

Husband Mastermind Group

Bonus Lesson: Self-Soothing Strategies

The goal of self-soothing isn't to change anything outside of you or to make your anxiety go away. "Self-soothing" simply means to calm the anxiety within you as you move forward in life.

Only conscious people can be aware enough to practice self-soothing but the good news is that it isn't difficult. Even infants learn how to do it.

Here are a few suggestions for self-soothing.

Breathe

When you are stressed, your breathing becomes quick and shallow. Your shoulders hunch forward. When you are feeling stressed, breathe in deeply from your abdomen. Relax your shoulders. This changes the CO2 level in your blood; slows your heartbeat; and relaxes your body and mind. **Breathing is the most effective form of self-soothing.** (Also read the bonus lesson on Diaphragmatic Breathing for more about the method.)

I Can Handle It

Most anxiety is the result of the false belief that you can't handle something. This could include whatever is happening around you in the present moment, or whatever you are imagining in your mind is going to happen at some future time. Your mind is convinced that you can't handle things like rejection or someone being mad at you; things like looking foolish, being found out, being alone, and telling the truth.

The next time you are conscious of feeling anxious, just repeat to yourself, "No matter what happens, I'll handle it." Continue to repeat until your mind starts to believe it. You have handled everything so far in life (even when you didn't believe you could) - you will handle everything else that comes your way. "I can handle it" is one of the most powerful self-soothing techniques you can use.

Gratitude

Much of our anxiety is the result of deprivation thinking. Feeling grateful is very calming because it activates a different part of your brain. Consciously

counting your blessings when you are feeling worried or anxious reminds you that you live in an abundant world. It also helps you to get out of your lizard-brain, and to attune yourself to a different part of your brain. Whenever you find yourself worrying or stressing about something, pause for a few moments and think about some of the things for which you are grateful. Maybe write these blessings down in a journal. Look your gratitude journal over before falling asleep at night, and again when you first wake up in the morning.

Niceness and Perfectionism

Consciously let go of your need to be liked by everyone all the time, and of your need to do everything perfectly. These are two of the biggest anxiety producers. Challenge your distorted beliefs that cause you to both seek approval, and to hide your mistakes.

Be in the Moment

Unless someone is holding a loaded gun to your head, or there is a man-eating tiger crouching next to you in the bushes, you probably don't really have much to be anxious about right at this moment. For most of us, the world we live in really isn't all that dangerous. In contrast to our ancestors who first developed our present emotional response system a hundred thousand years ago, there aren't that many situations where we truly need to fight, run, or hide.

Pause for just a moment. Pay attention to your body and your immediate surroundings. Are you warm enough? Are you well fed? Are you in relatively good health? Are you safe? This is the Now. The present moment usually isn't all that bad. Dwelling in the Now helps soothe the anxiety your mind creates when it's focusing on some moment in the future.

Obsess Appointment

If you have a worry spinning around in your brain; make an Obsess Appointment with yourself. Set aside 10 minutes once a day and CONSCIOUSLY obsess. Whenever you find yourself unconsciously obsessing throughout the day, tell your brain to stop. Limit all obsessing to your obsess appointment. Do this for three days, and you'll be amazed at the results!

Break it Down

Break down whatever is making you anxious into little tasks. The anxious mind tends to make everything into a much bigger deal than it really is. No matter what's in front of you, you don't have to tackle the whole thing. Think of it this way: How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Take Action

Thinking causes anxiety; acting cures it. One of the most powerful ways to soothe your anxiety is to forbid your mind from freaking itself out by over thinking. Overcome the paralysis of analysis, and take action. Instead: do something - anything. If it turns out that your action wasn't the right choice, then learn from it, and do something else. Overcome the tendency to sit and do nothing. **If there is something you need to do, do it now** (It doesn't become less stressful if you wait and do it later)!

A few other suggestions.

Talk to someone; journal; recall past experiences of when you successfully handled similar (or worse) situations; visualize positive outcomes; use humor; meditate; exercise; practice yoga; go for a walk.

Anxiety management keeps you stuck in an endless cycle of worry and paralysis.

Self-soothing allows you to move forward, to embrace the beautiful adventure and serendipity of life!

Your goal is not to make your anxiety go away, but rather to lean into it while you soothe your mind.

Taken from Dr. Robert Glover - <http://www.nomoremrniceguy.com>