

ANXIETY

Why you have it, How it works and What you can do about it.

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Anxiety

Introduction

I am primarily a hypnotherapist but more and more now I find myself using tools designed to combat Anxiety.

I decided to specialise in Anxiety, or rather Anxiety presented itself to me as something I need to spend more time with, because the majority of clients coming to me were presenting with it. It found me.

In order to 'keep my axe sharp' as the saying goes, I was doing more research and general reading around this topic, than anything else.

I developed a deep interest in the why and how of anxiety in the mind.

In this book I want to show you what anxiety is, how it works and why we need to do something about it.

I'll also give you some tips and tools to combat anxiety in your life.

Anxiety is a dreadful condition, but is one which we bring upon ourselves. So it stands to reason that we can do something about it.

What is Anxiety?

In a nutshell, Anxiety is a feeling of worry based on an upcoming event or maybe something with an uncertain outcome.

It is usually about the future and sometimes about the present and can be described as catastrophising anticipation. Always expecting the worst case scenario.

Anxiety is never about the past. That would be a traumatic memory with emotional attachment, of varying degrees of complexity. Take PTSD for example. A similar feeling maybe, but much more severe and based on an Initial Sensitising Event (ISE), usually deemed as life threatening.

In one sense, Anxiety is a human emotion, provoked by an overacting conscious mind. A never ending cycle of 'What if...?' scenarios. What if I didn't turn the stove off?, What if I can't escape the car if we crash? These are just two examples of thoughts that can lead to a spiraling train of thought that can and often does, lead to a full on panic attack. A Cortex derived anxiety pattern.

There is another route to Anxiety and that is much more direct. When the Amygdala in your brain are triggered by an event and that instantly propels you into a full on Anxiety attack with no warning.

We will look at these two routes individually in a little while.

Anxiety is often associated with the failure to satisfy one or more of the basic human needs. These are....

If something is missing in life it can quite easily trigger anxiety to fill that space. For example...

How does Anxiety Start?

It's now widely thought, that at a high level, Anxiety starts in one of two ways.

It either comes about by spiraling negative thoughts that lead to a spike in the Amygdala in the brain, or it is more instantaneous, where it comes on quickly as a direct result of a trigger. A direct hit on the amygdala with no spiraling thoughts before hand.

Worrying about anything and everything is a more Generalized Anxiety disorder. Something that puts the individual in a situation, where control appears to be lost.

By extending this thought we can see that Anxiety is not something that is being done to you, rather it's something you are doing to yourself.

Once you understand that, realization that you are controlling it means that you can change what you are doing.

Later, I will show you some easy tactics to take control of the anxious spiral before it becomes overwhelming.

To really get rid of anxiety though, I'd advise on seeing a therapist who can guide your unconscious mind into new behavior patterns. Creating new neural pathways to replace the old anxious behavior loops. This can be done in as few as 2 or 3 sessions. My view is that you learned how to

do this quite quickly so it is just as easy and quick to unlearn it and do something else.

Just a word here on Fear. Fears of specific things bring out the same feelings. The difference though between simple Fears and Anxiety is that Anxiety does not have a specific root. No initial sensitizing event. Anxiety is when you have those feelings but there is no immediate danger.

The way we treat the two is quite different as well.

So, as a therapist, it is essential to question correctly during any initial consultation, to find out the true make-up of the feelings being presented.

Stress cannot be prevented, only managed, because life regularly throws all kinds of things at each of us. But, as often as not, stress isn't generated by external circumstances; rather, it's generated by subjective perceptions. These include unrealistic expectations, such as crippling perfectionism or rigid ideas about how others "should" be, a need for things to be orderly and predictable in rigid ways when too little of life is that way, a belief that you're too fragile or vulnerable to cope with problems, or any of a great many ways people torment themselves with their own internal issues.

One particular aspect of anxiety bears special consideration, if only briefly. It has to do with the foundation of anxiety. There are two separate but related structural components of most people's anxiety: (1) the tendency to overestimate the risks one faces; and (2) the tendency to underestimate one's resources or abilities to manage those risks successfully

The Main Types of Anxiety

Anxiety has been categorized into the following specific diagnosable disorders. Although as I explained above, there really are only two ways anxiety can strike, 1) from the frontal cortex (overworrying, thinking etc) or 2) directly from the Amygdala (Flight, Fright or Freeze – trauma, phobia etc).

In the description titles below I'll indicate with a 1 or a 2 to identify where the source is likely to be for each.

These categories are:-

- Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Panic disorder
- Social anxiety disorder
- Phobias
- Agoraphobia
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Skin picking
- Hair pulling
- Post-traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD)

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) (1)

The main symptom of GAD is over worrying about different activities and events. A general feeling of no control over what's affecting you. You experience most of the anxiety symptoms a lot of the time.

This can have a big impact on your life. You might find that it affects your ability to work, travel places or leave the house. You develop general avoidance tactics to try and minimise the experience.

This type of anxiety can result in depression if left untreated.

GAD can be difficult to diagnose because it does not have unique identifying symptoms. Your doctor is likely to say you have GAD if you have felt anxious for most days over six months and it has had a negative impact on most areas of your life.

Panic disorder (2)

Panic attacks can strike at random and reach full intensity rapidly, causing more stress and anxiety over what might be happening.

Further anxiety can come from worrying about when the next one might strike.

You could have a panic attack and not be aware of the trigger when you have Panic Disorder.

Panic disorder symptoms can include the following.

- An overwhelming sense of dread or fear
- Chest pain or a sensation that your heart is beating irregularly
- Feeling that you might be dying or having a heart attack
- Sweating and hot flushes or chills and shivering
- A dry mouth, shortness of breath or choking sensation

- Nausea, dizziness and feeling faint
- Numbness, pins and needles or a tingling sensation in your fingers
- A need to go to the toilet
- A churning stomach
- Ringing in your ears

You may also dissociate during a panic attack. Such as feeling detached from yourself.

Phobias can lead to panic attacks if exposure to the trigger happens suddenly and can't be avoided. For instance someone who is afraid of flying experiences severe turbulence on an unavoidable flight.

Social anxiety disorder (1)

Not the same as simply worrying about an occasion. This is an intense dread of an upcoming social engagement. The symptoms might even be mild before the event and manifest into something else at the time it happens. It's often called Social Phobia, which better describes how the symptoms can manifest.

Some common situations where you may experience anxiety are the following:

- Meeting new people or strangers
- Dating
- Eating or drinking in public

You may be worried about what others are thinking about you and that

they are watching and judging you all the time. You might feel aware of the physical signs of your anxiety. This can include sweating, a fast heartbeat, a shaky voice and blushing. This in turn leads to more anxiety by worrying that people will notice these.

Phobias (2)

A phobia is an overwhelming fear of an object, place, situation, feeling or animal. Phobias are stronger than fears. They develop when a person has increased feelings of danger about a situation or object. Someone with a phobia may arrange their daily routine to avoid the thing that's causing them anxiety.

Typical examples of phobias are listed here:

- Animal phobias, e.g. spiders, snakes or rodents
- Environmental phobias, e.g. heights and germs
- Situational phobias, e.g. going to the dentist
- Body phobias, e.g. blood or being sick
- Sexual phobias, e.g. performance anxiety

Agoraphobia (1)

Agoraphobia is a fear of being in situations where escape might be difficult. Or situations where help wouldn't be available if things go wrong. This could be the following.

- Leaving your home

- Being in public spaces
- Using public transport
- Being in crowded spaces

You might find that these situations make you feel distressed, panicked and anxious. You may avoid some situations altogether. This can affect day-to-day life.

Agoraphobia can make it difficult to make an appointment with your GP to talk about your symptoms. You might not feel able to leave your house or go to the GP surgery. You can arrange a telephone appointment if you have symptoms of agoraphobia. A GP will decide on the best treatment options for you depending on what you tell them.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) (1)

You will have obsessions, compulsion or both if you have OCD.

- Obsession - An obsession is an unwelcome thought or image that you keep thinking about and is largely out of your control. These can be difficult to ignore. These thoughts can be disturbing, which can make you feel distressed and anxious.
- Compulsion - A compulsion is something you think about or do repeatedly to relieve anxiety. This can be hidden or obvious. Such as saying a phrase in your head to calm yourself. Or checking that the front door is locked.

You might believe that something bad will happen if you do not do these things. You may realise that your thinking and behaviour is not logical but still find it very difficult to stop.

There are different types of OCD, which include:

- Contamination - A need to clean and wash because something or someone is contaminated
- Checking - The constant need to check yourself or your environment to prevent damage, fire, leaks or harm
- Intrusive thoughts - Thoughts which are repetitive, upsetting and often horrific
- Hoarding - Not feeling able to throw away useless or worn out items

Speak to your GP if you think you have OCD. They should discuss treatment options with you. Or you could try to self-refer to an NHS talking treatment service.

Skin Picking (1)

Skin picking is medically known as dermatillomania. It is an impulse control disorder. You will regularly pick at your skin. Often you will pick healthy skin. This can cause damage to your skin, including bleeding, bruising and sometimes permanent marks. You will usually pick the skin on your face, but might also pick other areas of the body. You might find it difficult to stop yourself doing it.

No one knows the cause for skin-picking. It is thought that it could be a type of addiction. Or it relieves tension and stress. It is common to have OCD and dermatillomania at the same time.

Your GP may arrange for you to see a specialist mental health doctor like a psychiatrist for diagnosis.

Hair pulling (1)

Hair pulling is medically known as trichotillomania. It is an impulse control disorder. You feel the urge to pull out your hair if you have this condition. This can be from your scalp or other places such as your arms, eyelashes, legs or pubic area. You might find it difficult to stop yourself doing this.

You might experience a build-up of tension which you can relieve by pulling out the strand of hair. You might not even be aware that you're doing it.

It can be difficult to stop, which can lead to hair loss. This in turn can make you feel guilty, embarrassed and affect how you feel about yourself or how your friends and family see you.

Your doctor will look at the following to diagnose your condition:

- You repeatedly pull your hair out, causing noticeable hair loss
- You feel increasing tension before you pull your hair out
- You feel relief or pleasure when you have pulled your hair out
- There are no underlying illnesses, such as a skin condition, causing you to pull your hair out
- Pulling your hair out affects your everyday life or causes you distress.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (2)

You might have PTSD if your anxiety symptoms were caused by a threatening life situation. Such as a train crash or fire. You can feel anxious for months or years after the event even if you weren't physically harmed at the time.

What are the Symptoms of Anxiety?

Mental symptoms of anxiety can include:

- racing thoughts,
- uncontrollable over thinking,
- difficulties concentrating,
- feelings of dread, panic or 'impending doom',
- feeling irritable,
- heightened alertness,
- problems with sleep,
- changes in appetite,
- wanting to escape from the situation you are in, and
- dissociation.

Dissociation is when you feel *out of your body*. Watching things happen but not feeling them.

Physical symptoms of anxiety can include:

- sweating,
- heavy and fast breathing,
- hot flushes or blushing,
- dry mouth,
- shaking,
- hair loss,
- fast heartbeat,
- extreme tiredness or lack of energy

- dizziness and fainting, and
- stomach aches and sickness.

Why Does It Feel So Bad?

Once your brain enters the Anxiety state, your body is put on auto control instantly. Preparing you for Flight, Fight or Freeze.

If you had to stop and consciously think about your actions when you are in a real, life-threatening situation, you would almost certainly perish.

Auto control means your brain automatically ordering the release of panic hormones such as Adrenaline and Cortisone. This increases your strength, alertness and response times, along with corresponding heart and breathing rates.

Enabling you to protect yourself by running away very fast, fight the evil foe or less commonly in humans, freeze on the spot and play dead.

The problem is when your body is prepared and there is no danger.

Those hormones are still released but are not used up. They remain floating around in your system making you feel really ill. They are poisonous if they are left to linger for too long and will make you physical ill.

As the initial panic/anxiety subsides, you might start to shake and be 'in a state of shock'. This is the body's response to excess Cortisone.

This also why anyone who experiences unusual amounts of anxiety must exercise. Exercise will disperse these hormones and is something I recommend to all my anxious clients.

How Big is The Problem?

A certain level of Anxiety is normal and quite necessary for us to survive, but when it rises to debilitating levels, it becomes a problem.

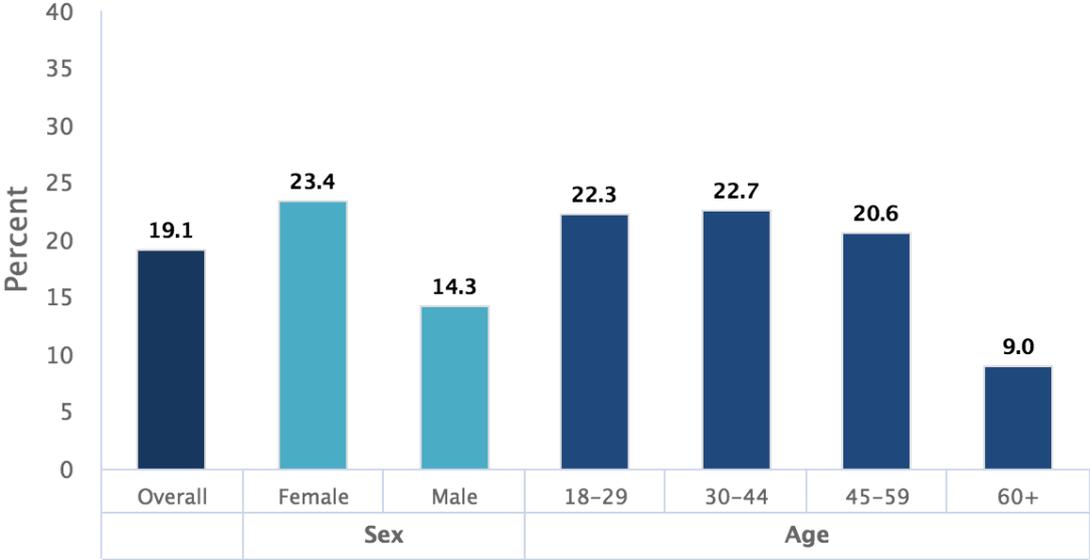
Anxiety is a growing concern. Once the domain of an individuals suffering in silence, it is now a widely recognized symptom of modern life.

1 in 13 people worldwide are suffering from anxiety at a level that makes life uncomfortable. That's around 275 million people. 62% of those are women. The disparity between male and female figures may be because, generally, men will suffer in silence, not wishing to display a weakness. But whoever you are, it limits lifestyle, often causing people to use avoidance to steer clear of anything that might trigger the attacks.

World Mental Health issues are expected to cost over \$16 Trillion by 2030.

The message here is you're not alone. So don't suffer in silence.

This is an older chart but it shows nicely the prevalence of anxiety.



More and more young people are being sucked into a life of misery by lifestyle patterns that did not exist only a few years ago.

Constant exposure to social media platforms to see what other people are up to, leads to comparison issues and an overall perception of low self worth if your life is not so razzle dazzle.

This is so unhealthy and it's ruining the younger generations.

Disregard the fact that nobody's life can be that perfect or that you're only seeing a glimpse of what others want you to see, youngsters are comparing themselves against a fantasy and coming up short. That can only lead one way.

I see more and more youngsters with increasing levels of social anxiety because they expect everyone around them to be judging them. Eventually they realize it's not right and seek help.

What Happens If It's Left Untreated?

Cortisol is released due to stress and anxiety. It is the product of the chemical interaction between your stressed brain and your kidneys. This, in some instances, is beneficial. In a danger situation we use the Cortisol to generate an extra burst of energy, to help in our fight or flight situation.

The problem is when stress is ongoing and this response is not switched off.

Excess Cortisol rots the brain – quite literally.

It depletes the hippocampus – the part of your brain dealing with learning and stress control. When this weakens, the result is less ability to deal with stress. This loop left untreated, can eventually lead to breakdowns and much worse.

Exercise and relaxation both reverse the affects excess cortisol has.

We all know the parrot fashion method of cramming new knowledge, just repeating the same things over again until it sticks.

That's not necessarily the most efficient method though.

Recent research has shown that Fears and trauma triggers for instance, are stored in long term memory when they become attached to an event. This is how they break through the critical awareness state and become

lodged in long term memory (or the subconscious mind). So, every time these events are encountered the associated behavior is triggered. Even worse, every time they trigger it is confirmation to the subconscious that this is the correct thing to do!

Luckily, the brain is adaptive and can be told that this is not what is needed and trained to do something much more acceptable.

Hypnosis can be used to address any and all of these sorts of issues, not only calming people but also teaching more realistic thinking, greater flexibility, and better problem-solving skills.

There are other methods that can achieve this but hypnosis is by far the speediest, most reliable and comfortable route to recovery. Combining relaxation with pleasant images and telling the subconscious that this is the preferred response, for instance.

This is known as neuroplasticity and is quite natural. This is what happens whenever we learn anything new. More recent research using MRI scans etc, has shown that even adult brains are efficient at these changes. Contrary to what was previously thought, that after puberty, activity in the brain was essentially negative. Old folks can learn new stuff!

So where does this lead us.

We need to break this loop that allows the Cortisol to do it's work.

Not all of us are predisposed to doing more exercise, if you can then all well and good. But luckily we have another tool in the box.

Relaxation and turning your thoughts inward, focusing internally, will help break this cycle.

The more often you break this cycle, the weaker it becomes.

Why The Drugs Don't Work

Unfortunately, these days, for what I believe are a variety of reasons, Doctors are too quick to prescribe drugs when patients present with Anxiety.

This, coupled with counselling and psychotherapy that in this day and age is seen as clumsy and slow, is a recipe for apathy in people, that could quite easily lead happy productive lifestyles.

It doesn't have to be this way. But what I promote is not widely accepted and mainstream medicine sniggers and poo poo's 'alternative' approaches as being 'out there' with no evidence and research.

That from a body that prescribes drugs that even the simple placebo effect out performs. It's a fact that one of my mentors, Richard Bandler, in the 1960's was so disenchanted with this fact, that he tried to patent a simple sugar pill with absolutely no medicinal value whatsoever. He called it Placebo and printed this very fact all over the label. Completely open honest and truthful.

He was barred and blocked from doing this. Told in no uncertain way that he was never going to be allowed to produce his 'pill'. Why?

Big Pharma Cover Up!

(Adrian gets off high horse. High horse exits stage left)

Ok, so what do the commonly prescribed drugs for Anxiety actually do for/to you.

Your brain is a complex, powerful, living, regenerative organ. It rewires and modifies itself with every new experience you encounter.

As you encounter experiences throughout your life you create filters based on these experiences that determine how you will respond in similar experiences as life goes on. Over time you build up a complex set of filters that determine how you as an individual see the world. Only you see the world in the way that you do. Everybody has different experiences in life and so ends up with a different set of filters.

That, in a nutshell, is why two people can react totally differently to identical stimuli.

The filter building process goes on all your life, shaping your world.

Anxiety can limit this process by restricting experience down to your 'comfort zone'. Avoidance takes over and change becomes minimal. Preserving the anxiety state. Nasty loop that one.

So, hey doc, give me some pills!

Medications can help reduce the symptoms of anxiety, BUT, they do not and cannot provide you with the new learning experiences that will divert

those old pathways into pastures new. In fact, worse, some of them will mess with the way the brain works and stop it doing this altogether.

Building up resistance and accommodating anxiety.

If we take a similar analogy, say someone who has sprained their ankle and it's painful and swollen. Taking Ibuprofen may reduce the pain and the inflammation, to a point where it is bearable. But would you then conclude that the reason your ankle was hurting and swollen was because you didn't have enough Ibuprofen in your system?

I guess not, so hence my stance on chemicals and Anxiety. Pills will not get rid of it for good.

With that in mind let's look at some of the common anxiety pills being prescribed in their millions on a daily basis. I will mention the overall group identity and some examples of each.

Benzodiazepines – Diazepam (Valium), Lorazepam, Clonazepam

These little babies will numb your soul. They work on anxiety by restricting activity in the Amygdala. Unfortunately, the way they do this is not restricted to just that part of the brain. So, they have side effects that include weakness, feeling sedated and lack of focus.

Long term use can cause dependency and tolerance. That in turn can increase anxiety. Terrific. The user may not realise that they have become dependant and may well conclude that their anxiety is getting worse by itself. Dependency is not caused by overuse as such, just by regular use.

This is why coming off these should not be attempted without consulting with a doctor.

Rather frustratingly, because a regular daily dosage of benzodiazepines affects how the brain learns and subsequently restricts rewiring, it makes it extremely difficult to deal with the anxiety in therapy. Neurons must fire in order to rewire and this is blocked by this type of drug.

SSRIs and SNRIs – Sertraline, Fluoxetine, Citalopram, Duloxetine

Frequently called anti-depressants as they are primarily used to treat depression. But they are often prescribed for Anxiety.

These drugs take some time to kick in and do not provide immediate relief.

Side effects are wide, such as nausea, weight gain, headaches, insomnia, dizziness and loss of sexual response.

They were initially designed to increase the levels of serotonin, as this was expected to promote a greater feeling of wellbeing. It was believed that depression was caused by an imbalance of serotonin in the brain.

Serotonin is a happy chemical that the brain releases naturally. The increase in serotonin levels is immediate when taking these drugs, but the benefit is not. It's not known why that is.

In fact little is known on how these drugs work. How they affect the brain and what regions they affect is still being studied.

This category of drugs are not addictive but again stopping them too quickly can result in withdrawal symptoms.

Beta-Blockers – Propranolol, Atenolol, Metoprolol

These are not prescribed to affect Anxiety itself, rather the symptoms associated with Anxiety. Trembling and increased heart rate.

They block adrenalin, so are often used by sportsmen or performers prior to a concert performance. Sports use is usually in areas where a steady hand is required, such as shooting and archery.

They are for infrequent use, used daily they can lead to dependence.

Side effects are dizziness, breathing difficulty, nausea, coldness of hands and feet and tiredness. They can even cause depression, rather bizarrely.

So, these are the most common types of drugs prescribed for Anxiety.

None of them cure anything, they only mask symptoms and if taken for long periods are known to cause problems. So why use them at all???

Dealing With Anxiety Head On, My Way

I'm going to give you here some techniques that can help you nip the anxiety attack in the bud. To control it and stop it getting out of proportion.

Read them through, decide what feels right for you and use it as often as you can.

The more often you use a technique the stronger it will become. Like exercising a muscle over and over.

Just a word of guidance, if you are measuring the anxiety levels within yourself to decide if things are working, it's useful to give your feelings a score out of 10. The higher the number the worse the feeling.

Do this before you start and then after each run through of the technique. Always, always get yourself to a 0 out of 10. Leave nothing behind.

Breathing in 7/11 Time

Now, one of the first responses to shift when we start to feel anxious, is our breathing. We need to pump around more oxygen for all the heavy exercise our survival requires.

What anxiety tends to do, is quicken the breathing, what you tend to do

is gulp air. This is also what we do during heavy exercise, because our muscles need all the oxygen they can get.

When we breathe *in* we activate the *sympathetic nervous system* – the part that has to do with fight or flight, heavy exercise and arousal. When we breathe *out* we activate the *parasympathetic nervous system* – the part that relaxes and calms us.

People will often sigh (slowly breathe out) when they are stressed as their body seeks to balance out their arousal levels.

This 7/11 breathing method involves breathing *in* to the quick count of 7 (*not* 7 seconds), pausing for a moment, breathing *out* to the quick count of 11, pausing for a moment again, and repeating. The numbers don't matter so much. The important thing here is that the out breath is slower and longer than the in breath.

Promoting peace over panic.

You simply cannot be anxious if you are relaxed.

It's impossible.

And this technique has a ripple effect. There are benefits beyond just directly and quickly calming the person:

1) Focusing on breathing is a distraction. The fear response then might believe, "I wouldn't be focusing on my breathing if there really were an immediate threat!"

2) Try to use 7/11 breathing (or 5/9 breathing) while you *imagine* whatever it is you feel afraid of (the 'trigger'). In this way we start to

change the physiological response associated with that trigger and literally rewire your brain.

Spinning

I don't mean spinning your body round and round, that would be silly and just make you feel sick!

This is a specific technique that does something else wonderful in your brain. It's a technique that again, rewires your brain by changing the submodalities (characteristics if you like) of the anxiety response, into it's opposite. Therefore, changing the way the anxiety response develops.

It starts like this...

- Get the Feeling:- Put your self in the situation that gives you anxiety. Really try to ramp up those feelings.
- Close your eyes and notice where you feel the feeling.
- Realise that if that feeling were spinning in one direction, which way it is spinning.
- Think of a colour that represents the feeling. Then imagine arrows around the edge of the spinning feeling in that colour.
- Notice what speed the arrows are spinning at. And slow them down.
- Slow the arrows right down and bring them to a stop.
- Make the arrows spin in the opposite direction and change the arrow colour to something that represents how you'd rather feel. Add some sparkle. Calm, relaxed etc.

- Notice the difference in the feeling now and speed the arrows up in this new direction.
- keep the arrows spinning until you feel much better.

Quite often, with repeated use, this will get easier and the feeling can automatically flip and stabilize.

Bi-Lateral Stimulation

This last technique is a means of defeating anxiety directly in the brain. It works because Anxiety lives predominantly in the left hemisphere. By triggering activity in both hemispheres, the anxiety deflates.

- 1) Start by getting the feeling as in Spinning above. Rate the feeling you have on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being worse.
- 2) Get yourself a ball or something with a little weight to it and hold it in one hand.
- 3) The aim is to pass the ball from one hand to the other in the middle of your body.
- 4) Hold the feeling in your mind.
- 4) When you pass the ball, leave the passing hand where it is, in the middle of your body. Whilst move the receiving hand away to the side.
- 5) Bring the ball back to the middle and pass back to the other hand, leaving the other passing hand where it is in the middle.
- 6) Pass the ball backwards and forwards like this for a few minutes.
- 7) Try and focus on the anxious feeling all the time. Notice as the feeling starts to fade. At some point stop and re-calibrate the feeling on the scale of 1 to 10.
- 8) Always try to continue until the feeling is at zero.

Japanese magic

These next two simple tips come from Japanese energy medicine and shown to me by Mike Mandel, an amazing Canadian Hypnotist.

The first one is for that anxiety that comes from the Cortex. The overthinking, overworrying type. Like a fear of flying, for example.

All you need to do is focus on what you are concerned about and grasp a thumb, either thumb, in the grip of the opposite hand. Grip it firmly, but not so tight as to cut off the blood supply.

After a few seconds or maybe even a couple of minutes you should feel a pulsing sensation. That's great and means it's working. Continue gripping the thumb until the worry or fear has subsided completely.

This can be especially useful if you wake up in the middle of the night and start the worry wheel spinning. Just grasp your thumb and you could find yourself dropping back off to sleep in a few minutes.

If, however, the worry has tripped over into a full on Amygdala panic stations. Let's say that flight has met some strong turbulence or you feel a Panic Attack coming on, swap the thumb for an Index finger. The first finger on either hand.

Do the same thing and again after a short while things should start to calm down.

How can I get rid of it altogether?

The techniques above are great at impacting anxiety levels on the fly. They can over time, if used regularly help you defeat your anxiety.

However if you want quick release from the anxiety prison, for ever, you will need the help of an experienced therapist.

For instance, in my clinic I aim to get rid of any anxiety in 3 sessions. Utilising powerful eye movement techniques, along with hypnotherapy to dissolve those old neural pathways, helping to rewire your brain naturally.

There is slowly building up a wealth of study and information that backs up the theory that hypnosis has a beneficial effect on a wide range of symptoms, especially anxiety and anxiety related conditions.

I have helped many, many clients get over anxiety. That's proof to me that there's something in this.

I hope I can help you.