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## **Beyond Anxiety**

ANXIETY...the silent, obnoxious, insidious condition that hides in wait, underlying all levels of reason and intelligence; like an unknown enemy ready to strike at any given moment, rendering its prey helpless.



If you've been closely acquainted with someone, or ever personally suffered from anxiety or even worse, panic attacks, you know how debilitating this affliction can be.

Have you ever been told to just get hold of yourself, let it go, or it's all in your mind? People who have not suffered from anxiety or panic attacks often don't understand the overwhelming sense of fear and dread that overtakes the sufferer. Anxiety can be a living hell for the person enduring the ongoing fears and crippling affects of its unpredictable nature.

The problem with panic attacks is that once you've experienced an attack, it creates its own underlying fear of having another one, which in turn sets off a feeling of panic about having a panic attack. It becomes a vicious cycle. A horrible way to live! I suffered with anxiety and panic attacks for many, many years, so I know firsthand how debilitating, chronic anxiety can be.

Anxiety affects an enormous number of people; in fact I'd go as far as to say that ninety-nine point nine percent of people I've seen clinically in the last 19 years have had some level of anxiety. It seems to be part of the human condition.

For some reason stress is acceptable in our society, but to let it be known that you suffer from anxiety is taboo! Go figure! We are such strange creatures. Saying we're stressed is okay, but to admit to having anxiety is not okay. Somewhere along the way, we have mixed anxiety in with weakness and mental illness and boy, that is just not so. Some of the strongest and most intelligent people I know have had to deal with chronic anxiety.

People tend to hide their anxiety; they'll do anything to avoid putting themselves into a situation that causes them to feel anxious. There is also a huge fear of having a panic attack in front of other people, and being out of control. This fear all too often has people staying home alone in their safe, controlled environment. People with anxiety are often ruled and controlled by the condition; it stops them from doing the things they would love to do. It stops people from trying new things, stepping fully into their lives and living the way they would ultimately like to live.

There are many anxiety symptoms. Let's look at some of the more common ones...

Feelings of fear and dread  
Racing thoughts  
Feeling trapped  
Dizziness  
Worry  
Confusion  
Shortness of breath

Disorientation  
Hyperventilation  
Nausea  
Tetany (rigidity)  
Internal tremors  
Tightness in the chest

External shaking  
Racing heart  
Sweating

Tension in the body  
Tingling/numbness

People may experience some or all of these common symptoms with different levels of intensity and frequency. It can vary from person to person.

Some people experience a continuous, underlying current of anxiety, flowing like a silent river through their daily lives. Others experience anxiety due to upcoming events or changed circumstances. Although anxiety can be experienced differently from person to person, every sufferer would agree, when it rears its ugly head there's no denying its powerful grip and all consuming dominance. Anxiety is not good for your health, it chews up large amounts of energy and can leave its victims reeling and exhausted.

People's biggest fear is not knowing when panic may strike. Panic can hit suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, leaving you feeling completely out of control and at the mercy of the attack. This can be a truly terrifying experience!

### **What can you do to manage anxiety?**

The very first step I teach people with anxiety is how to breathe correctly. Learning to breathe correctly is a simple but vital part of being able to rebalance your internal environment. Breathing is one of the most powerful tools you have, and when correct breathing is practiced on a daily basis, it will transform your life. Good breathing is a learned skill and it requires commitment. Freedom comes from commitment and breathing is the way...and no excuses, haha, you can't leave home without it!

Sufferers of anxiety do not have good breathing habits. Their breathing is fast, shallow and contracted. When the breathing pattern is poor, the body, mind and emotions are also affected. Good breathing helps to order the mind and balance the emotions. Here's a simple starter...

### **Breathing Practice**

1. Sit comfortably
2. Become aware of your breathing for 30 - 60 seconds
3. Extend and expand your breath slowly, softly and deeply
4. Continue breathing this way for 5 - 20 minutes
5. Repeat 1 - 2 times daily

**Breath Awareness** - Become aware of your breathing during the day, expand it gently and deeply, often. Notice the difference it makes to how you feel. Get to know your breathing more intimately.

**Lessons** - Book in for breathing lessons with a breathing coach or do a course on breathing. Breath awareness is vital for good health and extremely important for sufferers of stress and anxiety.

Good breathing habits can liberate you from anxiety and lead you into a new freedom and sense of power in your life. People are always saying, "I can't believe how different I feel and I'm not as frightened now. I feel safer and calmer." There are natural ways to work with anxiety, and as you learn and practice some simple tools, breathing being on the top of the list, you will become skilled at managing and rebalancing yourself. Freedom at last!

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