

## 10 Steps to Calm Anxiety

1. **Understand what anxiety is.** It's fear. Sometimes helpful, but more often destructive because our fear tends to be more negative and exaggerated than the reality (thanks to our ancestors – we're descended from the overly skittish members of our species). It's a misguided way to exercise control over things we can't control. It's a way to *feel* powerful without doing anything about the problem. It's our brain trying to take over areas it's not in charge of, or us using our brain to do something it's not designed for (know the future!)
2. **Stay in a sense of power and possibility, not helplessness.** Anxiety can be a way to unconsciously create or reinforce a *sense* of power while doing nothing and taking no action or responsibility – and therefore no risk. Avoid and talk back to any internal dialogue that sounds like a victim mentality or powerlessness. These feed anxiety.
3. **Gather data.** What exactly is my fear? What are the facts? What information am I missing? What assumptions am I making? How might I be making incorrect assumptions, distorting facts, or operating from false beliefs? What evidence do I have that these false beliefs are true? What other evidence or data exists to the contrary?
4. **Identify your unmet needs.** What do I need right now that I'm trying to get through fear and anxiety? Comfort? Clarity? Power? Control? Ease? Calm? Safety?
5. **Practice compassion.** Appreciate what's good and right about you that brought you to this anxious state -- your sensitivity, your caring, your genetic heritage, and your instinct of self-protection. Be gentle with yourself, kind in your self-talk, patient with your timing, curious about the root of the problem, and committed to finding a more constructive way to get your needs met.
6. **Figure out what you *can* control, and take action.** You can control your attitude, choices, and behaviors. Gather more information. Get help from a professional with expertise in your problem. Ask for advice from people who've dealt successfully with this problem. Journal. Talk to a therapist or coach. Take a class. Learn a skill you lack.

7. **Give up on trying to know or control that which you cannot know or control.** Develop trust and faith in God, Life, the Universe, Ancestors, a Higher Power, Fate, Humanity, etc. – anything bigger than you that ultimately knows more than you. Just give up, let go, and refocus. Say “cancel, clear, delete” whenever unhelpful thoughts come up. Write them down on a piece of paper and burn them or put them into a “God box” for “God” to worry about instead of you. Gently redirect any unhelpful thoughts to a more powerful, realistic, accurate version.
8. **Learn to be more present.** Anxiety is about the future. *It’s not real.* Learn to live more in and from the present moment and all the joy and possibility it offers. Read books like *The Power of Now* (Tolle) or *Wherever you go, there you are* (Kabat-Zinn). Try some form of meditation or mindfulness practice. Immerse yourself in a creative pursuit or intense physical exercise. The sensation of losing time is a sign of having been fully present.
9. **Practice gratitude.** Nothing helps balance out the distortion of reality that anxiety brings than consciously gathering daily examples of alternate, positive realities, and being grateful for the myriad things that work well (even without our influence)! Write these things down, say them aloud, post them somewhere you see them!
10. **Learn to trust your intuition and your judgment.** The more you listen to your inner knowing, the more you make good decisions, the more successful you become at responding to what comes your way, and the more you learn from your mistakes, the more confident you’ll become that you can handle whatever shows up. Record, remember, remind and celebrate the many successes you’ve created, and that have fallen into your lap. You can’t control the outside world, only your attitude, your choices, and your actions!

**Let’s talk about how to set you up for success!** [susana@susanarinderle.com](mailto:susana@susanarinderle.com)