Anxiety and Memory Loss

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The Relationship Between Anxiety and Memory Loss

Anxiety is condition when people exposed to long periods of stress often tend to “overthink”. People with anxiety worry about minor problems and often are trapped inside their own minds and think “what if”. This condition has not only psychological but also physical symptoms. Some of the symptoms of anxiety can include sleep disorders, constant worry and anxious thoughts, panic attacks, hormone changes and brain issues.

Is Anxiety Causing Memory Loss or Vice Versa?

It’s hard to actually say if your memory loss is due to anxiety or some other problem. However people with anxiety can experience some physical symptoms that are linked to memory loss. Anxious people go through some hormone and brain chemistry changes that can actually cause memory loss issues. The most common anxiety symptoms that can lead to memory loss include:

- **High levels of Stress Hormone:** The stress hormone in our body is known as cortisol. People who suffer from anxiety produce high level of this hormone which can directly affect the brain function and cause memory loss. Often people with anxiety find it difficult to focus and have short term memory issues. This can include difficulty to create short term memories and/or forget them easily.

- **Difficulties with concentration:** Having anxiety actually means that you are using your brain in the most intense way without a rest. People with anxiety are consumed with thought and often it is hard for them to focus on memories. When you use your brain in such an active way it is sometimes difficult to create memories or to recall them. Often you are producing so many anxious thoughts that they can actually replace your short term memories in battle for space.

- **Sleep Disorders:** Most of the people who suffer from anxiety experience different issues with their sleep. Often people find it hard to fall asleep or wake up frequently during the night which can cause sleep deprivation. It is proven that sleep deprivation can cause memory loss issues. Sleep is the time when your brain focuses on your thoughts and turns them into memories. Sleep deprivation means that you don’t get enough or healthy enough sleep and you brain cannot fully create your memories.

- **Change of your priorities:** As we said, anxious people often get trapped in their own thoughts. This means that a person with anxiety tends to focus on all the negative thoughts and forget the good ones. Those people often focus and pay much more attention on their own present negative thoughts and don’t think about their past which eventually turns into memory loss issues.

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Keeping Your Memories

If you are experiencing memory loss issues the first thing that you should think about is to seek the help of professional. Just make sure to exclude any other factors that may cause your memory loss and prove that this is consequence of your anxiety. Keep in mind that memory loss is actually a normal thing and your memory function is decreasing with age. Even if you are in your 30s it's perfectly normal to forget some things. As people with anxiety tend to "overthink" it is possible that you are in perfect health and your worries are useless.

Here are some useful tactics that you can use to improve your memory:

- **Try brain and logical games:** this is an easy and not time consuming way to improve your brain function and logic. You can find numerous websites over the Internet that can offer your great variety of brain games. Try to spend about 30 minutes per day playing such games. This will distract you from your constantly thinking about the negative mind and will help you train your brain to focus on other things.

- **Get enough healthy sleep:** We said how important sleep is for your brain and memories and it is as much important for your anxiety. Try to ensure at least 8 hours night sleep every day. It is important to cut off all the negative factors that may influence your sleep – don't put any devices in your bedroom (cell phones, computers etc.), make sure the room you sleep in is well ventilated and dark. If you find it extremely hard to fall asleep you can try with some calming herbal teas or essential oils.

- **Exercise:** just like sleeping, exercise is important for your anxiety and for your brain function. It is proven that exercising can improve your memory and relieve anxiety. It can also help you fall asleep easier if you have more physical activity during the day.

Keep in mind that if you are sure that your memory loss is caused by anxiety, it is the anxiety that you will have to pay attention to. It is the root problem and if you do not work on it you will get only temporary results. There are certain ways that you can try to cope with your anxiety alone or you can seek therapy.