Use This Trick to Calm Your Anxiety Right Now

by LACINDA AYERS

How to Relieve Anxiety and Anxiousness

Some of the scariest moments in my life can be attributed to not knowing how to calm anxiety. There were times I felt I had no control whatsoever and I wasn't sure what would happen next.

I feel so fortunate to have come to realize what works for me, and even more so to be able to share it with others.

Using the "Disappearing Exercise"

Last year, I attended a series of seminars designed to help everyday people realize their true potential in life. There I learned of something called the "disappearing exercise."

During the seminar, I used the exercise to get rid of a headache, but I quickly realized its value in the face of a panic attack.

The foundation upon which the exercise was built is the brilliant work done by a Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung, who said, "What you resist will not only persist but will grow in size."

Although I've found many ways to ease my symptoms over the years, this exercise remains the only thing that's proven time and time again to provide relief within minutes. Upon first learning how it worked, I did the work with a partner. I've since found that going through the steps alone is just as effective.

Close your eyes for the duration of the question and answer process. It will keep you from being distracted.

How to Calm Anxiety And Your Anxious Mind

Every time I feel anxious or my anxiety is taking over my overwhelmed mind, I ask myself these questions to relax both my mind and anxiety.

Why Do You Feel This Way?

The first step is to identify why you feel the way you do. So ask yourself (or have someone ask you) for your story about your anxiety.

Why Are You Anxious?

This is an opportunity, to be honest without judgment, so it's imperative to speak freely, saying the first thing that comes to mind. If you have more than one story, just say so. Give life to your feelings. Acknowledge them as real by saying it aloud.

Some examples might be:

- I'm panicked because I lost my job today.
- I'm nervous because so-and-so is ignoring me.
- I feel anxious because I dropped my bright red lipstick on the white carpet.

How Are You Feeling Physically?

Second, you want to notice how you're feeling physically.

- Where do you feel your anxiety?
- What does it feel like?

Scan your body and find where you're feeling the tension, pain, or discomfort of any kind. List the places and sensations one by one. Be specific.

Take your time and explore what you're going through, and again, say it aloud.

Rate Your Anxiety From a Scale of 1 to 10

The final step is to rate your anxiety on a scale of one to ten. As with the first question, just say what comes to mind first. No need to overthink it or worry about what it means to you to admit you're freaking out a bit. Just be honest. No judgments.

Once you've gotten all of that out of the way, start over. You (and your partner – if you have one) should go through this process until the number on your scale slides all the way down to a big fat zero.

So now you're wondering, how does this work?

My Own Experiences With Calming Anxiety

As mentioned, I first participated in this exercise to rid myself of a headache. I didn't have much faith in the seminar leader when she told me the only requirement to "disappear" the throbbing in my head was simply wanting it to go away.

My story was that the lights were bright, I hadn't had enough water, and the leader's voice was bothersome. I pointed to a spot on my forehead that hurt and described it as a stabbing pain. I then rated it at a six.

The second time around, my story was less dramatic. I just thought of the lights. Then the stabbing felt more like heat, and the number decreased to a four.

The third time, all I could say was, "I have a headache." I couldn't even recall any of the reasons I thought my head hurt in the first place. The heat that used to be stabbing was just gone.

Then she asked me to rate my pain on a scale of one to ten, and I laughed. I opened my eyes, abruptly remembering I was on a stage in front of hundreds of people and laughed at the insane reality of knowing my headache disappeared. It blew my mind.

In Conclusion...

The way I see it, there are a few things that happened up there that day. Most importantly, I was able just to be. Though it started out with me judging my headache by creating a story to go along with it, by the end of the exercise, I had no attachments left to a headache at all and the stories evaporated.

Additionally, I stopped fighting my headache. By becoming an observer of it, I was able to be separate from it.

And as Carl Jung believed, I ceased to resist, and it stopped persisting.

Try it. It will feel silly at first, and may even be frustrating if you’re at the height of anxiety at the time, but it will be worth it.

I hope that you, like me, will feel the anxiety fall away realizing you are not your anxiety, but merely a witness to it.