Three: Change

The last step for dealing with unhelpful thoughts is to transform the negative thoughts into positive ones deliberately. This is a process known as reframing, where you actively change the perspective on a situation so that you can see another angle that you might not have thought about before. For example, if thinking that you might lose your job over a small mistake activates your anxiety, then you can try, instead, to think about all the possible reasons that your employer would want to keep you. If you think that you are a failure, try thinking about how you have learned from your past mistakes, particularly the times when that learning has led to success. Perhaps you worry that you can't please everyone all of the time, but can you really think of someone who can?

Understanding Your Feelings

So far, we've discussed how thoughts can increase the anxiety that you feel. However, feelings also play a significant role in the degree of your anxiety symptoms, and getting in touch with your feelings is as important as getting a handle on your thoughts.

Feelings refer to subjective experiences of emotions, like happiness, anger, sadness, joy, and fondness. There are even more subjective notions like the feeling of being "trapped" or feeling lost. It is difficult to define what a feeling is, and it is perhaps for this reason that so many people tend to ignore their feelings in favor of thoughts or other, more objective observations. For example, if you ask a group of people how they feel, they'll often reply with non-feeling descriptions, like "everything will be fine," or "I think I'm going to be all right." There is a pronounced tendency to discount and ignore feelings.

Many factors can contribute to this phenomenon. A lot of which can be attributed to childhood experiences. If you are male, you were most likely raised to think that "big boys don't cry," and you may find that your experiences of sadness or loss as an adult are uncomfortable. If you were taught that expressing anger or disapproval in any way, no matter how mild, is inappropriate, leaving you to never learning how to assert your personal preferences or express your anger appropriately. If at any age, you experienced ridicule for expressing emotion, there is a strong

likelihood that you would resist sharing your emotions with anyone in the future.

Realizing Feelings Are Neither Right or Wrong

Feelings are amoral, meaning they are neither right or wrong. They also come without warning; you don't choose to get upset, you simply become upset. You can't be blamed for what you feel, for something you don't rationally control. The only thing that can be judged is how you react to those feelings. It isn't what you feel, but how you handle those feelings that make the difference. You can feel outraged over an incident, but expressing that outrage with violence is not appropriate in most situations. Actions made in the heat of the moment are not typically the best course of action that you can take.

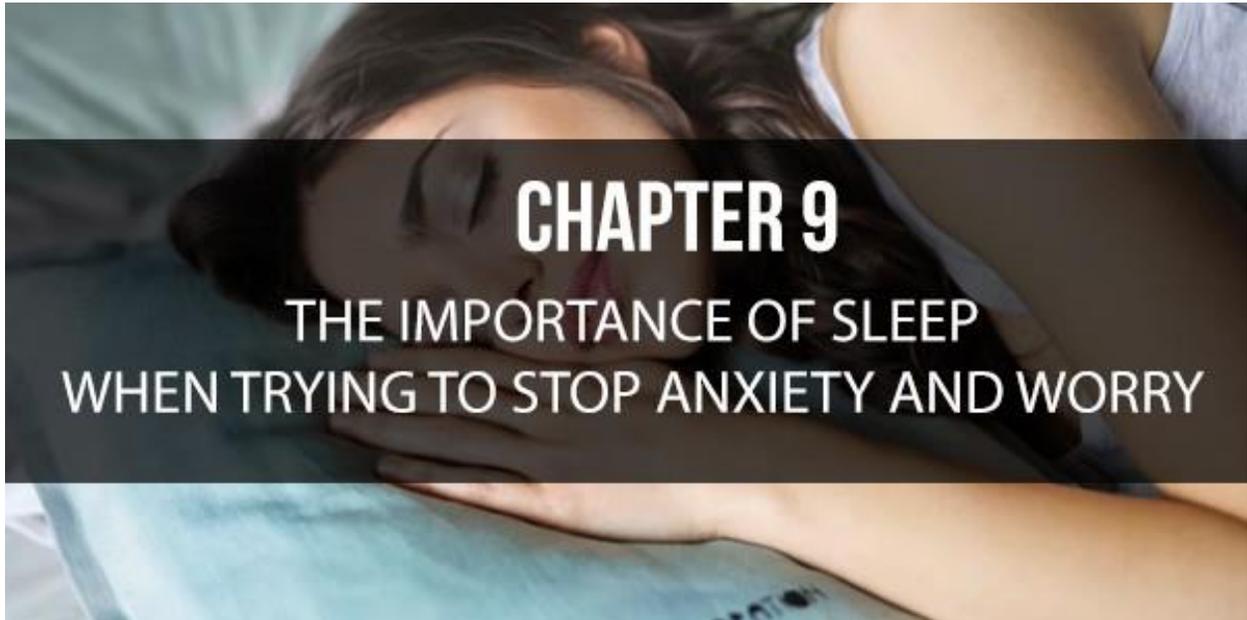
Unfortunately, anxiety often overcomes rational thinking. For that reason, it isn't good to rush into any course of action when you are in the midst of an anxiety attack. What's even more important is that you remember that you are allowed to feel anything. You are no more "wrong" to feel anxious than you are to feel angry, happy, or sad. Knowing this might be able to help prevent you from blaming yourself for the anxiety that you suffer from. While the stormy emotion is unpleasant, allowing it to flow through you and waiting it out is often the best way to get rid of it.

Recognizing Your Feelings

One way that you can know what you're feeling is utilizing a technique known as journaling, where you create a diary of all the emotions that you are experiencing. Journaling is an excellent way of venting so that you aren't bothered as much. All you have to do is write out exactly what you are feeling, without editing. The more authentic your journaling, the more effective the process will be for you.

To get the most out of your journal, you'll want to read back over what you've written periodically. The journal may help you to uncover patterns, see connections between stimuli and emotions, and provide you with more insight into how much control you have gained over your anxiety. Reading how you were able to overcome previous anxiety attacks, you start to realize that when you are in the grip of a new attack, that things won't look so bad in a few minutes and that you don't have to give into the panicked feelings.

Chapter 9 – The Importance of Sleep When Trying to Stop Anxiety and Worry



One of the most significant problems that those who suffer from anxiety face is difficulty sleeping. When they have difficulty sleeping, they tend to wake up feeling exhausted in the morning, making dealing with the symptoms associated with their anxiety disorder that much harder.

There are several sleep strategies that might help you get a good night's sleep every night. If you know what to avoid as well as trying out some of the techniques discussed below, then it shouldn't be difficult to start to get enough sleep.

The first step is working out how much sleep you need each night. While most adults need at least eight hours to function properly, this can vary from person to person. In order to find out how much you should be sleeping, you'll want to try out different times for going to bed and waking up. You should try to go to bed at the same time every night and then allow yourself to wake up naturally. You may find that it will take several weeks before you can get into a routine, but when you know this, then you can try one of the following techniques to help you get a more restful night's sleep. The best ways to sleep better include making slight adjustments to your bedtime routine and your activities throughout the day.

Bedroom Environment

If you want to start getting a better night's sleep, then you need to set up the bedroom that will help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep. Start by removing any televisions, gaming systems, computers and other electronics from the room, and create a space that invites rest. Keep the room cool, ideally between 60 and 67 degrees. Adding white noise or background noise can be helpful.

You want total darkness when you are trying to sleep, so check your lighting. If you notice too much light coming into the room, hang up some curtains where light might be leaking in. You might also want to make adjustments to your bed by making sure that

your mattress and pillow are comfortable and clean. If you've had your bed for more than ten years, it might be time to invest in a new and more supportive mattress.

Bedtime Rituals

You can improve your chances of getting a good night's sleep by establishing and sticking to a regular bedtime routine. Even if you consider yourself spontaneous and impulsive, your body appreciates a routine and will respond to it. This can be done by first setting up a bedtime schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every night, even on the weekends or when you don't have to work or get up early. This will set your internal clock and help you get into the pattern of sleeping at regular times.

Start to train your body to know that it's bedtime. Take a warm bath or shower, or do something specific that separates your daytime activities to your bedtime activities. Read a book for a little while, or listen to some relaxing music. Establishing these types of rituals will help you transition into sleep.

Yoga and Mediation



Part of your bedtime routine might include yoga or mediation. These kinds of practices can help to relax your mind and bring it into sync with your body. A simple yoga pose that you can practice before bed is called the straight leg raise. You simply have to lie on the floor, with your back pressed flat against it.

Then bend one knee and extend the other leg. Slowly raise the straightened leg up in the air until it is at a 90-degree angle with your body. Slowly lower it back down to the ground. Do these ten times with each leg, and your mind will start to get quiet, your back and neck muscles will start to relax, and you'll be ready to go to sleep.

The practice of meditation doesn't have to be complicated. Once you are settled comfortably in your bed, you can begin to practice abdominal breathing to help relax both your body and your mind, which will, in turn, prepare you to sleep better. To do this, place your hands on your stomach and take deep breaths in through your nose. As you exhale, focus your mind on that breath coming out of your mouth. When you focus on this, you take your mind off the thoughts that might distract you from sleep.

Exercise

One of the best ways that you can ensure you get a good night's sleep is to make sure that you are physically exhausted by the end of the day. Getting regular exercise will help your body be ready for sleep when it's time. Vigorous exercise that increases your cardiovascular activity is the best way to wear yourself out, but even light exercise will get you physically tired before bed. Whatever you can do to give yourself a flash of physical activity while you're awake is guaranteed to help you sleep better during the night.

Daily Behaviors

When you are trying to get a better night's sleep, there are a few things that you can do during the day to ensure your success. For starters, avoid naps during the day. While you may be found of

your midday nap, sleeping in the afternoon can increase the chances that your body will stay up later. Try to eliminate any other sleeping during the day and save it for the night.

Get all your work done early in the day and save the last hour or two before your bedtime for winding down. This means shutting down your laptop, avoiding texting on your phone, and leaving the emails until tomorrow.

Try to avoid drinking and smoking. Consuming alcohol, even during the day, can mess up your body's schedule and rhythms. The last thing that you want to do is to work hard to train your body to sleep and then not be able to get your rest because you had a glass of wine with your dinner.

These are some of the best things you can do to help you sleep better and remember that it might take you some time to train yourself. Do what you can to establish a sleep schedule, make your bedroom conducive to rest, and watch what you do during the day. You'll soon notice the benefits of getting a better night's sleep.

Chapter 10 – Changing Your Lifestyle to Regain Control of Your Life



If you want to overcome anxiety, you'll need to make some important lifestyle changes, starting with your diet. You may think that changing your diet is an odd way of treating a mental health condition, but scientists have discovered a direct relationship between what you eat and your mood. There are certain foods and drinks that are known to trigger and aggravate episodes of anxiety. There are also some foods and drinks that have been proven to have a calming effect on the nervous system. If you suffer from anxiety, you might want to remember the old adage, “you are what you eat.”

Foods to Avoid

If you want to manage your anxiety better, there are a number of foods that you need to avoid. This is important to understand because many of the foods that we consider to be comfort foods may actually do more harm than good.

Stimulants

If you suffer from an anxiety disorder, you should be avoiding stimulants like caffeine and nicotine. Stimulants increase the work of the nervous system, which leads to anxiety-like symptoms such as shortness of breath, palpitations, and gastrointestinal problems. The more stimulants that you ingest during the day, the greater your chances of experiencing an anxiety attack.

Salt

Salt depletes the body of potassium, which is critical for the nervous system to function properly. It can also cause an elevation in blood pressure, and increase issues with your heart. If you're prone to anxiety, it's best to avoid foods that are high in sodium. This includes cheese, pretzels, potato salad, fried potatoes, sliced meats, and stew. Salt is also a staple in most fast-food products.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a natural depressant. Although it can make you feel calm and sedated in the short term, it can also be dehydrating. That's why drinking too much, results in a hangover because your brain has lost too much water. The dehydration caused by the consumption of alcohol can often exacerbate anxiety for those who are prone to suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. The accompanying depression can also contribute to your feelings of helplessness, which can result in more feelings of frustration.

Participating in Exercise Therapy

The last thing you probably want to do when you suffer from anxiety is exercise. However, exercise is one of the most effective ways of managing anxiety. It may not be able to cure an anxiety disorder completely, but it can help significantly alleviate the symptoms. Exercise helps to stabilize the amount of “happy” chemicals, like dopamine and serotonin, in the body, which helps to improve general mood.

Researchers found that exercise helps to stimulate the production of new brain cells that are resistant to stress. So, the more you exercise, the greater number of these stress-resistant brain cells that you'll have, which can leave you feeling more calm and relaxed, even when you are faced with anxiety-provoking situations. Exercise, you can say, helps to renew the hardware of your brain, so you always function in optimum condition.

Conclusion



Anxiety can be difficult to cope with, and can ultimately take over all aspects of your life unless you do something about it. While you've gained more knowledge about how to manage your anxiety, you won't be able to enjoy the benefits of overcoming your anxiety unless you start practicing the steps you've learned. Start by making the small move of incorporating more fun, excitement, joy, and enthusiasm in your life. Once you do this, you will no longer look back because you will be motivated to make your life better and happier.

The good news for you is that your anxiety disorder is treatable, and you can take the appropriate steps to manage your symptoms and ultimately overcome your anxiety. By managing your thoughts, understanding and accepting your feelings, and incorporating mindfulness and breathing techniques into your

daily routine, you can start to take control of your life and banish anxiety for good.

An anxiety free life is attainable, and now you have all the tools you need to overcome your anxiety and start living the life you deserve. With a little patience, an awareness of your surroundings and yourself, and a commitment to follow through with the lessons you've learned, you can be well on your way to working through and overcoming the many different aspects of your debilitating condition.

The only thing left for you to do to start feeling better and managing your anxiety is to implement the lessons that you've recently learned. Don't wait, start taking back your life today.