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**Cover Design**

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# Introduction

If you are reading this you have probably been experiencing some anxiety symptoms, maybe even panic attacks, or maybe you want to know how to help stop the panic in their lives.

Do you know what causes those feelings of anxiety?

The information in this ebook will help you to take a step back and explore questions about your behaviour. Along the way we will delve into mind, body, self and emotions; and how you can change the way you feel.

Wouldn't it be useful to be able to delve into you mind, exploring how the way your thinking has been instrumental in why you feel how you do? To explore how it feels to live without anxiety or fear?

At this point we need to say that reading this book, or any other publication for that matter, is not a substitution for proper medical advice. Do not self diagnose, see a Doctor.

We have noticed over the years that we have been in practice, just how much pain and suffering people seem to put up with on a regular basis. People will suffer anxiety and panic attacks for years without attempting to stop them or even try to do very much about it. The cost in terms of the reduction of quality of life can be enormous. Sufferers often get depressed, their physical health may be compromised, their effectiveness in the workplace can dramatically decline, and their relationships become difficult as those around them don't understand why they can't control this. Some find they lose their jobs and possibly their homes as their ability to work fails them.

Many expect the drugs prescribed by their doctors to give them the relief they long for. In our experience pharmaceutical options are rarely the answer especially in the long term. Many go along for a while trying the different drugs on offer, whilst still feeling anxious.

**Then something happens.**

Maybe a love one gives them an ultimatum insisting they do something more about it; or maybe an incident motivates them to look for alternative help, or maybe they just get fed up with feeling that way and they begin to seek more permanent, effective answers.

In our experience once someone reaches that point, the point where you're completely fed up with how things are, it makes it much simpler to change.

### **When suffering reaches its limits .....**

Many of the 'anxiety' symptoms experienced are a direct result of what's called the 'fight or flight' response. This is an automatic program your body turns on instantly in times of perceived danger. It helps us to either stay and fight, or run away.

The 'fight or flight' response is, set up with a positive intention, to protect us. Its part of our biological history, millions of years ago our ancestors lived a very tenuous existence. They had to survive wild animals, hostile neighbours, starvation and many life threatening dangers.

Many of our responses evolved to ensure our very continued existence. Fear is one of those skills, the wariness was intended to be protective. Anxiety is a survival instinct that has been bred into humankind to keep us safe. However since we no longer live in a primitive world, many of these fears are no longer useful. In many ways its as if we have failed to adapt to an much safer environment.

The dangers we encounter nowadays are vastly different to those our forbears faced, yet our brains continue to function as if nothing has changed. Some are driven by instinct to run form a hungry wild animal, when in fact they are only facing a barking dog. Others feel terrified about speaking in public, because atavistically they think that someone else might kill them if they offend or fail to deliver. Whereas others feel uncomfortable in open spaces because being exposed in this way can make it easier for predators to catch them. Yet these days it seems that we are the main predator!

Wariness persists deep in our psychology, and can lead to fears, phobias and anxiety. In people with an anxiety disorder, the same program's that once kept us safe can start running, producing the same chemical response when we are not in any actual danger. The 'danger' is created in our mind, in the way we think, in the images we make, and our body reacts as if the threat is real. Our imagination takes over, runs away with us and suddenly we feel as if we are in genuine danger. Our brain is running 'Better safe than sorry'.

**False  
Evidence  
Appearing  
Real**

The majority of patients we see in our private practice's present with some kind of anxiety disorder, from phobia's to panic attacks. Some studies show that one in ten UK citizens suffer some kind of anxiety. The causes seem to be many and varied, some are reactions to the stress and strain's of everyday life, or the leftovers from some traumatic incident.

Their impact on daily life can be extreme, people are often unable to work effectively, travel, maintain relationships, to socialise, drive, write, fly; the list is endless. Unfortunately people who suffer from anxiety are also more likely to become depressed, or addicted to substances of one kind or another. Life is hard and they think a drink or two or a spliff is the easy way out.

Sufferers often go to their G.P for assistance, and are prescribed some form of medication. Guidelines given to the medical profession are for these prescriptions to be very short term because of this risk, and yet many people are prescribed these drugs for years.

Medication can be effective for some, but it certainly shouldn't be thought of as a cure. Anxiety medication can provide some temporary relief, but it doesn't treat the underlying cause of the disorder. Once you stop taking the pills, the anxiety symptoms often return in full force.

If you decide to take medication, remember, anxiety medications aren't a cure. Medication may treat some symptoms of anxiety, but can't change the underlying issues and situations in your life that are making you anxious. Anxiety medication won't solve your problems if you're anxious because of mounting bills, a tendency to jump to "worst-case scenarios", or an unhealthy relationship.

So ....

That's where this booklet can help. There are viable alternatives to medication. The ideas we discuss can be more effective for reducing anxiety than drugs and the techniques explored quicker than the Pharmaceutical alternative. The advantage of our approach is that it can produce lasting changes and long-term relief.

Many clients tell us they have had enough, they have wasted hours, tens of hours, hundreds of hours and sometimes thousands of hours worrying about feeling anxious.

So much time wasted. How much time have you wasted worrying about feeling anxious?

Think about how much time each day do you spend thinking about the possibility of being anxious.

If you spend just one hour a day that's 7 hours a week, 365 hours a year.

This is the amount of time you waste in one year; how many years have you felt this way?

Many of our clients have been worrying for years, say it's ten years; that's 3650 hours spent on worrying about feeling anxious.

I think you understand where we're going with this, isn't it about time to stop? Haven't you felt this way for long enough?

If we were to tell you that by completing the following exercises you could take back control of your thought patterns and stop feeling anxious, would you be interested?

Time to read on .....

# What is Anxiety?

If you have an official diagnosis it will probably fall into one of six categories or a combination of these. A critical starting point in dealing with any anxiety disorder is understanding that it originally had an adaptive function. All our fears no matter how irrational they may seem are based on ensuring our survival.

It is only now eons later that these fears, phobias and anxieties appear neurotic. Evolution installed functions that helped ensure the continuation of the species, functions that we may well need again. Some of us have the setting on these important skills turned up way too high. Lets explore the functionality.....

## Specific Phobia

This is fear of a specific stimulus or situation, it could be anything, dogs, lifts, planes, water etc. The basic survival instinct tells you that the thing is actually dangerous in itself, the plane may crash, the dog may bite ..... Around 60% of us are said to have some phobic tendencies, 11% have a profound specific phobia.

## Panic Disorder

This, in essence, is the fear of having a panic attack. Any change in physiology can be framed as 'symptoms' such as a change in breathing, heart rate, sweating, or shaking is seen as a sign of impending disaster, collapse, maybe even insanity or death. Its a sneaky one, the attempt to avoid any situations that are believed to be at cause can lead to other things like Agoraphobia. The bottom line is wariness again

## Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

This is recurring thoughts or images (obsessions) that are very distressing. They could be about being out of control, contamination, behaving inappropriately, or making a mistake. There is an almost over whelming urge to do something to neutralise these images, this could be constant washing, ordering, counting, checking or other ritual

behaviours.

## **Generalised Anxiety Disorder**

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) can be defined as a disorder in which the sufferer feels in a constant state of high anxiety and is often known as 'chronic worrying' or a 'free floating' anxiety condition.

We all suffer with worry from time to time, but the thing that makes GAD different from "normal worry" is that the worry is prolonged, and the level of worry is out of proportion to the risk. The thoughts can be described as 'catastrophic', or jumping to the worst possible conclusion.

## **Social Anxiety Disorder**

A fear of being judged by others, especially in social situations, parties, presentations, eating in restaurants, using public toilets.

## **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.**

Excessive fear caused by previous exposure to injury or a perceived threat. This could be rape, road traffic accidents, violence and/or war. Sufferers often re experience the trauma in flash backs or nightmares, and avoid situations that are reminiscent of the incident.

No matter how it is labeled, Anxiety and or Fear is part of our survival instinct; it sets our body and mind in motion in preparation for a perceived threat. It's hard wired into the sub conscious and is one of our oldest emotions; sometimes generated without any conscious awareness. We all feel uneasy sometimes, yet don't know why. We jump when something moves on the ground or touches us, we blink when something is coming towards our eyes. We respond to sensory input and it drives us into action.

Fear or anxiety makes you focus. There's a moment of awareness, with our unconscious telling us something isn't right, and as we sense "something" we freeze. This freezing may stop predators from seeing us, it also gives us a chance to evaluate the situation

and if it is OK, we continue - returning to what we were doing.

Fear or anxiety is all about chemicals, epinephrine and norepinephrine; epinephrine (adrenaline) is secreted by the adrenal glands. These chemicals are released in moments of fear to prepare us for the fight or flight response; and changes occur to improve our chances of survival. As well as increased physical strength a surge in oxygen boosts sensory acuity whilst non-survival processes like digestion are put on hold.

Fears and phobias are extreme anxieties. As we go through life we learn a great many things by experience, things we are not even aware of. An unconscious learning, fear is one of these experiences and is a demonstration of how quickly we learn an automatic response.

From one experience the mind can generalise and attach fear. Then the flight or fight response kicks in. Your imagination is immensely powerful and the area of the brain that you use to imagine something is the same area that is used when experiencing things. Which is why your nervous system can't tell the difference between a real or imagined experience.

For an event to be coded as traumatic its said that four conditions need to be met. First it needs to be a emotional event; second, have a meaning for the individual; third, the chemicals need to be in place and fourth the experience is perceived as inescapable. If these are present it is possible that the brain will categorise the event as traumatic.

And yet there could be 2 people at the same event and one will be traumatised whilst the other will not. How can this happen?

Life is full of traumatic moments, in order for an event to be traumatising it must produce an emotional response. Meaning is attached to the event, your brain codes it as fearful. Where one person may code something as fearful another may not.

A good example of this is those who are afraid of riding on roller coasters. Gloria can't be tempted onto a roller coaster not for anything! Whilst Tina loves them and the subsequent adrenalin rush. Roller Coasters produce the four conditions in Gloria's mind and she knows its scary and dangerous and once in she can't get out; whereas Tina, who loves roller coasters will have all the same conditions in place. She loves the adrenalin rush, feels safe in the seat (doesn't want to get out till the ride is done), remembers great times growing up going to amusement parks with friends and family and loves the thrill of the ride.



Did you know that around 60% of panic attacks are due to hyperventilation? When we hyperventilate, or breathe rapidly we take in much more oxygen than we need, and we do not exhale enough carbon dioxide. The blood has too much oxygen, and this leads the arteries and blood vessels to constrict, blocking the flow of oxygen to the brain. This can cause dizziness and feelings of suffocation. Managing your breathing is a simple, yet very effective way of altering your feelings. Try out the experiment on the next page .....

### Experiment .....

There are a number of ways in which you can change the way you feel. Use this technique to train yourself to be calmer and more relaxed.

1. Breathe Out (empty your lungs)
2. Breathe in slowly whilst mentally counting to 7 (breathe through the mouth and fill your lungs)
3. When your lungs are full, hold your breath for a moment, this is to let the CO<sup>2</sup> and oxygen exchange in your lungs.
4. Now roll your eyes up to the ceiling (imagine you have a pair of sunglasses on the top of your head, and you are attempting to look through them, avoid tipping your neck back) and

5. Close and relax your eyes
6. Breathe out slowly whilst mentally counting to 11
7. Relax your body completely

By taking deep slow breaths you re-oxygenate the brain and gradually change your body chemistry from one of a distressed state with an excess of adrenaline, cortisol and nor-adrenaline to a more relaxed state.

**You cannot feel anxious whilst you are relaxed, they are reciprocally inhibitive states.**

Practice this technique several times during the day so that you make this state a natural response. You will begin to find that the things that used to bother you no longer seem so important, and with practice you will have a much more resourceful relaxed state of mind.

**A** ction  
**C** hanges  
**T** hings



## **Taking control of your brain .....**

We have made huge advances over the years, we can travel in space, see and talk to people across the world, cure diseases that a few years ago were though incurable. Go to our doctor and receive various pills and potions to make us well, yet there is one thing allopathic medicine doesn't have an answer for - anxiety and fear.

Yes they can give you tranquillisers and, or beta blockers but these aren't guaranteed to make things better.

The decisions we make and the actions we take affect our future and whilst we may depend on technology and suppliers of goods for food etc; we still need to take responsibility for our thoughts, actions and beliefs.

Imagine for a moment that you have the ability to operate the most complex computer system that you can; instantly bounce from negativity and doubt to optimism, hope and motivation. What would you be capable of achieving if you had access to a system that would do this for you?

Now, you brain can already do this for you.

You could say the reasons people have problems is because they have been using their brain haphazardly. Most people are unaware that we can control our thoughts and change our feelings.

Over the years that we have been in private practice we have lost count of the number of people who have asked for help with anxiety issues. More than a third of our client base at any given time come into this category.

It's estimated that 1.5 million people suffer from anxiety issues in the UK; 2% of Europeans and 6.8 million Americans. The number of people complaining about feelings of anxiety are growing, with a huge number now being diagnosed with GAD; General Anxiety Disorder.

Those who have experienced panic attacks often go around with a grave sense of unease that at any moment, they will experience a major attack. It's a fear of the experience of another major episode that pushes them over the edge. It's ironic that it's the fear of the possibility of a panic attack that ultimately causes the feeling of anxiety.

This leads people to make changes to their behaviour, their goal is to not do anything that might trigger a panic attack. They avoid people, places, events, things and even thoughts of things, which may be related to an incident, real or imagined.

When people feel this way, simple daily tasks can become big challenges. Some start to fear driving their car in traffic. Others fear leaving their safe zone or simply any situation where they have responsibilities to perform.

This state of apprehension keeps a person's anxiety level high, leading to feelings of general anxiety.

When helping people stop this unhelpful cycle, we begin by finding out how they are creating these feelings; the majority of our clients are surprised when they realise that it's the thoughts that they have that creates the way they feel.

People make unrealistic self-statements that keep them in a constant state of alarm. Often they demand absolute certainty about things, and there is no certainty in an uncertain world. In response to the stress of their unrealistic thinking their body generates the flight or fight response.

After a while they begin to fear the fear itself, and as they become more sensitised they begin to anticipate panic. The worry/anxiety over the possibility of becoming

anxious takes hold.

This leads them to avoid any situation where they perceive they may experience uncomfortable feelings. Prolonged anxiety can lead to hyperventilation and panic.

You may think this is a strange thing for us to say but all of that; the unrealistic statements, the creation of disastrous scenarios, imagining being anxious and afraid - these are the frames we choose to put around things, for whatever reason.

The 'symptoms' you notice are really just arousal, its just an energy moving through you, just like the feelings generated when you exercise, dance or have sex. Its just something that happens, and passes. As we said earlier what Tina feels on a roller coaster boils down to physical arousal, she enjoys it, but it passes, and she will often join the queues at the parks to experience it again & again & again. The same feelings that Tina experiences as thrilling, Gloria has framed as uncomfortable and most definitely unwanted.

Although some Anxiety is inherited, most is a learned behaviour and, as unpalatable as it may seem, therefore a lifestyle choice .....

If you learnt how to do anxiety you can learn how to stop it and do something else. All those people who come to see us for help with anxiety issues spend a lot of time thinking about being anxious, how it feels, when it can happen. They practice a lot too, remembering past experiences of feeling bad, associating into those feelings. When we ask them if they have ever thought of just not doing it; most look at us as if we're crazy.

So there are certain things that have to be done to feel anxious. Panic escalates when:

1. You make unrealistic self-statements that keep you in a constant state of alarm, false alarm. Your body tenses with the fight or flight response; your heart beats faster, you feel short of breath, you have butterflies in your stomach, etc. This chronic state of arousal makes you "sensitised" to any hint of a possible danger. Sensitisation means that your nerves are set on a hair trigger. The least unpleasant surprise, or minor conflict can set off panic.
2. You begin to fear the fear itself. As your body becomes more sensitised, you begin to anticipate panic attacks.
3. You try to avoid them at all costs. Now you have a new fear. You not only fear the "trigger" for your panic you now fear the symptoms that fear

causes in your body.

4. You reject your own feelings as your fear of fear escalates. You hate experiencing the symptoms; the pounding heart, the dizziness, the shortness of breath, the trembling legs, the lump in your throat, the hot or cold flashes, and the confusion you feel in your mind. You resist and fight against anything unusual happening in your body. You become hyper vigilant for symptoms of an approaching panic. You come to fear any emotion or experience that triggers physical sensations that remind you of panic. Even feeling excited, exercising or contracting innocuous illnesses such as the flu seems dangerous because the symptoms remind you of the feeling of panic.
5. You avoid ultimately, any situation, person or thing that evokes feelings of arousal or anxiety. What started for example, as nervousness when walking empty streets alone, becomes avoidance of going anywhere alone. What started as anxious thoughts about an issue, becomes avoidance of that issue; or what started as shyness at parties, becomes avoidance of every social contact.

Every symptom you experience during a panic attack is a natural harmless part of your body's fight or flight response. All panic symptoms are the direct result of the hormone adrenaline, which is released by your adrenal glands when you perceive that you are in danger. Adrenaline is metabolised in your body in less than three minutes. Its effects can go away just as quickly. Therefore, if you can stop your catastrophic predictions, your panic attack will be over entirely within three minutes. This means that your anxiety need never last more than three minutes.

But it is necessary to stop the loop of catastrophic thinking. The crucial step is to contest and refute any catastrophic predictions you find yourself making about your panic symptoms.

To prepare yourself you will need to first look at how your panic symptoms arise. Take a moment and imagine that you are in a frightening situation. What type of situation is it? Now let yourself feel a little of the anxiety you would normally experience in the real situation.

Although this manufactured anxiety will differ from a full-blown panic attack, some physical symptoms may accompany it. Is your heart beating faster? Etc etc.

Now imagine yourself in the same frightening situation. This time concentrate on your thoughts. Notice what you tell yourself about the situation and about your symptoms. Do this now.

Did you find that you make catastrophic predictions about the situation? Did you think of the worst that could possibly happen? As you began feeling anxious, did you tell yourself scary things about your symptoms of panic? These are the things that can prolong and intensify panic.



***STOP IT!***

## Reprogramming for Results

In order to change the way your body responds to seemingly frightening situations, you need to replace your catastrophic thoughts with truthful statements that explain the nature of your symptoms; that your physical sensations won't harm you and that they will soon go away. By using a coping phrase that counters each symptom you notice, you will be able to realise your symptoms for the benign sensations that they are; and start the process of lessening your fear.

**You can slow your heart rate.** During the flight or fight response your pulse speeds up to rates of 120 - 130 beats per minute. A noted authority in the field of anxiety control says the normal human heart can sustain an elevated rate of this kind for weeks without any danger. So you can certainly sustain this rate for a few hours without any harm. If you are worried get a medical check up to put your mind at rest. Then knowing that your heart is OK you can begin to stop your catastrophic thinking. By practicing breathing techniques and relaxing, your heart beat will slow down.

**You can feel balanced.** We have already discovered that feelings of dizziness or vertigo are the product of hyperventilation. This will go away when you slow down your breathing, so take a few slow deep breaths. Sometimes tension in your neck or jaw can affect your inner ear and cause dizziness. This will go away when you relax. When you feel dizzy, practice slow breathing techniques and the dizziness will go away.

**You can breathe fully and deeply.** Shortness of breath is caused by tightness in the diaphragm. This causes you to take short, quick breaths into the top of your lungs when you feel fear. The solution is to consciously take deep, slow breaths while focusing on the full exhalation of air. The coping phrase to remember is "push the old air out. Take a new deep breath. Push the old air out. Take a new deep breath ....."

**You can feel strength in your legs.** During a panic attack your legs may feel weak. You may even fear that you will fall down. This reaction is caused by blood pooling in the veins of your thigh muscles. The fight or flight reaction pushes blood to your extremities to prepare you to run. The weakness you feel is an illusion, because the blood is actually making your legs ready to move, and move quickly. When blood collects in your legs in a resting state, it produces a subjective feeling of heaviness and weakness. When this happens, tell yourself “this is just my legs preparing to run. They are stronger than usual right now”.

**You can swallow freely.** Extensive tension in your throat may cause you to feel as though you can't swallow when you are very anxious. Actually, you could swallow if you had to. And the symptom will pass as soon as you relax. To hasten its passing, open your mouth wide and fake a yawn. Tell yourself, “I can yawn away the tension in my throat”.

**You can feel hot or cold and that's OK.** These symptoms are caused by vasoconstriction, rising blood pressure, and changes in your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. All of these changes are a natural part of the fight or flight reaction and will pass when you stop making catastrophic predictions and calm down. When you feel hot or cold, tell yourself, “this will pass in a few minutes”.

**You can feel clear headed.** Confusion, fuzziness and an inability to think are caused by hyper oxygenation and a high concentration of blood in your large muscles. It's all part of your body's automatic preparation for fighting or flight. These feelings can be relieved by slow deep breathing. Tell yourself “I can just breathe deeply and slowly to clear my mind”.

Repeat your coping responses to remind yourself that your symptoms are natural and harmless. You can use the self-statements recommended here or make up your own. For example here is a complete coping statement “my pounding heart is medically safe because my heart could beat this fast for weeks without harm. I can cope because it will pass in a few minutes”. Think about each of your symptoms, why it is harmless, and how you can cope with it. Some people find it useful to write this down.

By using the breathing experiment you will be able to slow down the thoughts and become calm.

Remember you can't panic whilst calm, and you can remain calm.

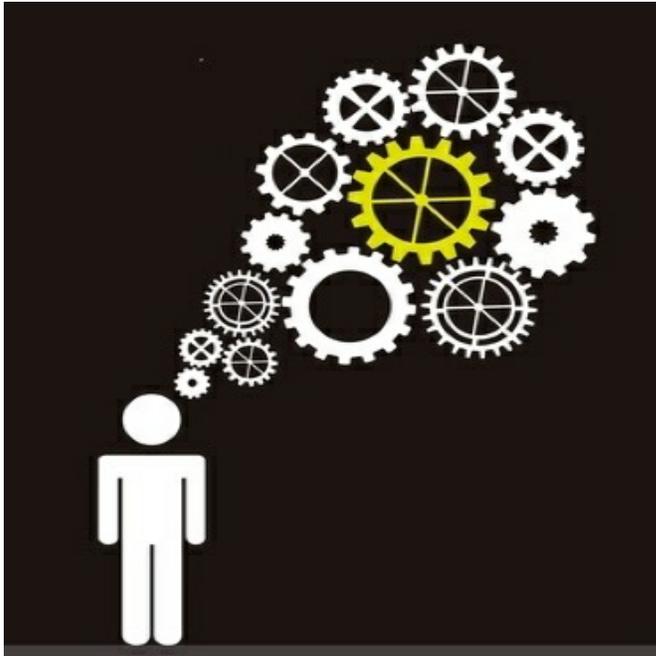
Now pay attention to how you are thinking, and change those thoughts. For you to create anxiety those thoughts, the words that you say to yourself need to be thought in a certain way. No one can feel anxious if they are thinking with a silly voice. What happens if you change the way that you speak to yourself and think those words with a cartoon character's voice; our favourites are Disney characters, such as Mickey Mouse.

What happens when you change those thoughts to sound like Mickey?

Pay attention to the way that you are thinking when you make yourself anxious.

Whats the different between feeling calm and feeling anxious?

How exactly are you thinking what are you thinking?



**Experiment .....**

1. Pay attention to the thoughts in your mind when you feel anxious. The things you say to yourself. Note how and what you think.
2. Now change how you say it to yourself, make it a silly voice or maybe a bored voice and notice the difference. For the anxiety to be created how and what you say to yourself has to be in a specific way; by changing this you change how you feel.
3. What happens when you slow everything down. Think what you would think but this time do so very slowly. Leaving large gaps in between the words, whilst making the voice a bored disinterested one. No one feels anxious whilst bored and disinterested.

It's the way you're thinking and what you are thinking about that causes the way that you feel.

People who feel anxious tend to be on “high alert”, waiting for anxiety to occur. Feeling anxious about the possibility of feeling anxious.

How can you change that?

## Experiment .....

Try this experiment; smile with your whole face including your eyes. Now try and think of something horrible. Its difficult isn't it.

Now smile again, with your whole face, and think of something you really enjoy. Its easier to think of something good whilst you are smiling.

With the smile our brains become wired up for certain signals, and chemicals are released from your brain. Serotonin and Endorphins are released when we smile and when we laugh. Its these chemicals that make us feel good.

Have you ever had that exhausted feeling after a good laugh? The one where your side hurts, your eyes are watering, you can't catch your breath and it feels as if you've just finished a good work out. Laughter and exercise has more in common than most people think, both can boost your health.

Laughter can support the immune system, improve blood pressure, stimulate organs and reduce pain. People feel less pain after a good laugh because it causes the body to release chemicals that act as a natural painkiller.

Laughter can help you feel better about yourself and the world around you, when laughing no other thought comes to mind. It can also induce change in the body's chemistry, after a good laugh you feel better for hours and as you remember that situation you can re-access those feelings all over again.

Amongst other things laughter boosts the immune system, enhances oxygen intake, relaxes muscles throughout the body and triggers the release of endorphins (these are a group of peptides, resembling opiates, they reduce pain and make you feel good) as we have said.

## Experiment .....

1. think of times when you laughed, really laughed. One of those times when you found yourself laughing and it was impossible to stop. Remember how it felt, what you were thinking and feeling vividly.
2. Start chuckling along to yourself as you do this until you are laughing. You may feel silly at first that's OK, that will help with the laughter.
3. As you giggle away, start thinking of the thing that used to make you feel anxious and notice as you laugh at it how it begins to change in your mind.

Whats the difference now?

There is a saying in English, “I’ll laugh about this tomorrow”; why wait. Laughter seems to recode the way that we think about something, changing our perspective.

Many of the people who come to see us think of themselves as anxious people; no one is born anxious this is a learned behaviour/response. Something that has been practiced; and the more we practice something the more we believe in our ability to do it.....

## What you practice you become .....

Most people practice stopping themselves from going for, and achieving what they want, and then beat themselves up for doing such a good job of thinking they are too anxious, shy, unlikeable, unconfident etc. They become experts at their apparent failures by convincing themselves there must be something wrong.

Many think they have failed or made a mistake if they don't get the results they are looking for immediately. Making mistakes, failing is all part of the path to success. Mel Gibson calls failure "school fees", the price you pay for the life you want to live.

If you're not there yet its time to step back, take stock and prepare to move forwards.

Stop for a moment and vividly imagine how your life will be when your problems are solved; when you have the results you want .....

How will your posture be

How will your voice sound

What kind of things will you be saying to yourself

What will you be picturing in your mind

People who worry and feel anxious rarely see things going their way. They usually create disaster movies in their mind running of all the things they don't want but expect to happen. They never consider taking control of their thoughts and changing the way they are thinking.

People tend to be prisoners of their thoughts allowing the thoughts to take them into their problems. Since most anxiety issues are created by your imagination and thus imaginary, all you need are imaginary solutions to change the way you feel.

## Experiment .....

1. Think of the way you are now, with those anxious thoughts.
2. Picture that in you mind. What are you imagining? Do you have a colour picture? Is it a movie or still picture? What size is it?
3. Are there any sounds connected to this picture? If so notice what they are.
4. Notice how you represent that in your mind at the moment.
5. Now put that thought to one side and begin to think about and design what you want instead.

6. What would you look like if you were already in control of your thoughts and behavior, with all the necessary resources that will enable you to have the life you want.
7. Make this image completely compelling and irresistible.
8. Add a compelling voice telling you how you will make this happen, practicing what is needed.
9. You can do this.
10. Put that image to one side and bring back the first image, the one you want to change;
11. And bring back the newly designed image, how you want to be, shrink it down and put it in the bottom left hand corner of the image you want to change
12. Have the newly designed image spring up and grow in size replacing, swishing away the image you want to get rid of. Do this process 5 times in a row very quickly.
13. Each time you swish the images it will be harder to bring back the first image.
14. If after completing the process 5 times you are able to bring back anything from the original image. Imagine draining any colour out completely, turning it black then white, then black then white several times; as the image completely disappears.

In order to learn new habits you have to first practice them, consciously for a period of time before they become unconscious, automatic responses.

This technique will help you to gradually change your body chemistry from that of a distressed state, with too much adrenaline to a more relaxed state where you will have hormones of calmness moving throughout your body. As you practice this technique throughout the day, you will begin to find that the things that used to bother you before no longer seem to bother you as much. With practice you will be more relaxed and in a more resourceful state of mind.

Nothing feels better than being in a calm, relaxed and confident state - taking responsibility for your own emotions and responses.

So remember, you can change the way you feel using your breath. First of all make yourself comfortable and breathe out completely empty your lungs

Breathe in fully, completely filling your lungs to the count of 7 - breathing in through your mouth

Hold that breath for a few seconds and roll your eyes up to the ceiling, keeping your head still and moving your eyes only.

Close your eyes and relax

Breathing out to the count of 11

As you breath out completely, relax your jaw

## Experiments .....

Time to change the way that you feel .....

1. Begin your breathing exercise as above
2. Think of a time when you felt good, really wonderful.
3. Imagine that time in detail. See what you saw, hear what you heard and feel how good you felt.
4. Now with you eyes still closed imagine stepping into that memory, step in and imagine having that experience now
5. Pay attention to the good feeling, notice how it feels and where it is in your body
6. Imagine that feeling spreading all over your body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Imagine it getting stronger as it spreads.
7. Notice how that feels and how the feelings grows stronger as it spreads around your body.
8. Now think of a time in the future when this feeling will enhance the experience and imagine how that feels .....

People tell us that sometimes there is a thought that goes around and around in their mind that makes them feel bad, to stop this .....

1. Begin the breathing exercise
2. Notice that thought and what you say to yourself that makes you feel bad
3. Now change the tone of that thought. First making it sound like Mickey Mouse or similar and notice how that changes the feeling
4. Now slow everything down, leaving huge gaps in between each word. Begin by leaving approximately a 30 second gap
5. Notice how the feelings changes
6. If necessary leave a larger gap

Changing your mood .....

1. When you are in a bad mood three things will be happening, you will be making images that make you feel bad. Designing your disaster movie. Talking to yourself in a pessimistic way and feeling bad. Notice the images,

sounds and feelings that you have given yourself.

2. Putting that to one side, how would you rather be instead, create an image of what you want.
3. Now push the first, negative image away, into the distance and shrink it down to the size of a postage stamp. Now black it out and make it completely white then black then white then black
4. Now bring back the new positive image of what you want in its place

By practicing these techniques you will be able to control those old anxious feelings. Remember what you practice you become ..... People who practice these techniques have said its like having their own internal happy pill.



## What next?

We have, over the last couple of decades discovered that using a mixture of NLP, Hypnotherapy and 'Homework', has enabled many people to 'get their life back'.

So, lets review some basics. The Famous French Philosopher Descartes stated that the essential feature of human consciousness was '*cognita ergo sum*', - "I think, therefore I am'. As we mentioned earlier, we are our thoughts, the contents of our thoughts, the very images we think in create our state. Some 'automatic thoughts' operate on the very margins of our consciousness as a continual monologue and or video show. They can form patterns of thinking (very often false) that preset our reactions. Very simply if these thoughts and images can be identified and changed, then the state of mind/mood that they trigger and sustain can be resolved.

Step 1 then is **Notice what you notice**. This, the first part of a piece of advice borrowed from Dr Richard Bandler creator of NLP, is about discovering **how** you think what you are thinking. Gloria asked a lady she worked with recently to explain her phobia of lifts to her in great detail, almost frame by frame. She struggled for a while because this train of thought happened almost subconsciously. However with some gentle probing she described to her what she saw in her minds eye, what she said to herself, how she felt step by step.

Now, when we get into a lift we might notice the walls, the operating panel, the people in the lift, the floor covering, we might be able to see out and notice our surroundings as we travel up or down. As 'economy of effort' sort of women we always check to see if there is a lift or an escalator around if we need to move up or down a building. Gloria's patient however managed to negatively hallucinate the floor. For a split second somewhere almost buried in her subconscious, she saw in her minds eye the lift shafts gaping mouth and the workings, at some level of consciousness a voice inside was quick to warn her she might fall and die a horrible death, mangled beyond recognition. If we did that to ourselves, then we wouldn't get into a lift either, would you?

Identifying how you are thinking sounds simple, but thoughts and images can wizz by so fast, its like catching one tiny fish in a huge shoal of fish darting quickly through your mind. However its your mind, so you can slow it down and focus on just one bit at a time. Notice the images you make in your minds eye one by one. Gloria's 'lift lady' saw a continuous moving picture in her mind; it was in full colour, life size, really close, and very clear. She had a panoramic video of stepping through the lift door, and falling, spinning round and round as she fell, there was a scream, and the voice in her head was shouting at her "You are gonna die"

This multi media image in her mind triggered a release of the fight or flight hormone's we talked about earlier. As we now know these chemicals promote physical and mental changes which prepare us for either running away from danger, or standing and fighting. Her breathing changed, often she was left either gasping for breath or panting, her muscles tensed, her heart rate went up, and so did her blood pressure, her thoughts raced, and her body froze. In the past she had been taken to the hospital by ambulance with chest pains. It is quite understandable that she had been very careful to avoid lifts for over 25 years!

Knowing just how you do what you do to yourself, in great detail, is the key to making things better.

**Step 2 Notice the difference that makes the difference.** Once you know what you are thinking and how you are thinking it, change a few things, experiment, discover what needs to be changed for you to respond differently. Our patterns of thinking and

responding are recorded in our brain almost in the way music is recorded on an old fashioned vinyl record. Once the needle goes into the groove, the track plays on, unless the record is either scratched or broken. The record can be effectively ruined when you find the right change to make for you.

Some people tends to process information in an auditory way, so for them to work with changing a way of feeling or responding, they pay attention to the soundtrack of their anxiety, what they said to themselves, or what other's were saying to them, the external or internal noises that accompany the feeling. So, remember the earlier experiment where you changed the soundtrack, changed the way that you thought to yourself to change the feelings? That's perfect for them.

Perhaps you have experienced a time in the past where someone has said something hurtful or unpleasant to you. You no doubt replay it from time to time and feel bad.

Just experiment with that, run it like a video with sound in your minds eye. Then speed the film up a little, try adding some funny music like circus music. Perhaps having the person singing what they said like an opera signer is the change you need. Experiment and notice what makes the difference in how you feel.

There are some really effective ways to manage anxiety, once again our thanks to Dr. Richard Bandler whose work with Neuro Linguistic Programming has changed our lives. Read the following suggestions through, and experiment with them over the next few days. I think you will be surprised and delighted at how much better you will feel.

**Try this .....**

1. Think of half a dozen different times when you have felt foolish or embarrassed by your responses to perceived feelings of anxiety or panic.

Make a video of the first time you remember feeling this way, then the second, then the third etc. Run all those video clips together, one after the other in one continuous loop of you looking ridiculous, immobilised by anxiety and panic.

Make the video pictures very big, very bright as you run that video over and over, seeing yourself looking quite ridiculous, feeling really embarrassed by your behaviour. Re run the video until the point where you are saying, "this is stupid, I have had enough, this has to stop now".

2. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in your own private Cinema. A big screen, one big comfy armchair, with a control panel on one arm. You have state of the art technology, you can play, fast forward, rewind any scene from any film really quickly.



Now think of a time where you experienced an anxiety or panic attack, imagine you have made a video of the whole episode, and play the video on the screen over there. Run that video all the way through to the end of the experience, the point where you know you are going to be OK. End it as a freeze frame, so that you have a still image.

Imagine floating up from the chair and merging with the you on the screen, same expression, same position, floating inside yourself in the video freeze frame.

Now imagine the video goes into rewind, really fast. everything goes backwards really fast, with you inside, play some funny music in your head as you rewind to the beginning of the video. Float out of the screen back into your chair. Start the video again and repeat the whole process.

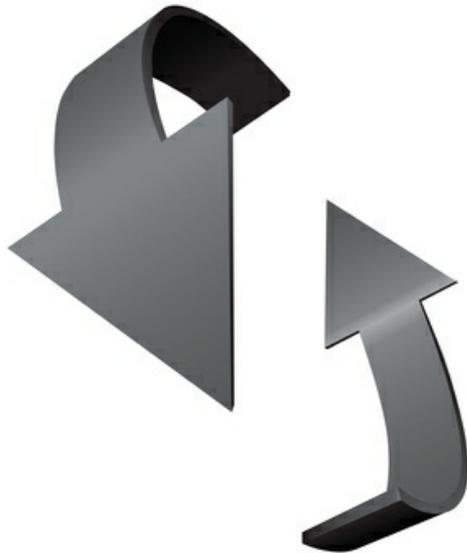
If needed to lessen anxiety, you can repeat this activity until you notice that you no longer feel anxious or panicky at all.

**Try this .....**

Think of a time when you almost wet yourself with laughter, and it was impossible to stop laughing, the more you tried to calm down, the more intense the laughter became. remember how it felt, what you were thinking, as vividly as you can.

Start giggling to yourself as you remember this, keep going until you are really laughing continuously. As you continue to laugh, start thinking of the things that used to make you feel anxious. Notice that as you laugh, the way you think and feel about your anxiety or panic changes.

Think of something that makes you feel anxious, and focus in on the feeling inside, where exactly is the feeling, how does it move? Imagine taking the feeling outside your body, and drawing a diagram in the air to demonstrate the way the feeling spins. Put red arrows to show you the direction that the feeling spins in.



Turn the feeling around, change the arrows from red to blue, and spin the feeling in the opposite direction. Pull it back into your body, keep spinning it faster and faster as you notice how different it feels now.

And finally, remember that the way you feel is a direct result of the images you are running in your minds eye. You can change your mind, and keep the changes.



## Changing your Lifestyle



Another thing that we have noticed with our clients is the tendency to try and self medicate using alcohol. You won't be surprised when we say this doesn't work, in fact it makes things worse, as the following day the anxiety is noticeably aggravated. This led us to explore if there were any ways in which changes in 'diet' might help.

We certainly don't believe that anxiety is caused by what we eat, but there are foods that amplify the symptoms, and foods that might just help. Eating healthier is advised we all know we should listen to.

Research has shown that a better diet with plenty of vegetables really makes a difference. You can start by avoiding foods that may contribute to those uncomfortable feelings. So let's take a look at what the Nutritional experts have discovered.

No surprises when we start with alcohol, ignoring the obvious fact that over indulgence can make us do stupid things which can create more anxiety in your life, alcohol does real physiological harm.

It dehydrates you, causes hormonal imbalance the effects of the toxins causes symptoms that trigger anxiety attacks. We are not advocating total abstinence, just moderation.

Excess coffee is also a known anxiety stimulant, again in moderation, it may not trigger anxiety in most people, but like alcohol the more you drink, the more you increase your risk. Coffee creates a more rapid heartbeat and some sensations that may create anxiety.

Refined sugars are another one to watch. Natural sugars found in fruit isn't too bad, its the processed white sugar used to add to food and drink that are the problem. Like coffee sugar stimulates your body in a way that can cause jitteriness that exacerbates anxiety symptoms.

Dairy products aren't inherently bad for you, but in excess they may heighten adrenaline levels and contribute to a more anxious state. Once again moderation is the key, and be mindful of the effects it has on you.

Fried foods are difficult to digest, and its difficult to reduce your anxiety if your body is struggling to process the food you are eating.

Foods like liver, eggs, pickles, sour cream, yoghurt and wine are acid producing, and some studies have shown that they reduce magnesium levels. This contributes to anxiety in many people, so cutting back on acid forming foods is important.

We have also found that patients who have stopped smoking have later commented that having stopping their anxiety levels dropped drastically. Studies have shown time and time again that the idea that smoking reduces anxiety is a myth. Many people smoke in order to cope with life, but studies have shown that smoking actually increases anxiety.

Ironically the very substances that people use when anxious; food, alcohol, coffee & smoking are probably making the anxiety worse.

Of course avoiding these foods wont cure anxiety, but combined with all the things you now know, it will help, especially if you find that you over consume some of the types of food we have been talking about. Remember, most foods can still be eaten in moderation, but healthier eating is still a very important part of maintaining a more

comfortable way of being.

Remember as Depak Chopra says “The best use of imagination is creativity, the worst use of imagination is anxiety?”



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Working internationally, she is highly sought after for her own elegant take on change work. Her enchanting interpersonal and communication skills enable her to provide a safe environment for her clients to make positive changes and enhancements in both their personal and professional lives in a fun and easy way.

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