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Anxiety Thoughts: Getting to your deep down thoughts

Throughout my newsletter I work through many specific questions utilizing CBT.

The principle of CBT is that your thoughts cause your anxiety and panic attacks. Therefore by locating the thoughts that make you feel badly, you are then in a position to recognize the cognitive distortions and then in a position to generate alternative, and more accurate and realistic thoughts that will make you feel better.

As you can probably see by now, it is important to really get at your thoughts, because once this happens you have something to work with.

Often when we're anxious or having a panic attack, it is very challenging to nail down our specific thoughts; which makes it's hard to do CBT because we do not have specific thoughts to work on.

Often people struggle with the issue of how to figure out what their underlining thoughts are. What I am suggesting is that you obviously know that you feel anxious but you might have trouble connecting it to any specific thoughts.

I have suggested ways in which you can be a good detective with your thoughts, but I'd like to suggest some more ways to do so.

As I suggested, however, in the last installment, if you continue to do something long enough you become very proficient in what you do. I believe this to be the case with restructuring your thinking, too, but I want to put forward some additional suggestions for getting at those anxiety producing thoughts!

First, it is important to keep a journal of your daily emotions, feelings, and of course any thoughts throughout the day. The act of journaling and documenting things will allow you the opportunity to get at your thoughts at a later time and do CBT.

The reason I suggest listing your emotions throughout the day is that if you can first look back at how you felt at different times throughout the day, you can look to see if there were situations and/or thoughts that might have triggered these emotions.

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When you look back at a specific emotion it might prove helpful in figuring out what your thoughts were.

This is the same for specific events that may have happened during the day.

A process I suggest, however, is to look at a particular emotion throughout the day and ask yourself the following: “What thoughts could be causing these emotions?” I suggest that when you do this you will probably start getting some ideas. It might take a few minutes but really reflecting on these things can be helpful. Once you get some ideas about what could be causing your emotions, I would suggest that these are likely what are causing your emotions.

The great news is that now you have some thoughts to work with. Now you can proceed with the process of CBT (which you no doubt are very familiar by now). I wanted to make this suggestion for the weekend in case you have some extra time to begin some journaling.

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