



7 WAYS
TO REDUCE
ANXIETY IN
7 MINUTES
OR LESS

*Think clearly, feel relaxed and
perform at your best under pressure*

Tony Yuile

*Tony Yuile is a qualified life coach and clinical hypnotherapist.
He has a busy practice in Wellington, New Zealand where he specialises in
teaching people how to reduce, and manage, the level of stress and anxiety in their lives.
Tony speaks and conducts workshops on various aspects of stress and anxiety management.*

PRAISE FOR
7 WAYS TO REDUCE ANXIETY IN 7 MINUTES OR LESS

*"Anyone suffering with stress and anxiety will be struggling with two big questions. Firstly "What on earth is happening to me?" and secondly, "What can I do to feel better fast? In this gem of a book, Tony Yuile answers both these questions quite brilliantly. This is a refreshing resource for anyone looking to deal with stress and anxiety in their life. Tony teaches the things that actually work (and work quickly).
Fantastic book for anyone seeking real effective help."*

**- Ed Lester, Founder of the NZ School of Professional Hypnotherapy and
NZ Life Coaching**

"Because of the very nature of anxiety, if you have it you want simple clear solutions: solutions you can use right now. You also want to know that the person giving them has experience helping people like you, and that their methods are realistic, researched and tested in practical day to day life. The book you are holding gives you all that and more. Tony Yuile has a wealth of experience guiding people from anxiety to calmness. Here are seven immediately usable solutions that he has used himself and shared with so many others in his coaching practice."

**- Dr Richard Bolstad, Trainer and author of 14 books including the
University text Transforming Communication**

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*You may not control all the events that happen to you
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.*

– Dr Maya Angelou

The content of this book is intended for general information purposes only. The techniques are not designed to, and should not be construed to, provide medical advice, professional diagnosis, opinion or treatment to you or any other individual, and they are not intended as a substitute for medical or professional care and treatment.

I recommend you seek professional help if you need it, but don't underestimate your own ability to take action and make positive, life-changing decisions to help you take back control of your wellbeing.

*To Mary, your love, encouragement and support
made my transformation possible.*

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What Is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a gift from nature because it aids survival

— none of us would live long if anxiety didn't stop us from taking foolhardy risks!

– Human Givens Institute

The word ‘anxiety’ is a derivative of the Latin word angō, which means ‘I cause physical pain’ or ‘I torment, trouble, vex, distress’.

When first researching anxiety, I soon became confused by the plethora of definitions. Anxiety has been defined as:

- an emotion
- a feeling
- a behavior
- a state of mind
- a consequence of stress
- a cause of stress

After working with anxious and stressed clients for a while, I realised that the majority of people use ‘anxiety’ and ‘stress’ as shorthand for the range of symptoms they are experiencing. Therefore, when explaining anxiety to my clients I use the following definition:

‘Anxiety’ is an umbrella term, used to describe the symptoms produced as a consequence of activating the stress response.

Whenever I refer to ‘anxiety’ in this book, I’m referring to the symptoms we experience. These symptoms can be found in Chapter 5: How Do We Know We Are Experiencing Anxiety?

THE UPSIDE AND DOWNSIDE OF ANXIETY

Many clients come to me with the goal of becoming completely free of anxiety. That’s an unrealistic goal, because the capacity to experience anxiety is innate and of survival value.

Anxiety evolved to protect us from physical harm, and today it also helps us to satisfy our physical and emotional needs. It’s an intrinsic part of the human condition. The only people who do not experience anxiety are psychopaths.

So I explain to clients that their goal is to not to eliminate anxiety but to gain control over their anxiety so it serves them (the upside), rather than having a damaging impact on their performance and physical and mental health (the downside).

Now, let's take a look at the two sides of anxiety.

THE UPSIDE OF ANXIETY

Anxiety has always played an important role in keeping humans alive and safe from physical harm, in a world full of uncertainties and risks. It still has an important role to play today, because it's okay to experience a level of fear about things we are uncertain about. Apprehension, unease and nervousness are our early warning system.

These feelings stop us from taking unnecessary risks, and encourage us to be cautious in our actions. Those actions may involve us planning and preparing for threats, e.g. earthquake proofing our house, buying insurance before we go on holiday, rehearsing before delivering a presentation, studying in preparation for an exam.

In particular, we need to experience some level of anxiety when we find ourselves faced with a new or challenging event, a problem, or find ourselves in an unfamiliar or potentially dangerous situation.

When we're faced with an experience we've never had before, it is healthy to have some anxiety because it tells us "*there are things we don't know*" and we have to obtain more information, skills or resources. For example, without anxiety (over the fear of failure) we wouldn't prepare for the job interview we have next week.

A certain amount of anxiety enhances our performance when we are faced with something challenging. Professional speakers, actors, athletes and other performers consistently rely on the heightened arousal of nervousness to channel extra energy into their performance. A reasonable level of nervousness before an interview or exam, for example, is likely to result in better preparation and, therefore, a better result.

When we are faced with a problem, a certain amount of anxiety can be a good thing because it makes use of that most powerful of human assets – the imagination – to consider various scenarios and options before arriving at the best possible solution.

The anxiety we may feel in unfamiliar surroundings, e.g. while walking near steep cliffs, will cause us to be more careful and purposeful in our movements.

Crossing a road is an example of a potentially dangerous situation. Without anxiety (over the fear of being knocked down), we wouldn't be careful as we crossed.

THE DOWNSIDE OF ANXIETY

While anxiety has ensured our survival as a species – helping us survive physical, life-threatening dangers – in today's world it can be problematic because the majority of the dangers and threats we face are not physical or life threatening. Today the main cause of anxiety is the misuse of our imagination. We create negative future scenarios in the virtual reality machine that is our imagination. Basically, we scare ourselves with threats that are unlikely to materialise into real dangers. When our fears are irrational or unreal they can prevent us from taking the action we need to take, and this can have a negative impact on our lives – perhaps to the point where we become dysfunctional.

From a behavioural perspective, avoidance is the main downside of anxiety. When experiencing anxiety we may avoid both familiar and new experiences.

Stepping outside of our comfort zone is often avoided. [The comfort zone is a behavioral state within which an individual operates in an anxiety-neutral condition, using a limited set of behaviors to deliver a steady level of performance, usually without a sense of risk.] So we play safe, and do not pursue opportunities or we avoid new experiences.

Avoiding experiences we used to enjoy is common.

Failing to take necessary action is a form of avoidance. We engage in procrastination, perfectionism and 'paralysis by analysis'. Paralysis by analysis occurs when we over-analyze (or over-think) a situation so a decision or action is never taken, in effect paralyzing the outcome.