

10 Simple Steps to Control Anxiety

When you're stressed and lack confidence

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Embracing 10 positive steps to a powerful, confident mindset.

Have you ever wondered what life would be like, to wake up each day feeling energised and amazing, and with the confidence to embrace all that life offers you?

Have you dared to dream about having the freedom to go where you want, when you want and with whom you want?

What would it be like to know that you have left past trauma and suffering well and truly behind you and to have the energy to fully welcome each day?

Confidence, freedom and choice await you and you can start right now!



1. Recognise the past is controlling your life

Decades ago, when I was doing a counselling course, a wise teacher said,

“no matter what your client presents with, only 10% of it is related to today, and 90% is linked to the past”

It has taken me a long time to really understand the true meaning of what that teacher was revealing; that past emotions are a record of the past. The stronger the emotion you feel from the past, the greater the memory. You can't heal from past suffering when you are replaying painful stories, memories and experiences in your mind, like a broken record. You can heal by learning strategies from neuroscience, to release the past and embrace the future that you desire and, in this booklet I have outlined some of my favourite strategies and concepts.

2. Be open to the Body-Mind idea

Your body is a robot controlled by the mind.

Have you ever started thinking of your favourite food and noticed that you start to salivate? Have you thought of freshly baked bread or toast and suddenly your stomach rumbled with hunger? You've been experiencing pain or discomfort in your body for days and your doctor gives you the “all clear”: amazing how fast we can go from pain to relief!

Every day our body gives us signs that it is a “robot, controlled by the mind”. In this way we understand that your body-mind can work for you or against you. It's hard to create a future when your body-mind is holding you back in the past.

3. Negative thought viruses and limiting beliefs are all in your mind!

Louise Hay, in the early 1980s said,

“the only thing you're ever dealing with in a particular moment of time is a thought and a thought can be changed”

It's easy to start believing you are stressed or depressed like the rest of your family, or don't have the energy to go out if you keep telling yourself that you were let down and hurt.

Dr Joe Dispenza¹, neuroscientist and author of *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* and *You are the Placebo* suggests that we have up to 60,000 to 70,000 thoughts a day, 90% of which are the same thoughts that we had yesterday. Think > act > feel > behave, quickly becomes a habit and cycle of “being yourself” and we can either stay stuck in the past or break the cycle of negative thoughts and limiting beliefs.

¹ <https://drjoedispenza.com/>

4. Breaking the Cycle of Negative Thoughts Activity

The *Breaking the Cycle of Negative Thoughts Activity* is one of my favourite ways of counteracting negative thoughts. I've used it thousands of times with success in my practice, and in my personal life. It is a powerful tool that you can add to your 'inner' tool kit.

Most clients find that this activity can be done within two to three minutes. Practicing it can make you recognise how quickly you can deflate the power of a thought, just like popping a 'thought-bubble'. It can be truly empowering to know that you have the choice to discard it before it has any control over you. Just like that!

Activity

- a) Bring to mind a negative thought that bothers or upsets you –
"I am X..."

(eg. *"I am having a craving"*, *"I am feeling cranky"*, *I am not good enough*, *"I am incompetent"*, *"I am feeling this will never work"*).
- b) Focus on the thought for about 10 seconds, believing it as much as possible. Take on the thought, step into it and see, feel it. How much power does that thought hold over you right now? – give it a rating out of 10 (10/10 = total power and 0/10 = no power)
 - c) Take the thought and insert the following phrase in front of it –
"I am having the thought that I am X..."
 - d) Notice what changes.
 - e) Play the thought again for 10 seconds but this time add the following longer phrase –
"I notice I am having the thought that I am X..."
 - f) Notice what changes.
 - g) Now think to yourself an even longer thought –
"I am noticing that I am noticing that I am having the thought that X..."
 - h) Notice what changes.
 - i) Ask yourself –
"How do I feel now?" Note the new rating out of 10 and that you now have the upper hand over that thought.
 - j) If the thought still has any power over you, try singing the thought to the tune of Jingle Bells or Humpty Dumpty and then (once you have stopped laughing!), ask yourself –
"How do I feel now?" Where has that old thought gone?

5. Savouring the present moment

Accessing the present moment is the only way to create true, permanent change and Dr Joe Dispenza is known for coining the phrase,

“now is the new later”

Joe Dispenza

Imagine travelling to a beautiful location, only for your first thought to be *“I wonder if I will ever come back here one day?”*

We’ve all done it but how precious would it be to take some gentle, relaxing breaths and honour this moment; savouring the experience through the senses and soaking it up? In this present moment, the past is behind us and the future is yet to begin.

Stephen Schueller, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania says that focusing on the present moment forces you to stop *overthinking*.

One of the defining features of anxiety and depression is catastrophizing - worrying about something that hasn't happened yet and may not happen at all.

“I have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened”

Mark Twain

It’s so easy to get lost in our mind, where we can beat ourselves up mentally and be oblivious to the life that is unfolding around us.

When subjects in a Study took a few minutes each day to actively savour something they usually hurried through - eating a meal, drinking a cup of tea, walking to the bus - they began experiencing more joy, happiness, and other positive emotions, and fewer depressive symptoms”, Schueller² found.

6. How to savour the present moment

Simple ways to focus on the present could be to wriggle your toes, tap on a table with a pencil or one of your fingers, squeeze your hand into a fist and then release it, being aware of the relief to the muscles when the tensions are released. Using aromatherapy oils or lighting a candle may be the perfect conduit to help you feel more present. You could draw an imaginary circle on the ground, take your shoes off and step into it calmly and peacefully.

An extension of this exercise, called the *Circle of Excellence*, is another great way to build confidence from the inside out.

² Dixit J. The Art of Now: Six Steps to Living in the Moment. *Psychology Today*. 2008;41(6):62-69.

7. Circle of Excellence to start your day powerfully

The following *Circle of Excellence* activity comes from the world of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) which is a system of working with your mind and brain “reprogramming” ways in which your mind works. NLP is able to help you quickly change unhelpful “programming” and achieve your goals easily and powerfully.

Activity

Take a few moments to be in a place where you will not be disturbed. Think about a beautiful circle in front of you, shimmering and glowing with the colour that evokes peaceful possibility within you.

As you are standing at the edge of this circle, think about three emotions or thoughts and qualities you would like more of in your life: how you would like to feel on the inside and act on the outside, eg. Calm, confidence and courage.

Now think of a specific time when you felt serene and calm. Step into your *Circle of Excellence* and into that past experience of calm and serenity.

Notice your posture, where you feel calm most in the body and expand that area. Notice the calm thoughts and mindset you are experiencing as you replay that specific scenario through your mind. It will be like a calm wave that moves and expands through you.

As it starts to dissipate, step back to the edge of your circle. Think of something else to shift your focus: it could be your birthday or favourite colour, and then step back into the circle reactivating the body-mind memory of calm.

Do this three times until you can feel and recognise a calm shift in body and mind.

Work through each emotion that you want more of such as confidence, energy, motivation, etc adding another layer of that to the circle each time you activate the memory of that positive emotion. Then step in to activate all three emotions/ thoughts or feelings that have been ‘anchored’ powerfully to the Circle of Excellence.

This activity is a great way to adopt body language that communicates confidence, calm and courage to be your true self.

I often record this activity for clients on their phone so they can then replay it at any time; they can jump out of bed, step into their *Circle of Excellence* and start the day enthusiastically and with energy.

One such client was a teacher who had been through a past traumatic experience that had her dreading stepping back into the classroom. This fear had lasted many years, but she says this technique assisted her to switch off the fear and to reclaim her happy, motivated and confident self to do the teaching she loves.



8. Spin away those old worries with this amazing Steve Andreas Technique

The Steve Andreas Technique³, as outlined below, has the potential to change your life.

I have used it many times in my clinical practice for people with anxiety, panic attacks, OCD, anger, jealousy and many more issues that get in the way of them living their life in the way they desire.

The best thing is this technique is fast acting and easy to use. After running through the steps and training your body-mind a few times, you may even notice that you 'spin' away a worry before you realise it was even there!

Activity

- a) What rating out of 10 does the feeling evoke in you?
- b) "Does any part of you have any objections to having a more comfortable response in all the situations in which you have had these intense feelings?"
- c) "I assume that you have felt this feeling in a variety of different situations. I want you to close your eyes so that you can attend more completely to your feelings. When you think about one of these situations now, where do you first notice the

feeling physically in your body? Then where does the feeling move to?"

All anxiety spins in the body. Close your eyes and notice whether the feeling spins in a clockwise or counter clockwise direction along this path, gesturing with your finger.

After you identify the direction of spin, I ask you to close your eyes again, and I say: "I want you to notice what changes when you begin, now, to spin that feeling in the opposite direction?"

- d) Typically, the feeling becomes much less intense, and may also change in quality.
- e) "When you give this feeling a colour that is a relaxing colour for you, and spin it a bit faster in that (opposite) direction, what else do notice about how it begins to change, now?"
- f) "Ok, now when you try to think of this as you used to, what are you noticing that is different?" Elicit your new rating of feeling and see how anxiety has dissipated.

I often record this for clients, so they can listen regularly to this fast acting technique. It's incredible how quickly you can train your brain to make the positive switch.

³ Andreas, Steve (2015, May 21), *Which Way Do Feelings Spin?*, Retrieved from <https://realpeoplepress.com/blog/which-way-do-feelings-spin>



9. Activate your 'Things That Bring Me Joy' list

Take a moment now to jot down some things that quite literally lift your spirits, even just thinking about them. Your list may include:

- Talking to a special friend or person in your life
- Listening to uplifting music
- Going for a walk in nature
- Reading a good book
- Going to a great movie
- Having a beautiful cup of tea
- Smelling your favourite flowers
- Spending a relaxing night at home
- Drawing, painting, being creative
- Lighting a candle...

Now I want you to make a daily ritual with yourself to incorporate at least one of the '*things that bring me joy*' into each day. It won't take long before you are looking forward to this moment each day, recognising the energy that flows when your heart is smiling and you are feeling joy.

So 'enjoy' creating your list and making this commitment to be a friend to yourself because you are so worth it!

10. Explore different meditation practices until you find one that fits

Most clients come to me doubting themselves, feeling depleted, low in energy, frazzled in mind and overwhelmed by competing life priorities. I usually say that this 'mind' that has arrived is like a computer that has so many screens open that just trying to open one more thing has the whole computer frozen and stuck.

We all know that restarting the computer involves closing all of the open screens down, switching it off for a few moments so it can reset and that when we switch it back on, the computer inevitably runs more smoothly and efficiently. Guided meditation is a cheap, efficient, portable 're-set' strategy for the mind, and your body-mind will say thank you throughout the day and way into the night.

You can find a list of some of the best meditation apps here: [Best Meditation Apps 2018](#) or feel free to contact me at admin@baysidehealthyliving.com.au and I'll send you a complimentary copy of my *Calm & Stress Free Mp3* that you can start enjoying right now!