



THE ANXIOUS TRUTH:

A Step-By-Step Guide To Understanding And Overcoming Panic, Anxiety, and Agoraphobia

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Find the complete version of this book at:

<https://theanxioustruth.com/recovery-guide>

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This is a free sample of my anxiety disorder recovery guide. This is all of chapter 1, explaining how you arrived at in the middle of what may seem like an un-solvable anxiety problem. I assure you, this is a solvable problem.

You are free to share this PDF with anyone you think can benefit from it. All I ask is that you keep this page intact in the PDF.

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CHAPTER 1 : HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

Lesson 1.1 : You Are NOT Broken

You're anxious, afraid, confused, and lost, but you are NOT broken or damaged.

You are not ill.

You do not have a disease that needs to be cured.

You are not imbalanced.

You are not incompetent.

You are not a lost cause.

You are not worse than anyone else with the same problem.

Your situation is not special, unique, or un-fixable.

You are still a complete human being with all the skills and qualities needed to get out of the mess of anxiety. There IS a way out, and you can get there.

Millions of other human beings before you have been in your exact position. Regular people just like you turned things around. They got good advice, pointed themselves in the right direction, then made a plan and executed it.

They found courage when they needed it.

They found determination.

They found persistence.

They found inspiration in the stories of those who came before them.

They discovered strength, learned new life skills, and along the way, uncovered qualities they never dreamed they had.

These humans, from all around the world, are just like you. They were once afraid, confused, and lost. Just like you. But now they're not, and you won't be either.

Solving this problem isn't easy because some hard work is involved, but you are capable of hard work.

Before we move forward together, I need you to believe that this is not your fault, you are not broken or hopeless, and that you already have everything inside you that you need to make your way back to the life you so desperately want. That's the first step of the hard work.

Your first panic attack was awful. It put you on a path into the great unknown. With no education on the real nature of anxiety, panic, fear, and cognition, you had no idea what was going on or why. I know this because this also describes my first panic attack.

Nobody ever told you about panic attacks. There was no semester spent on anxiety and anxiety disorders in middle school health class. Your parents never sat you down and gave you "the talk" about anxiety. For all intents and purposes, you were blindfolded, driven down the highway for a few hours, then kicked out of the car at 100 MPH without a map or a compass. Good luck with that!

Panic seems like a body problem. After all, your body gets completely lit up with all kinds of nasty sensations when you're anxious. *This must be a physical thing, right?* It would seem logical to approach this new situation at face value. "My body is freaking out, so I must work on my body to stop this from happening!" Nobody would blame you for taking that approach.

First stop...*Google. Let's figure this out!*

"What are these horrible feelings I'm experiencing?" "Why is my heart racing?" "Why do I feel so dizzy?" "Why do I feel like I'm going to pass out or die?" "Why is my stomach trying to kill me?"

After the Googling come the rampant thoughts:

Why do they happen?

This is so scary, and I hate it!

How do I stop it?

Nobody would blame you for asking those questions. They seem to be the right questions to ask, and sometimes you feel like you **MUST** keep asking them to remain safe. This is a common error, although completely understandable.

But sadly, Google likely became more of an enemy than a resource to you. You might have found lots of excellent information about your problem online, but most of it was completely drowned out by some horrible stuff. You probably found a ton of YouTube videos talking about anxiety and how to “fix it.” Blogs. Forums. Healing guides. If you were like me, you got buried in an avalanche of dietary advice, exercise programs, crystals, positive affirmations, hypnosis, herbs, supplements, detox programs and endless discussions of “self-care,” lifestyle changes, and toxic relationships.

The solution you were looking for was seemingly everywhere, in every direction. You were told that it was what you ingest, what you breathe, *how* you breathe, how you *don't* breathe, who you hang out with, who you sleep with, your job, your boss, your career uncertainty, your finances, your exercise routine (or lack thereof), your non-existent spirituality, being a people pleaser, not setting boundaries, being too rigid, being too unstructured, bad sleep hygiene, leaky gut syndrome, Mercury being in retrograde...and your mom. I can go on and on. But you get the idea.

Maybe you started talking to your friends and family about your anxiety. Perhaps you went online and asked total strangers on Facebook what they thought. Either way, if you spoke to 500 people, you've likely heard at least 250 variations on an anxiety “cure,” and you've probably tried at least 200 of them to no avail.

Imagine trying to shoot an arrow at a target, except there are 50,000 targets in your field of view, and they're all moving at all times. *Where do you aim? Everywhere? Nowhere?* All the while you're trying to decide, your body is in an uproar. Your nervous system is locked into high gear. You're continually anxious and often downright terrified. Instead of pursuing actual solutions, you find yourself spending more and more time trying to figure out how to just get away from it all.

Your anxiety and panicking were supposed to be getting better, but no matter what you tried, or which direction you ran, it got worse. Your world got smaller and harder to navigate.

Are you relating to what I'm talking about?

Now, let's talk about horror stories. The more you searched for answers, the more horror stories you heard. How many people did you encounter—especially online—who did nothing but talk about how terrible it is? How many different anxiety symptoms did you read about? How many people did you find who were engaging in an endless cycle of commiserating and comparing stories of failure and hopelessness? How many times have you been told that the best you could hope for was to “manage the disease,” medicate your way out of the mess, and just deal with the side effects?

I've heard it all.

Trust me, I know how discouraging and disheartening that discussion is.

So is it any wonder that you're anxious, afraid, confused, and lost? You're precisely where any intelligent human being would expect you to be right now. You had no roadmap to follow. You've been given way too much wrong and inconsistent advice, and you've been drowning in the nightmares of other anxiety sufferers.

There's no mystery as to how you wound up anxious, afraid, confused, and lost. You are a well-designed, intelligent human being. You were responding to fear and discomfort in precisely the way you were designed, and exactly the way everyone

would expect you to. That's not broken or ill in any way, is it? It's simply misguided.
That's fixable, so let's get to work!

Lesson 1.2 - A Natural Process Gone Wrong

Anxiety is NOT a disease.

I don't care what you've been told. You are not sick. This is not an illness, mental or otherwise. If you're offended by this because you feel that the term "mental illness" is an accurate description of why you can't solve this problem or build a better life, then this might be a good time to stop reading. I'm not going to entertain the idea that you the victim of some kind of illness because I know you are not. Humor me. Imagine for a minute that you are NOT actually damaged or sick. Imagine that you can actually get better, then let me show you why this is true.

A disease is what we call it when biological processes beyond your control bring about detrimental changes and/or impairments in the way your body functions at some level. Cancer is a disease. Alzheimer's is a disease. ALS is a disease. You could probably argue that even the common cold is a disease. But anxiety? That's not a disease.

Now that we've gotten that out of the way let me explain what anxiety really is.

Anxiety is a state. It's predictable, regular, natural, and does not indicate defect or malfunction. In a state of anxiety, your body is operating as it's been *designed* to work after millions of years of miraculous engineering—otherwise known as natural selection. Anxiety is the state you enter in response to an imminent threat, real or perceived. It is a close relative of fear—another natural state and is often a precursor to fear. Sometimes, it's difficult to tell anxiety and fear apart.

The physiological hallmarks of an anxiety state are all quite well-known and easily measurable. They are not a mystery. And I want to stress again; they do not indicate that anything is wrong, broken, or malfunctioning.

These are some of the physical manifestations of anxiety. Which symptoms do you relate to?

- Your heart beats quickly. This is normal in an anxiety state.
- You feel dizzy. This is normal.
- You feel shaky and weak. This is normal.
- Your vision gets strange. This is normal.
- You feel hot and/or cold. This is normal.
- You feel short of breath. This is normal.
- Your stomach churns, and you feel nauseous. This is normal.
- You feel an intense need to find a bathroom. This is normal.
- You feel driven to run or escape. This is normal.
- You feel an overwhelming sense of doom.

THIS. IS. NORMAL.

I can go on and on. The internet is awash in large lists of the “top” anxiety symptoms. You don’t need me to list them all for you, and I couldn’t even if I tried. There’s always another symptom anyway. The point is that every last one of the sensations you feel when anxious is entirely normal and expected from a properly functioning human body.

I know you’re convinced your most disturbing and scary symptoms are unique and special. You’re sure that nobody else feels it as strongly as you do. *This just can’t be normal! Something must really be wrong because it FEELS so much like something is wrong!*

Let me address those thoughts right now.

You are absolutely and completely wrong.

What anxiety and panic “feel like”...don't matter.

How you feel – aka the sensations and thoughts you experience – do not matter. I know this seems crazy to you, but you will learn as we go forward, that the feelings are not the problem. They are VERY real, but they aren't the actual problem. How you interpret them and react to them is the problem. Let me repeat for you that I absolutely know that the sensations are REAL. It's just that the danger you think they represent is not.

I promise, we will get into great detail about this later on, but I needed to put this concept out there now because it is THAT important.

And because it is THAT important, I share more on this—much more—later. So, make sure you keep reading. For now, let's get back to the topic at hand.

Anxiety is NOT a disease.

OK fine. It's not a disease. But obviously, SOMETHING is wrong, so what is it?!?!

Fair question. Let's break things down a little. We need to identify the components of this problem you want so desperately to solve.

First, there are the feelings and sensations that you hate so much. These are the symptoms of anxiety. You just read my rant about this. These are *normal* physiological operations in a *healthy human body*. The sensations and symptoms you dislike so much are simply your body reacting as it's been designed to respond in the presence of an impending threat. When needed, your body protects you and prepares you for battle or escape by entering an anxious state.

Sometimes, this mechanism gets triggered at the wrong time. The anxiety/fear response kicks in even when there is no current or pending threat in the environment. You were fine one minute, then convinced you were dying or going insane the next.

Maybe that was your first terrifying experience with panic. This happens to almost everyone at least once in a lifetime. Call it a bug. A defect maybe. A design flaw. Whatever it is, it happens...*all the time*. The natural protection mechanism built into your body fired when it shouldn't have, and maybe you found yourself at dinner with a friend, absolutely terrified for no reason.

That is not fun, but it's still not a disease, and it's *still not the problem*.

The problem is what happened after that. You were afraid and did not want to be afraid again. You were uncomfortable and did not want to be uncomfortable again. You interpreted this misfire as something to be avoided at all costs. This interpretation turned your natural threat protection mechanism into a threat! Your brain turned your own normal, healthy body into your enemy.

Once this happened, it was game over. You were locked in the cycle of fearing the next episode, living in a state of high alert, and dreading every tiny hint that it might be happening again.

You were afraid, so you learned to be afraid of being afraid. Does that sound like a disease?

Once you are living in a constant state of worry, always on guard for the next wave of anxiety symptoms or panic, then you are breeding the very thing you dread. Your fear manufactures tension, anxiety, and MORE fear. By teaching yourself that you must avoid and escape those feelings, you've created a monster where none previously existed.

Do you see now why your anxiety is not a mental illness? Can you see how the situation you are living in today is simply the result of a natural process gone awry? This is not an illness. You are not broken or damaged. You just learned some incorrect lessons. Your anxiety is nothing more than a collection of bad brain habits.

That doesn't sound so bad, does it? Habits, no matter how bad, can be broken. Things you learned in error, that you thought to be true all this time, can be unlearned and corrected. You are not sick, ill, or full of disease. You just need to fix some mental mistakes, that's all.

Have you ever spent years singing along with a favorite song, only to learn that you've been singing the wrong lyrics? For God knows how long you were convinced you knew the words, until one day you found out that everything you thought you knew was wrong. This is the same thing. You've been singing the wrong words. Now you can learn the right words and sing them. Much better, right?

Lesson 1.3 - Nobody Ever Told You

Let's talk for a few minutes about the severe lack of mental health education and information you've been given most of your life. It's a thing. And it's contributed to where you are today.

In the US, at some point in our formal education, we get basic training in what we call "health." The curriculum includes things like drug and alcohol addiction, use of tobacco products, cancer detection and prevention, safe sex, and how to brush your teeth properly. All valuable for sure. And yes, please clean your teeth after every meal. *See? Free dental hygiene advice, too. You're welcome.*

As of 2018, precisely TWO American states (New York and Virginia) have decided that mental health issues should be included at various points in the journey between kindergarten and high school graduation. If you're living in another country and are unaware of the number of states in the US, we have 50 states. *Two* have taken action to include some primary mental health education. That's not a good percentage. It's a start, but as you can clearly see, we have a very long way to go.

Our formal education system has failed to provide primary education when it comes to mental health, but what about your tribe? Your parents. Your family. Your friends. Surely they were a good source of information and advice.

I think you already know what I'm going to say next. Collectively, from an educational standpoint, your tribe has been no help whatsoever.

The people close to you surely love you and care about you, but they've likely spent more time discussing video game cheat codes with you than helping you understand fundamental human issues like anxiety, stress, fear, and depression. You can't blame them, though. Where would they have gotten the information? We already know that our schools aren't overflowing with it. The internet is mostly a dumpster fire when it comes to this topic, as I touched on earlier and will touch on again later. While I'm sure your loved ones would have wanted to pass along useful information and advice, they had very little chance to get it themselves, so how could they?

The problem you're facing—the thing you're trying to change—is well understood in behavioral sciences circles. Really, it is. If you're in the grips of recurring panic attacks, panic disorder, agoraphobia, GAD (generalized anxiety disorder), or most anxiety disorders, the mechanism of action is pretty well documented, and effective treatment is available. I am not claiming that we know all there is to know about human emotions or the human brain in general. Hardly. We really know very little. But at least when it comes to the nuts and bolts of cognition and learning as it relates to developing and treating phobias (if you are afraid of how you feel, then this qualifies as a phobia), we're in decent shape.

The issue here is that nobody ever taught you about these things. You may be familiar with names like Pavlov and Skinner, or maybe you're into self-help and have heard names like Maslow or Jung, but that's about it. The fact that there is an entire population of smart people who devote their lives to understanding these problems and treating them is mostly unknown. We all know that scientists are working to prevent and cure cancer. We know that drug companies spend vast amounts of money developing new drugs to treat diseases (this isn't a disease—see Chapter 2). We all hear about incredible advances in health like cybernetic prosthetics and cochlear implants for the hearing impaired. But we rarely, if ever, hear anything from the behav-

ioral sciences concerning their advances, even though a TON of great work is happening there.

Let me clarify a little something about the internet.

The internet has changed the world. You can argue whether the change has been positive or negative, but it is a change, nonetheless. One of the most significant changes of the last 25 years has been the spread of information. There is a literal tsunami of words, images, and videos related to mental health issues on the Internet. The problem is that very little of it relates to the behavioral sciences in any meaningful way. We default to emotional and spiritual matters. We fill our social media networks with inspirational memes and quotes. We write blog posts about finding peace and being enlightened and how journaling changes everything. We fill the internet with stuff that kinda makes us feel good to read, and maybe gives us hope in some way. This is great, but in the end, it tends toward the fluffy, the basic, and the non-actionable.

Thank you, internet, for the pretty pictures and Zen quotes, but what do I do when I feel a panic attack coming on? (Spoiler alert...it's not counting all the blue things you can see or singing along with the radio.)

We love easy things. We hate hard things. And let me be brutally honest here, what you're going to do to solve your problem isn't glamorous or easy in any way. It's rote. It's simple. It's almost spartan. It doesn't lend itself to memes and sharable quotes. It's based on very dry science that nobody wants to read. Well, except me. I like to read it. I'm strange that way.

What I'm saying here is that while the path from panic to peace is well-defined, it's not exciting or quick, and it involves doing things that you won't want to do. Nobody wants to read about that.

But there are others like me out there talking about taking a cognitive behavioral approach to anxiety problems. Still, we are hard to find because most people would share a picture of Morgan Freeman saying something he never actually said before sharing an article about the effectiveness of graduated exposure therapy. That stuff gets hidden in obscure corners of the web.

While good information about this problem may not be easy to find, it still exists. We know quite a bit about how this problem occurs and how to fix it. Let's take a basic look at this.

Human beings are subject to stress. We get anxious. We get afraid. Sometimes we get sad and even depressed. This is part of life standing upright at the top of the food chain on this planet of ours. You cannot avoid these things. Our responses—especially to stress, anxiety, and fear—are not mysterious. When studied across large populations, we can see what happens when we worry, and when we are afraid. There are patterns. They are predictable. The good news is that you work the same way that every other human being works.

To solve this problem we're talking about, there are basic concepts to learn and understand. Some basic skills and strategies need to be learned and practiced as part of the process of overcoming your anxiety issues. They will likely be new to you. Even though all humans can benefit from knowing these things, we don't teach them in our schools; we don't teach them in our families, and we don't talk about them enough in our global electronic conversations.

So I will remind you again...this is not your fault.

The information you need to change things is out there. Nobody ever told you about it, and it's pretty hard to find.

Let's fix that.

Lesson 1.4 - Adrift In A Sea Of Bad Information

First, nobody told you.

Then EVERYBODY wanted to tell you.

You have likely been adrift in a sea of wrong information. Horribly wrong information. Like, you can't even fathom the epic badness of the information you've probably been given. Thank you, internet!

It's 100 percent predictable that a person who begins experiencing anxiety and panic will start a furious, almost obsessive search for information on every symptom, sensation, and change of bodily state. There's a pattern. Almost everyone follows it perfectly. It happens—that thing you hate. You try to shake it off, but you're worried. Then it happens again. Now you're focused on it. Then it happens again and again. Then anxiety and panic becomes an actual problem, and you decide that it's time to find out what's going on.

You sit yourself down in front of "Doctor Google" to begin your search. The result is a swirling quagmire of misinformation, misapplication of good science, questionable science, BAD science, outright quackery, made-up stuff, and non-actionable fuzzy platitudes. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Next comes the firestorm of bloggers, vloggers, and other "influencers." They have decided that anxiety is an excellent topic to attract likes, views, and attention. What they actually have to say about anxiety is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if it's valid, helpful, or in any way applicable to solving the

problem of a full-blown anxiety disorder. Just watch them, please. Because, well, they are influencers! Again, thank you, internet.

As if this isn't enough, you next encounter a wide range of people trying to make money in the anxiety space. In this wave, you're drowned in books, audiobooks, e-books, courses, classes, weekend retreats, and coaching services. When the first wave recedes, the next holds the homeopathic remedies, natural cures, herbs, minerals, crystals, oils, plant extracts, and discount codes for eye of newt.

Finally, when you think you've got your head back above the water, in come the tappers, neuro-linguistic programmers, inner child advocates, chakra clearers, astrologers (yes, astrologers), smudgers, reiki practitioners and re-aligners of meridians. And hypnotists. Oh, the hypnotists!

Let's keep going. There's magnetic cranial stimulation, burning of sage, bobbing your head while breathing, adrenal support, ashwagandha (I just like saying that), subliminal/binaural audio reprogramming, veganism, ketogenic diets, brain wave re-adjustment and...not kidding...primal screaming. If you've been at this for any amount of time, you know that while I'm being a bit ridiculous, I'm not in any way exaggerating. If you can imagine it, it's been held up as a solution to your anxiety and panic problems.

Look, I'm not saying that all these things are totally useless in life. Some people love tapping. Some swear by smudging, and others will give up their crystals only when you pry them from their cold, dead hands. That's fine. If something brings you enjoyment or comfort, then go with it.

However, none of these things is a cure or "fix" for an anxiety disorder. Before we move on, I will simply ask this. *If you believe that hugging your inner child (for instance) has fixed this problem for you, then why are you reading this book?*

The array of “cures” is dizzying, disorienting and disheartening, especially if you’ve tried many of them without success. If you’ve been down that road, you know what I mean. After you’ve been excited, then disappointed for the 10th time, it can be easy to conclude there’s no hope. This is all too common, but if you’re reading right now, then believe me when I tell you that there is hope. Giant bundles of it. I promise.

Now, let’s talk for a few minutes about misinformation and questionable advice from the people you actually know and love in real life. This is also a thing. I think it’s safe to assume that your friends and family love you and want you to feel better and live a happy life. They always mean well, however sometimes those closest to us accidentally land the hardest blows when it comes to this topic. Bad advice on a personal level tends toward more practical, oversimplified suggestions that can really harm your confidence and your overall outlook.

Have you ever been told to “just get over it”? That one is always fun. “Pull yourself together” is another common one. I’ve heard of people who have been told they simply need a vacation or more sleep. Friends and family members might suggest that you find a hobby, change careers, or break up with a lousy partner. Get a pet. Move out of that horrible apartment you’re living in. Find a boyfriend/girlfriend. Watch a funny movie. These are all actual suggestions you may have heard from people close to you. Again, they mean well, but I understand how difficult it is to listen to such advice.

After all, if you could “just get over it,” you would!

Allow me to address one other source of information. I know this is a sensitive topic and that you might feel some relief turning to your faith. I want to say I am respectful of everyone’s faith. If you find strength in your faith and religion, there’s nothing wrong about that. In my years of interacting with people who have this problem of ours, I have come across many who have told me that they have experienced two primary faith-based issues. The first is that they are concerned that a given recovery plan will

conflict with the teachings they hold dear. The second is that they may be in a crisis of faith because they've been told that a higher power will take away the problem. Often they've been counseled by a trusted and loved priest or clergyman, yet the problem persists—thereby causing the crisis of faith. I understand how difficult these issues must be. If your faith plays a significant role in your life and the life of your family, then you are likely looking for a recovery path that will compliment your beliefs and will not run counter to advice you've been given through that channel. I can only tell you that while I may not share your exact religious beliefs, I do think that whatever process placed us here has imbued us with many gifts.

Gifts of reasoning and critical thinking. The gift of adaptation. The gift of flexibility. The gifts of courage and inner strength. The gift of learning. Consider that the path we will be examining together is based on all these things. You will use the gifts you have been given to change your situation for the better. It will not be easy. It requires action on your part. You must carry this weight and do the work for yourself. But what you find when you get down the road is so worth it. If you believe that you have been given this life by a loving creator, consider that He would be joyful watching you utilize your gifts to build a better life for you and the people who love you.

You've now read approximately 5000 of my words. What have we accomplished? We've seen that you are not at fault for where you are right now and that you are not broken, damaged, or diseased. We've established that you've had minimal opportunity to understand the mechanisms at play and that you've been buried in an avalanche of bad advice and wrong information.

It's not all bad news, though. We've also learned that this problem is really nothing more than a collection of bad brain habits learned in times of real but baseless fear. We've seen that this is a fixable problem and that you are in no way beyond hope. You are fixable. This is fixable. And your life can change.

So now what?

Let's layout what this path is going to look like. In the next lesson, I will take you through an overview of what we're going to be doing to enact this change. The good stuff is about to start!

Lesson 1.5 - Let's Get Ready To Rumble

Now it's time to start learning and laying the foundation for real change and improvement. I'll lay out exactly what we'll be talking about, what I'm going to teach you, and the impact it will have day-to-day and in the long term.

The first thing we're going to do is to take an in-depth look at the mechanics of anxiety, fear, cognition, and learning. If you're going to change course and start sailing in the right direction, you need to understand what's going on. You don't have to be in the dark about it any longer. It's not rocket science. I think you'll find that the mechanism that got you to where you are now is pretty easy to understand when you strip away all the erroneous stuff you've been inundated with.

We'll discuss how anxiety is just part of being human, and why an anxiety-free life isn't a realistic or healthy goal. We'll spend some time on the idea that your whole body/brain system is working pretty much as designed, just with a few missed turns along the way that require a course correction. I will spend quite a bit of time explaining why this is NOT a body problem and why it most certainly is a cognition and learning problem. Really, you WANT this to be a cognition and learning problem, because that's so much easier to address than an actual physical illness or disorder.

Many many people spend a tremendous amount of time in therapy and engaged in self-examination, hoping to uncover the "root cause" of their anxiety issues. I will explain to you how this is not the best plan to get you back on your feet. It seems like

such a logical thing to do, but like most other aspects of this solving an anxiety problem, it's not.

I'm REALLY going to hammer you on two keystone concepts that we will use to build your recovery plan:

1. Attacking your symptoms will not work. Trying to stop the feelings and sensations is a dead end. Examining and explaining them is wasted time and effort. Playing whack-a-mole (Google it) with your anxiety symptoms is a no-win proposition that will only lead to frustration and disappointment.
2. Avoiding is the worst thing you can do. I'm going to show you why avoidance is the kiss of death when trying to recover from something like panic disorder or agoraphobia. We will talk about why avoiding is the default behavior for the vast majority of human beings, and why you must be committed to doing precisely the opposite of it. That is, it is imperative that you go toward the feelings, sensations, places, people, and situations you fear the most.

Then once we've built a good foundation and understanding of the problem, it's time to start understanding the solution. So much of what we will discuss is easy from a conceptual standpoint, but it's also odd because it *is* counter-intuitive and often goes against "instinct." That just means that we need to spend some time laying it all out so that you can buy into why you have to do what your body and brain are screaming at you NOT to do! If you're a Seinfeld fan, you've heard George revel in "doing the opposite." This is going to be a key concept for you.

We'll spend some talking about changing your focus. That is, making a shift away from always thinking about and evaluating how you feel. This is a difficult state to live in constantly, so realizing that you're doing that and working on moving your overall

focus outward a bit will be really helpful. We're going to have to carefully examine the idea of going INTO fear as opposed to running from it. This is really the most essential part of the whole plan, so I will spend plenty of time showing you why this works and why you must do it, even though it is hard. If you're not ready to do hard things, then you're going to be disappointed with the outcome here.

After we get OK with the idea of going toward fear, we'll go over how to make that happen. You'll learn about why your reaction to anxiety and its symptoms is really the issue, and why you'll have to change that reaction. You can't simply go running into the scary stuff without also changing the way you react to being afraid. They go hand in hand as part of the solution. We'll talk about the need to learn new skills that will help you go toward fear with a new reaction. Things like fundamental focus and meditation skills, proper breathing, and on-demand muscle relaxation are necessary, so we'll go over those things. I'll probably rant about the need to continually practice your new skills so that you can get better at them and use them when you need them most. Well, I'll try not to rant, but no promises.

The last step in understanding the solution has to do with persistence and patience. Utilizing what I am teaching you requires both. But finding persistence and patience can be hard to find, especially in the beginning, so I'll also spend some time explaining why these concepts are important. Then when you find yourself struggling, you can refer back to that information for support.

Once we've gained a good understanding of the solution to your problem, we'll move on to actually making a recovery plan. Getting to the place you want to go requires an actual plan. There are many reasons for this. I will go over all of these reasons with you. What you need to know before we get to the plan is that recovery, even with a plan, is difficult and often wildly inconsistent. Why make it any harder than it al-

ready will be? Let's just work on making a good plan so that you have a road map to follow.

Be warned. Your plan will be a DOING plan. This is not a thinking or feeling solution. This is a solution firmly rooted in taking action. This is the part where many people lose it, so I'll do my best to explain why you have to actually DO these hard things without spending all your time thinking about them, talking about them, and learning about them. There's not much to learn. I'll teach you; then you'll GO.

I'm going to tell you that your plan has to include arranging your life so that you can do the work that needs to be done every single day with no days off. It's OK to make yourself a priority right now. It will go a very long way toward accelerating your progress if you do. I will address the common objections to this idea, and why we have to throw them out the window. The work will get done every day. We'll talk about how small steps taken repetitively is MUCH better than trying to fix everything in big leaps. This is a common mistake people make, but don't worry. I won't let you make it.

We'll talk about timeframes. I know this is often the million-dollar question. "How long will it take me to be normal again?"

Sadly, I can't really tell you, but we can discuss some average timeframes and the factors that can speed up and/or slow down the process. Having realistic expectations and understanding the need for patience and persistence that I mentioned earlier will really help you.

Once we've got your plan nailed down, we will move onto goal setting. A plan involves setting goals. Otherwise, there is no actual plan. We'll go over how to identify the goals most appropriate for your situation, how to set incremental goals, and how to identify the activities and tasks that move you closer to achieving those goals. Then we'll talk about how your goals will change over time. Your plan will be a living, breathing thing. It will evolve as you make progress. Both the smaller objectives and

overall direction contained in your plan will adjust over time. You'll want to be prepared for this. Again, knowing what to expect is a huge help.

Finally, we will move on to actually executing your plan and what that entails. This is where the rubber hits the road. The actual doing part. This is the part where you're picking up new skills, practicing them, and putting them into play as you intentionally do things that presently terrify you. Executing your plan is what creates real change in your life. It's the heavy lifting, and it will be hard, but so worth it.

Executing your plan will involve commitment, prioritization, time management, and working with your family and friends. We need to get them in the loop and on board in whatever way you think is best for you.

We will fill your toolbox with useful tools. I mentioned meditation, breathing, and relaxation. We will go over all of this in detail. We will spend a fair amount of time talking about how you must expect to struggle at times. This is another pitfall for many people, so we have to prepare for that. There will be days when it feels like you are accomplishing nothing, or that you have slid back to square one. I will give you a place to return to when you need to combat those thoughts. We'll discuss how and when to make judgments as to your progress. Above all, we will talk about how progress is never measured by feelings. Progress will be measured by what you do when you're anxious, uncomfortable, and afraid. These are the fires that forge the new you. This is important, so I will spend plenty of time on that topic.

Finally, we will see that as you progress, recovery isn't always all about recovery. You're also living life while you're working on solving your problem. We need to go over how sometimes you just need to live for the sake of living rather than just for recovery. This is a concept that many miss. It's common to get entirely consumed by the recovery process to such an extent that you can lose context and focus. I will give you

plenty of material that you can refer back to so we can keep that from becoming a problem.

As you can see, there is much work to do. There are many concepts to cover, lessons to learn, and steps to take. It will be challenging. It will require you to re-think most, if not all, of what you've been doing. It will likely require you to forget everything you think you knew to be true. You will go against what you think is common sense, and you will go against instinct, at least in the beginning. You will learn to think differently about this problem, and you will learn to trust that you've been *designed to recover*.

You will have understanding, direction, a plan, a purpose, and optimism where none has existed. We're going to wipe out that lost and confused thing. Then we're going to take care of the afraid part. When we get there, magic happens.

Ready?

This is a free sample chapter of my anxiety recovery book.

Find the complete version of this book at:

<https://theanxioustruth.com/recovery-guide>

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This is a free sample of my anxiety disorder recovery guide. This is all of chapter 1, explaining how you arrived at in the middle of what may seem like an un-solvable anxiety problem. I assure you, this is a solvable problem.

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