

- ▶ *We gain strength and courage and confidence by*
- ▶ *each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...We must do that which we think we*
 - ▶ *cannot.*

▶ *Eleanor Roosevelt*

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TEST TAKING ANXIETY

and

What You Can Do About It

What we will cover today

- ▶ I. Test Anxiety Quiz
- ▶ II. Components of anxiety
- ▶ III. Anxiety Disorders
- ▶ IV. Basic things you can do to reduce anxiety
- ▶ V. 2 Experiences in reducing anxiety

I. Test Anxiety Quiz

True or False

- ▶ 1. I have a hard time getting started studying for the test.
- ▶ 2. I have trouble sleeping & lay awake worrying about the exam or even dream about the exam.
- ▶ 3. I expect to do poorly no matter how much I study.
- ▶ 4. While studying I often feel a sense of hopelessness & dread.
- ▶ 5. The day of the exam I either don't eat or overeat.
- ▶ 6. I often yawn while studying or taking the exam.
- ▶ 7. During the exam I feel confused or panic.
- ▶ 8. I experience sweaty palms
- ▶ 9. Mental blocks (brain lock, short circuit.)
- ▶ 10. During exams I have headaches, vomiting or faintness.
- ▶ 11. After the exam I pretend it meant nothing, it was meaningless.
- ▶ 12. After an exam I sometimes feel depressed or angry.
- ▶ 13. As a rule I view test taking a stressful situation and dread it.
- ▶ 14. I do great on assignments & papers, but poorly on tests.

II. Components of anxiety

- ▶ A. Emotional component
- ▶ B. Cognitive
- ▶ C. Physical
- ▶ D. Source – Basal Ganglia Problems

II. Components of Anxiety

▶ D. Basal Ganglia – SPECT scans- Daniel Amen MD

- 1. Location – Set of large structures toward center of brain surrounding the deep limbic system
- 2. Problems with Basal Ganglia - over or under active
Source – Genetic and Environment
- 3. One function - Set body's “idle speed” of anxiety level

II. Components of Anxiety

▶ B. Cognitive

- 1. Worry – Hallmark of anxiety – “What if?”
- 2. Mental Blank out
- 3. Racing thoughts – no focus
- 4. ANTS – Automatic negative thoughts
 - Negative cognitions
 - Beliefs and Attitude
 - a. Examples
 - b. Source
 - (1) Past
 - (2) Present
 - (3) Future

II. Physical

▶ C. Physical

◦ 1. Symptoms

- Dry mouth
- Cold clammy hands
- Tense muscles
- Trembling/shaking
- Palpitations
- Hyperventilation
- Faintness/Dizziness
- Sweating
- Nausea/Cramps
- Diarrhea
- Frequent urination

▶ 2. Triggers

- Too hot
- Too cold
- Tired
- Hormone changes
 - Cycles
 - Menopause

ANXIETY DISORDERS

III. Anxiety Disorders

- ▶ A. GAD – Generalized anxiety disorder
- ▶ B. Panic Disorder
- ▶ C. OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- ▶ D. Phobias
- ▶ E. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

IV. What you can do

▶ A. Basics

- 1. Get enough sleep
- 2. Nutrition
- 3. Exercise – Exercise – Exercise!
- 4. Lifestyle and relationship issues
- 5. Develop good study and test taking skills

IV. What you can do

- ▶ B. Pay attention to your thinking Beliefs/Attitudes/ANTS – self talk
 - 1. Be aware of it
 - 2. Challenge it
 - 3. Change it

IV. What you can do

- ▶ C. Relaxation –The Foundation
 - 1. Abdominal breathing
 - 2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - 3. Visualization
 - 4. Meditation
 - 5. Guided Imagery
 - 6. Biofeedback
 - 7. Yoga
 - 8. Calming Music

IV. What you can do

- ▶ D. Dr. Amen's Basal Ganglia Prescription
 - 1. Kill the fortune telling ants
 - a. Write down the event or thought causing anxiety
 - b. Write down the automatic negative thought (ANT)
 - c. Label the thought as a “fortune telling ANT”
 - d. Kill the ant by writing down a thought to defuse the negative one

 - *Remember – thoughts are just thoughts– You don't have to believe every one that comes into your mind*

D. Dr. Amen's Basal Ganglia Prescription

- ▶ 2. Use Guided Imagery
- ▶ 3. Diaphragmatic Breathing
 - –Practice 5 to 10 minutes a day to settle down BG
- 4. Meditation or Self Hypnosis
- 5. 18/40/60 Rule

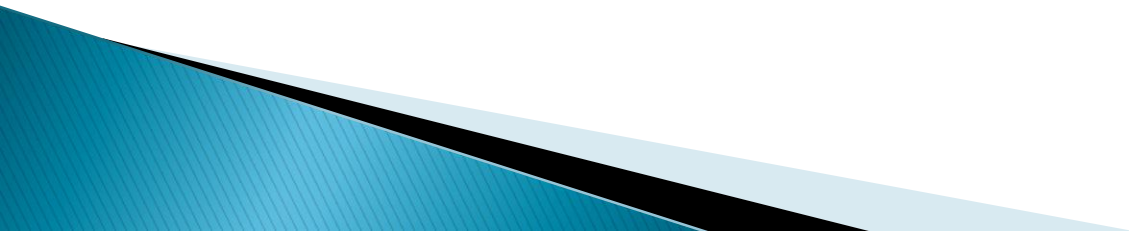
When you're 18, you worry about what everybody is thinking of you

When you're 40, you don't give a damn about what anybody thinks of you.

When you're 60, you realize nobody's been thinking about you at all.

E. 2 Powerful Tools to Reduce Anxiety

- 1. Safe Place
 - Visualization
- 2. Freeze Frame
 - Attention
 - Breathing
 - Emotion



Steps of Freeze Frame Exercise

- Think of a stressful event (exam)
 1. Acknowledge the feeling and FF – Stop
 2. Take 2 deep belly breaths
 3. Shift your focus to heart
 4. Imagine you are breathing into and out of your heart
 5. Recall a positive feeling.
 6. Tap into your sense of reality, common sense or intuition

REVIEW

- ▶ I. Symptoms of Test Anxiety
- ▶ II. Components of anxiety
- ▶ III. Anxiety Disorders
- ▶ IV. Basic behaviors to reduce anxiety
- ▶ V. 2 Anxiety reduction tools