

Appendix 5

Affirmations for Overcoming Anxiety

The following affirmations and script are intended to help you change your attitude and respond constructively to the kinds of negative self-talk that can feed anxiety. Reading through them once or twice probably won't make much difference. Rehearsing some or all of them daily for a few weeks or months will begin to help you change your basic outlook about fear in a constructive direction. One way to do this is to read through one of the three sections below slowly once or twice each day, giving yourself time to reflect on each affirmation. Even better, record one or all three sections, leaving a few seconds of silence between each affirmation. Then listen to the recording once daily, when relaxed, to reinforce a more positive and confident attitude about mastering your anxiety.

Negative Thoughts and Positive Affirmations to Combat Them

(Use only the affirmations if you make a recording.)

This is unbearable.

I can learn how to cope better with this.

What if this goes on without letting up?

I'll deal with this one day at a time. I don't have to project into the future.

I feel damaged, inadequate relative to others.

Some of us have steeper paths to walk than others. That doesn't make me less valuable as a human being—even if I accomplish less in the outer world.

Why do I have to deal with this? Other people seem freer to enjoy their lives.

Life is a school. For whatever reasons, at least for now, I've been given a steeper path—a tougher curriculum. That doesn't make me wrong. In fact, adversity develops qualities of strength and compassion.

Having this condition seems unfair.

Life can appear unfair from a human perspective. If we could see the bigger picture, we'd see that everything is proceeding according to plan.

I don't know how to cope with this.

I can *learn* to cope better—with this and any difficulty life brings.

I feel so inadequate relative to others.

Let people do what they do in the outer world. I'm following a path of inner growth and transformation, which is at least equally valuable. Finding peace in myself can be a gift to others.

Each day seems like a major challenge.

I'm learning to take things more slowly. I make time to take care of myself. I make time to do small things to nurture myself.

I don't understand why I'm this way—why this happened to me.

The causes are many, including heredity, early environment, and cumulative stress. Understanding causes satisfies the intellect, but it's not what heals.

I feel like I'm going crazy.

When anxiety is high, I *feel* like I'm losing control. But that feeling has nothing to do with going crazy. Anxiety disorders are a long way from the category of disorders labeled "crazy."

I have to really fight this.

Struggling with a problem won't help as much as making more time in my life to better care for myself.

I shouldn't have let this happen to me.

The long-term causes of this problem lie in heredity and childhood environment, so I didn't cause this condition. I *can* now take responsibility for getting better.

Antianxiety Affirmations

- I am learning to let go of worry.
- Each day I'm growing in my capacity to master worry and anxiety.
- I am learning not to feed my worries—to choose peace over fear.
- I am learning to consciously choose what I think, and I choose thoughts that are supportive and beneficial for me.
- When anxious thoughts come up, I can slow down, breathe, and let them go.
- When anxious thoughts come up, I can make time to relax and release them.
- Deep relaxation gives me the freedom of choice to move out of fear.
- Anxiety is made of illusory thoughts—thoughts I can let go of.
- When I see most situations as they truly are, there is nothing to be afraid of.
- Fearful thoughts are usually exaggerated, and I'm growing in my ability to turn them off at will.
- More and more, it's becoming easier to relax and talk myself out of anxiety.
- I keep my mind too busy thinking positive and constructive thoughts to have much time for worry.
- I'm learning to control my mind and choose the thoughts that I think.

- I am gaining more confidence in myself, knowing I can handle any situation that comes along.
- Fear is dissolving and vanishing from my life. I am calm, confident, and secure.
- As I take life more slowly and easily, I have more ease and peace in my life.
- As I grow in my ability to relax and feel secure, I realize that there is truly nothing to fear.
- More and more, I'm growing in confidence, knowing that I can handle any situation that comes up.

Script for Overcoming Fear

Focusing on a fear always makes it worse. When I can relax enough, I become able to change my focus. I can put my mind on loving, supportive, constructive ideas. I can't make fearful thoughts go away. Struggling with them makes them loom larger. Instead, I can redirect my mind to more peaceful, calming thoughts and circumstances. Every time I do this, I am choosing peace instead of fear. The more I choose peace, the more it becomes a part of my life. With practice, I get better at redirecting my mind. I learn how to spend less time focusing on fear. I grow stronger in my ability to choose wholesome, helpful thoughts over fearful ones. I make time to relax ... to reconnect with that place deep within myself that is always at peace.

When I make the time to do this, I can choose to move away from fearful thoughts. I can allow my mind to expand into a wider place that is much larger than my fearful thoughts. Fear requires a narrow, small focus of my mind. When I relax or meditate, my mind becomes deep enough—and large enough—to transcend fear. I'm learning to see that my fearful thoughts grossly overestimate risk or threat. The true risk I face in most situations is actually very small. True, it's impossible to eliminate risk from life altogether. Being in a physical body in the physical world necessitates some risk. Only in heaven is there an eternal risk-free state. I'm learning to recognize my tendency to exaggerate risks—to blow them out of proportion. Every fear involves both overestimating the risk of danger—and underestimating my ability to cope. If I take the time to examine my fearful thoughts, I'll discover that in most cases they are unrealistic. When I choose to see most situations as they truly are, I see that they are not dangerous. If I practice replacing my fearful thoughts with real thoughts, eventually my fearful thoughts will diminish. Every time I feel afraid, I recognize the unreality of my fearful thoughts and let go of them more easily.

The important thing is not to feed fear ... not to dwell on it or give it energy. Instead I can practice redirecting my attention to something—anything—that makes me feel better. I can focus on talking to a friend, reading something uplifting, working with my hands, listening to a recording, or any number of activities which help me take my mind off fear. With practice, I become more and more adept at moving away from fearful thoughts—of not indulging in them. I begin to become master rather than victim of my mind. I learn that I have more and more choice about fear. I can step into it or out of it. And, as time passes, I learn to step out of it.