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anx·i·e·ty

/aNG'zī-itē/

**Noun:**

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. A desire to do something, typically accompanied by unease.

## Featured Topic: Managing Anxiety

**Have you ever felt like a prisoner of your own mind?** You know the feeling - restlessness, tense shoulders, a knot in the stomach, clenching jaws, aching head, and a mind that just won't shut down! Anxiety is a normal response to certain life situations. Sometimes we feel this way because we are about to do something that is out of our comfort zone, or because we don't know what to expect and feel out of control. Other times, we experience a general sense of dread or restlessness and can't quite put our finger on exactly why we feel this way. In this month's newsletter:

- "Did You Know..." This section provides bits of information about anxiety
- "Here's What Can Help..." This section provides some tips for managing anxiety
- Featuring my popular relaxation CD: [Breath, Awareness & Imagination](#) - an affordable tool for deep relaxation!

If you're wondering [how hypnosis can help you manage anxiety](#), give me a call for a **FREE** 20 minute phone consultation!



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## Did you know . . .

***Anxiety can become a mental habit - or even an identity.*** Just as we form behavioral habits like eating certain foods or doing certain routines, our thoughts can become habits as well. Sometimes we get so used to our negative self-talk that we become unaware of it - it becomes automatic. We can even end up identifying with these mental habits by labeling ourselves as "an anxious person" or "a worrier". Telling ourselves the same negative stories over and over is like a form of self-hypnosis! What stories are you telling yourself? Are these stories sticking to you as an identity?

***Anxiety may be a signal that we are resisting life as it is.*** As human beings, we are wired by nature to mentally anticipate and rehearse the possible future, and to re-hash the past. This is a normal and useful way to learn new things, adjust, adapt, and cope. These mental stories often take the form of expectations - what we *think* will happen - how we *think* life will be - and, we tend to *get attached* to these mental expectations. But, what happens when life doesn't match our internal scripts? What happens when life doesn't turn out like we expected? Well, if you're anything like me, I tend to spin more inner dramas in my mind desperately trying to regain a sense of control - to make life conform to what I fantasized it *should be* instead of accepting it as it is. How about you?

*"Anxiety's like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you very far."*— Jodi Picoult, from her novel [Sing You Home](#)

***Anxiety often covers up emotions we prefer not to feel.*** Anxiety keeps us in our head. As long as we are busy spinning stories in our minds, we don't have to feel. As long as we keep that rocking chair moving, we are kept distracted from the feelings in the body and the heart. After all, who wants to feel out of control? Who wants to feel sad, helpless, and all those other vulnerable feelings? We automatically jump up into our heads and start spinning stories, analyzing, problem solving, anticipating - we will do anything to avoid a sense of powerlessness. We prefer to feel like we are **DOING** something - so we keep the mental spinning wheel moving. Sometimes I think I unconsciously prefer to feel anxiety rather than what's underneath it. How about you? Can you relate to this quote:

*"Usually she ordered a cup of coffee and a cup of tea, as well as a brownie, propping up her sadness with chocolate and caffeine so that it became an anxiety."* — Lorrie Moore, from her short story [Like Life](#)



## Here's what can help . . .

**1. Develop a "personal tool kit" of mind-body skills** like hypnosis, imagery, mindful breathing, mindful awareness, meditation, etc., that you can use anytime, anywhere to take a break from stress and anxiety. Give me a call for a FREE 20 minute phone consultation to see if hypnosis can help you break free of your mental prisons!

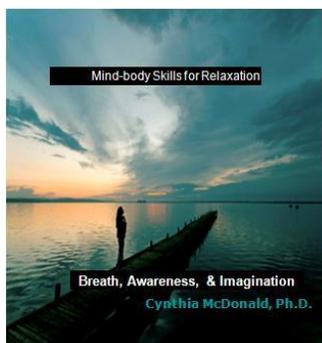
**2. Address possible physical reasons for your anxiety:** Reduce or eliminate sugar and caffeine from your diet. Be aware of supplements, over-the-counter, or prescription medications or treatments that may increase anxiety. See your doctor to eliminate possible medical causes for anxiety such as hyperthyroidism. Be sure to get enough sleep each night.

**3. Practice the "gotcha".** Learn to catch yourself in the act of spinning anxious fantasies. Challenge the story/thought - try saying to yourself: "this is just a story in my mind - it's NOT real - It's a FANTASY!" or "this is just a mental habit" or "this is just a thought".

**4. When you're feeling anxious, ask yourself: "Is there something I'm trying to avoid facing? Am I wishing life were other than what it is?"** If so, then just own up to it - admit it. That, in itself, can bring some relief!

**5. Sink into the deeper emotions under the surface of anxiety - *perhaps sadness, helplessness, etc.*** Take some deep breaths, and acknowledge to yourself, a trusted friend, or a therapist what you are really feeling.

*"Worrying is carrying tomorrow's load with today's strength- carrying two days at once. It is moving into tomorrow ahead of time. Worrying doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength."* — Corrie ten Boom



Add this popular and affordable CD to your stress management toolkit!

**Breath, Awareness, & Imagination**  
by Cynthia McDonald, PhD

Only \$15

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