

2 For 1 Technique to Relieve Stress and Anxiety



Anxiety Control Center

Audrey Sussman PhD.

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There are many ways to reduce stress. In the following exercise we will be changing negative thoughts and images to change the anxiety/stress cycle. By making changes using the conscious part of your mind, you can begin to re-program your reactions. The beauty of this exercise is that it can help change old patterns of thinking, without your having to do deep change work on the unconscious level. The down part is that it does take work to change a habit on the conscious level, but you will find it is well worth your time.

Changing Cognitive Thoughts

The exercise I am describing today stops the stress cycle at the cognitive level by changing scary "thoughts" into equally possible images that will serve to create calm instead of fear. There are other exercises to release anxiety at the physical and emotional part of the stress cycle which use hypnotic techniques to get to unconscious information at the root of the problem.

It is important to understand that your own thoughts create physical reactions. Even a quick thought can generate a physical reaction in the body. For example, when you imagine biting into a lemon your body creates a puckering in your mouth as you "taste" the lemon. Your thoughts touch off and trigger a physical reaction. Although there wasn't a "real" lemon, the reaction was the same "as if" there was. If one never had tasted a lemon, there would be no reaction..

Thinking about someone you love will create a very different reaction or vibration in the body than thinking of a situation that caused upset. What you're thinking has an impact on the "vibrations" that go through your body.

Therefore the way you use your mind can lead to positive vibrations, which lead to feelings of happiness, joy and contentment. Or to uncomfortable vibrations which lead to feelings of anger, upset, hurt or anxiety.

Using Your Thought to Create Positive Feelings

Use this exercise to change thought patterns. Whenever an old unwanted thought pops up, change it to a more positive image and then “step into” the new desired image, as if it were real. You are already good at this if you have created anxiety using your thoughts, we are just using your thoughts in a way that will work better for your health and well begin. The more you use this technique (by stepping into the positive image) the more power the image will feel.

Using your imagination to “be in the positive future image” works in a number of ways. It not only changes the negative image - it also actually begins to create a new “memory.” The mind stores the new image, as if it had already happened. For this type of technique to be effective, the new positive image needs to be just as strong as the old “scary” image. There are hypnotic ways of creating powerful images that you can also learn, they will be more powerful and work more quickly than just using the conscious part of your mind, but this is a good place to start.

In the worksheet below you'll use this method for changing negative thought to positive ones. It is called the "2 for 1 Exercise" because you create 2 positive thoughts for each negative you.

Worksheet to Stop Stress using 2 for 1 Exercise

Detailed Directions for the 2 For 1 Exercise

To stop stress and anxiety caused by thoughts of events that haven't even happened yet, use this really powerful technique. Yes, it is true that this exercise will take a bit of work in the beginning, but with practice you will find it becomes an automatic habit.

OVERVIEW:

Step 1: Make a list of any negative thoughts that go through your mind. Use just one situation or event.

Step 2: To help yourself to create enhancing thoughts, think about other possible "stories" about what might happen in the future. Create 2 positive "stories" for each negative "story" you had created.

Step 3: Using the new positive thoughts will help you to change the habit of negative thinking.

Full Directions for The "2 for 1" exercise:

1. Write down any negative thoughts you have going through your mind, about a situation. Write down any thought or "story" that causes stress or leads to other uncomfortable emotions.

It is important to write down the thoughts and images. By putting them down on paper you don't have to keep going over them in your mind. In a few moments you will begin to think of other possible outcomes that could also be possible.

2. After identifying a negative thoughts or stories – STOP – and focus on the feelings they produce. As you become aware of emotions notice where the feeling is "held" in your body. Make a note of what words or images go with the thoughts or feelings.

3. Sometimes a negative “story” or thought goes through the mind so quickly, that at first you might not even be conscious of it. Sometimes you will notice the physical reaction before even realizing there was a thought. So take a moment to search for these thoughts, and the physical reaction to them. If there is trouble finding the thought, just go back in your mind, to the event causing upset. Then, go to the moment just before the emotion was felt, and let your unconscious mind bring to the surface any images, sounds or memories.

Being curious is the best state to be in to bring thoughts and images into awareness. Write down the thoughts, negative “stories” or images that move through your mind.

Negative thoughts can create a vicious cycle as more negative thoughts pop up to support the first one. This creates unnecessary anguish and stress. People can create many negative thoughts in just an instant. By recognizing a thought, it becomes possible to stop, and correct the negative thought process.

4. When you feel a bodily reaction, such as tightness, pain in the stomach, head, chest, etc. ask yourself: What are you saying in your mind? Remember there is always a trigger for bodily reactions.

5. As you become aware of any negative statements answer the following questions

- a. For one day, pay attention to how many negative thoughts you create.**
- b. How often in a day do you have negative comments flowing through your mind?**
- c. Would you talk to your best friend this way? Would they still be your best friend?**
- d. Is there a benefit that comes from speaking to yourself in this negative way? What do you gain?**
- e. What is the negative result of thinking in this way?**
- f. If you believe there is a benefit, can this benefit be gained in a different, more self-enhancing way?**

6. Create 2 positive believable possibilities for every negative thought.

7. Every time a negative thought moves through your mind, replace it with two positive ones.

a. The positives need to be something that is believable. For instance, saying “I’ll handle it” is a positive statement that is believable, since we do handle things that come our way.

b. It will not help to say, “everything is OK” if you do not truly feel this way, for then it is not a believable, positive statement.

8. Whenever you catch yourself thinking a negative thought, use the power of your own mind in a productive way. Think of A BIG RED STOP SIGN, and hear the word “STOP,” shouted out in your mind. Then, say two of the positive thoughts that you have written down to replace each old negative one.

REMINDERS: ‘2 for 1’ EXERCISE

a. Changing negative thoughts to positive ones is done at the conscious level at first. Eventually the habit of changing negative thoughts into positives ones happens automatically, almost without any thought.

b. The positives need to be believable.

c. It takes time to change any habit. Just as an athlete practices to be good at his sport, this technique takes practice as well.

d. Practice this for three weeks, and be amazed at how automatic this positive habit becomes.

e. Over time the “2 for 1 technique” creates more self-acceptance, calm and confidence.

In my workshops and private sessions I'll show you another way to stop negative thinking. And also how to change an upsetting feeling in just seconds. If you would like a head start, add the following to your exercise. You might find your answers in the next exercise to be interesting, since you are beginning to look at the smaller elements that make up thoughts and images. We do this using an advanced NLP (Neuro-Linguistic technique) technique to get free of anger, hurt and upset.

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