

Anxiety reducing technique

(adapted from 'How To Train Your Brain to Choose Excitement Over Fear':
<https://medium.com/@corywilliam/how-to-train-your-brain-to-choose-excitement-over-fear-859afd88edd8>)

We all have opportunities to have victories which result in a feeling of fear or excitement. When broken down scientifically, feelings are a combination of chemical messengers we call hormones. Your body responds to hormones with particular emotions like joy, happiness, or fulfilment under the right mindset. When you tell yourself that you're nervous, your body will respond by releasing hormones, causing you to feel fear. Similarly, when you tell yourself you're excited, the body will respond by releasing the SAME hormones, causing you to feel excitement. Essentially, mindset is everything. Our minds are the true master of our emotional body and our bodies will respond by turning our thoughts into feelings. We are feeling-making machines!

According to human evolution, fear is a protection mechanism by the body to prevent you from taking risks that may end your life. Literally, fear comes from a prehistoric genetic imprinting to protect our bodies from death, so that we may live to reproduce. Your brain is in a constant battle (or so it thinks), to protect you from things it perceives as deadly. There are not a lot of things or people out to kill you today, so fear doesn't have a very productive place in modern society anymore. In order to be in the moment of action, we must learn to access excitement in spite of feeling fear.

Anxiety reducing technique (this can also be used to help with panic attacks)

1. The first thing to do is move. This is so that your body thinks you're moving away from whatever it perceives to be danger.
2. Take 3 deep breaths (make sure the out breath is longer and slower than the in breath) and smile or even better laugh with each out breath (even if this is false laughter as practiced in Laughter Yoga, e.g. 'ha, ha, ha' each time you breathe out).
3. Count from 5 down to 1.
4. If you feel it is appropriate you can reframe the feeling, e.g. if you're feeling anxiety you could say to yourself 'I'm just feeling excited'.
5. Focus on one thought; this can be an affirmation of how you would like to be, e.g. 'I am calm', even if you don't feel calm.
6. Repeat the thought to yourself and think of a positive image for a few minutes (it's best to choose an image that's related to a positive feeling you would like, e.g. one where you're feeling really good after an event).
7. If you can really imagine how good you would feel, after say an event. Expand on this and say to yourself and/ or write down something else to affirm it, e.g. I'm feeling good because...
 - I now know whatever happens I will be fine
 - I am getting better and better every day
 - I am calm, confident and in control