



Dealing with Anxiety, Fear and Panic

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Worrying about money, being anxious about job security, worrying about children, fearful of personal security, feeling inadequate – these are the things that occupy the normal mind. Unfortunately, psychology has proven time and time again that the normal mind is plagued by negative thought. This negativity is formed in the subconscious – that part of the mind that was inculcated with this form of negative thinking during our formative years – and is fed by the ubiquity of bad news, negative comment and the horror stories on which the mass media thrive. We are surrounded – from within and without – by negativity.

For many, that negativity leads to anxiety – we become anxious about all the things that we don't want to befall us. Anxiety often leads to fear – again, fearful of the things that we don't want to happen. And, for some, that anxiety can lead to outright panic – and that panic often overtakes us without any prior warning.

The first thing that you need to realize is that, if you are feeling anxious, fearful or panicked, it has nothing to do with you – it is the product of an over-active personality. Your personality – the person that you think you are – is a fiction comprised of all the psychological 'snapshots' that you took during your formative years. You took snapshots of events that made an impression on you at the time and, now, your subconscious mind is using those snapshots to create what you perceive to be your reality. And, because your subconscious automatically pours your energy into these negative emotions, you generally end up proving yourself right – you were right to worry, right to be anxious, right to be fearful – your life becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Psychology tells us that we can only perceive and experience what we expect to perceive and experience. In other words, if we change our expectations, our experience of life will change. This, however, is easier said than done because, as I have already said, not only is your subconscious mind occupied by the long-term squatters of negative thought, you are surrounded by other people who are similarly minded. It is difficult to believe that life could be so different.

What you have to do is start re-building your innate ability to ignore useless, self-sabotaging and negative thought by redirecting your attention to what is real. Reality is only to be found in the here and now. To be blunt, this breath could be your last – you had better get on with experiencing,

living and capitalizing upon the wonder of the here and now. The real here and now is a place where anxiety, fear and panic are simply not. It is a place where real action is taken – action that can move your life in the right direction. It is a place where challenges are met head on – not worried about, panicked over or wallowed in.

However, there is a problem – you cannot suddenly become relaxed, focused and present bang in the midst of adversity. Try telling someone who is in the depths of despair that, in reality, the here and now is the realm of real opportunity and happiness. Try explaining this to someone who has given up on succeeding, having failed over and over. Try telling someone who is in the throes of panic that his or her panic isn't real. It's just not on! Instead, you've got to cultivate your natural ability to present, the innate capacity that we all have to appreciate, experience and live in the here and now – when it doesn't matter, so that you can be fully focused, fully alert, fully present and fully armed, when it really does matter.

You've got to acclimatize your otherwise negative mind to the actual reality of the here and now. You've got to set time aside – diligently and in a disciplined manner – to train your mind to pay attention to reality instead of the negative circus in your head. You can start this training right away – no special fitness equipment is required! Tomorrow morning get up ten or fifteen minutes earlier than usual and deliberately take ten minutes to sit where you won't be disturbed. Pay attention to what your five senses are actually telling you. For starters, you might cut out your visual sense – it will ease your otherwise constant mental tendency to be distracted. So, sit and listen. Focus on what you are actually hearing. Clear your mind of thought, turn off the noise in your head. Pay attention to now – not what your imaginary personality is concocting for you based on its long-held preconceived notions. Get that imposter out of the way – out of your life – and see where life might take you.