

## **Breaking Free of Anxiety, Part X, Conclusion**

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In this series, I have covered many basic psychological tools and strategies used to break free from anxiety and panic disorder. I've stressed that anxiety disorders have a biological, psychological, and social component, and you need to have a multi-faceted approach in order to be effective in breaking free. Relying purely on medication will reduce symptoms, but nothing more. Medications do not address the underlying cognitive and psycho-social factors that are creating anxiety and panic.

The best treatment approach for anxiety sufferers is a combination of medications and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Medications reduce symptoms allow for the therapy process to proceed effectively. Medications make one more comfortable while working through the cognitive and socially based issues, which are creating the anxiety.

Previously, I have addressed the cognitive and behavioral skills, such as compartmentalizing, linear thinking, relaxation, reducing rumination and worry, sleeping well, and expanding one's comfort zone. These cognitive behavioral issues are at the core of a good program in learning to break free of anxiety and panic. Hypnosis is a powerful tool in the CBT process. It can be a valuable adjunct to CBT and allows one to incorporate cognitive skills at a much deeper level, so they can become more effective and automatic in a shorter period of time. I record the hypnosis sessions, so they can be listened to repeatedly, allowing the skills to be integrated faster and efficiently. (I regularly use hypnosis with CBT therapy, not only with anxiety, but with other clinical work. It enhances the effectiveness and speeds up the change process.)

We live in a culture which likes to believe that for every mental, emotional, or physical problem, there is a simple medical solution. This is certainly the case for anxiety and panic disorder. They have come to be classified by the pharmaceutical companies as disorders of "chemical imbalance." Chemical imbalances are frequently a part of anxiety and panic disorder, but they do not create the disorder, they are an effect of the disorder. Cognitive and psycho-social patterns need to be addressed if you truly break free. CBT is truly an adventure in learning when you are serious in your decision to begin the process...think about integrating a medical and psychological treatment protocol.

If you have any questions regarding how to proceed for treatment for yourself or someone you love, do not hesitate to call or e-mail me with your questions and concerns. Anxiety and panic are treatable and I encourage you to be pro-active, seek help and get on the path to breaking free of anxiety!