

CONSCIOUS ANXIETY PRACTICE

It may be surprising to learn that anxiety, like every emotion, is useful. We are taught to identify emotions only when they're in a heightened state. We tend to think of intense, gut-wrenching anxiety rather than the information and energy it provides.

However, if you can work with anxiety, you will notice how and why it is useful. The number one antidote for anxiety is to write down "what if's" and plan to prevent as much as possible. Talking about this helps as well.



Anxiety (related to fear) helps you plan for the future and complete important tasks. If you connect with your anxiety, it can give you focus, energy and motivation by planning for 'what if's' and concerns. Plus, trying to ignore or suppress anxiety takes a lot of emotional energy, leading to depression (freeze), procrastination and exhaustion.



Anxiety helps you organize, plan for, and complete your tasks – it's related to fear, but it helps you orient to the future rather than to the present only. Anxiety is your task-completion superhero.

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Karla McLaren, EdD

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WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

- Use your journal or some paper and get something to write with
- A timer on your phone or clock



Time for 15 minutes



Write about feelings



Close at 15 minutes

1. BEGIN BY SETTING TIMER AND SAY ALOUD

"I'm consciously honoring and understanding my anxiety now."

- Set your alarm for 15 to 30 minutes
- Write freely about what is on your mind, your worries, concerns, should's, terrors, things that need to get done and "what if's"
- Use questions on the following pages to understand anxiety more

2. MAKE SURE TO ASK

"What are my what if's, both short term and long term?"

"Anxiety, what needs to get done right now?"

"What actions can I take today to help?"

3. WHEN TIME IS UP, CLOSE WITH SOMETHING LIKE

"Thank you anxiety, I am wrapping up the practice now."

DISCIPLING ANXIETY THROUGH THE DAY

At any point during your day, if you feel anxiety, you can gently let yourself know that you will give it time during your scheduled Conscious Anxiety practice. You can also have impromptu practices as needed if you are going through high anxiety.



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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Is there anything I think I should be doing or shouldn't be doing or at least prioritizing?

Anxiety, what do you really need to get done right now?

If I could take ANY ACTIONS today, what actions should be taken?

What have I completed recently that may have loose ends? Anything unfinished that I have avoided or forgotten about?

What are my "what if's?" right now?

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Are there any upcoming due dates I may be concerned about?

Do I need more information about anything going on right now?

Is there anything I have overlooked? Have I been avoiding or procrastinating anything lately?

What are the BIG things in life that are really disappointing me right now or bothering me?

Who or what do I need to remember to place as a priority?

Can I delegate my tasks or is anyone else capable to help? Who could I ask and how could I communicate this to them?

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EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Am I spending too much time on 'busyness' and mundane tasks and not enough focus on my big ideas and dreams? Describe possibilities.

What do I need to do to prepare for any major concerns right now?

Do I have more "What if's" that you haven't already listed above? For example, "What if I am single forever?" "What if I'm sad forever?" "What if overweight forever?" List as many "What if's" that show up.

Ask your Anxiety if it trusts you to listen to it and take it seriously. If you have high-levels of anxiety it is likely your anxiety does not TRUST you to listen to it or take it seriously.

Since you may have made some agreements to take action, it is essential to do what you've agreed to for yourself. Plan for action steps in the right direction for anything you need to prioritize right now.



In its intense state, anxiety may be a feedback loop, feeling anxious about feeling anxiety which is initiated by things internally, such as an increase in adrenaline, cortisol, heart rate, or other physical conditions unrelated to anxiety's real message. When you realize anxiety is trying to help you and you are curious towards it and working with it, anxiety subsides.

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If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, in danger of hurting yourself or others, feeling suicidal, overwhelmed, or in crisis, you can access the following resources to find help.

If you are experiencing an emergency dial 911

Crisis Text Line www.crisistextline.org

Suicide Prevention 988lifeline.org

National Domestic Hotline www.thehotline.org