

WHAT IS *anxiety*?

ANXIETY IMPACTS US IN AT LEAST FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS. IT AFFECTS:

The way we feel.
The way we think.

The way our body works.
The way we behave.

WHAT DOES THAT *look like*?

HOW YOU FEEL

- Anxious, nervous, worried, frightened
- Feeling like something awful is going to happen
- Tense, stressed, uptight, on edge, unsettled
- Unreal, strange, woozy, detached
- Panicky

HOW YOU THINK

- Constant worrying
- Can't concentrate
- Racing thoughts
- Mind jumping from one thing to another
- Imagining the worst and dwelling on it
- Ruminating

HOW YOUR BODY WORKS

- Heart pounds, races, skips a beat
- Chest feels tight or painful
- Tingling or numbness in toes or fingers
- Stomach churning or butterflies
- Feeling of having to go to the bathroom
- Feeling jumpy or restless
- Tense muscles, headache
- Sweating
- Breathing changes
- Dizzy, light-headed

HOW YOU BEHAVE

- Pace back and forth
- Talk quickly or more than usual
- Become quiet
- Become irritable
- Eat more or less
- Avoid feared situations

WHY IS MY *body* DOING THIS TO ME?

ANXIETY IS THE FEELING WE GET WHEN OUR BODY RESPONDS TO A FRIGHTENING OR THREATENING EXPERIENCE. IT HAS BEEN CALLED THE **FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE**.

IT IS SIMPLY YOUR BODY **PREPARING FOR ACTION** TO EITHER FIGHT DANGER OR RUN AWAY FROM IT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. THE PURPOSE OF THE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY THEREFORE IS TO PREPARE YOUR BODY TO COPE WITH THREAT.

TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR BODY, IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE ATTACKED. AS SOON AS YOU ARE AWARE OF THE THREAT, YOUR **MUSCLES** TENSE, READY FOR ACTION. YOUR **HEART** BEATS FASTER TO CARRY BLOOD TO YOUR MUSCLES AND BRAIN, WHERE IT IS MOST NEEDED. YOU **BREATHE** FASTER TO PROVIDE OXYGEN WHICH IS NEEDED FOR ENERGY. YOU **SWEAT** TO STOP YOUR BODY FROM OVERHEATING. YOUR **MOUTH** BECOMES DRY AND YOUR **STOMACH** MAY HAVE BUTTERFLIES.

THE **FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE** IS A REALLY BASIC SYSTEM THAT PROBABLY GOES BACK TO THE DAYS OF **CAVEMEN**, AND IS PRESENT IN ANIMALS WHO DEPEND ON IT FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. FORTUNATELY, NOWADAYS WE ARE NOT OFTEN IN SUCH **LIFE OR DEATH SITUATIONS**. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY OF THESE STRESSES WE DO FACE CAN'T BE FOUGHT OFF OR RUN AWAY FROM, SO THE SYMPTOMS DON'T HELP. IN FACT, THEY OFTEN MAKE US FEEL WORSE, ESPECIALLY IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM.

WHAT KEEPS ANXIETY *going*?



AN EVENT HAPPENS AND WE HAVE A THOUGHT ABOUT THE EVENT...

"I have a test tomorrow and I haven't studied at all. I'm going to fail."

...HOW WE THINK ABOUT THE EVENT DETERMINES HOW WE FEEL ABOUT IT...

I feel really nervous.

...WHICH GENERATES THE SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY...

My stomach hurts and I'm breathing fast.

...AND RESULTS IN FEELING ANXIOUS.

"Helloooo anxiety."