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Onset of Anxiety: Warning Signs

Often in life when things are about to happen there are warning signs. This is very true for anxiety and panic attack sufferers because if you think about your own life you probably have experienced anxiety following an event such as a disagreement with someone or just a negative situation that occurred earlier in the day.

Often, though, it's not necessarily the single negative event but rather the accumulation of negative events that make you feel anxious.

Where am I headed with this?

Well if you think about your own life, you have undoubtedly had things happen in your life where you think back and say to yourself "I had a bad feeling about that" or "didn't really like the sound of it at the time", or, "sure enough it made me feel uncomfortable". And I'm not just necessarily talking about in the cases of anxiety or panic attacks.

But really my point here is, if you look at warning signs how do they apply to anxiety?

Such warning signs consist of negative emotions, perhaps a tightness in the diaphragm area, a queasy stomach, generally feeling uneasy, a sort of feeling of something nagging you, or just sort of spacey feeling after you might have had a conversation with someone that left you a little unsettled but at the same time a part of you wants to move onto the next things in your day.

There are countless warning signs that are probably specific to you but the important thing is learning to recognize the warning signs and you're taking action when you get the warning signs.

Taking action

If you take notice of the warning signs then this is the first step in changing the way you process these things.

Let's look at a specific example.

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Let's say that you get out of bed one morning and really stub your toe. It really hurts, it's really throbbing and painful and you're really mad. The rest of the day is this constant series of negative events that seem to keep happening.

As an anxiety sufferer it could be a single event in your day that you don't handle properly, you don't recognize the warning signs, and because you just let it go, so to speak, you think you're just moving on with your day. However, for the anxiety and panic attack sufferer, these things stay lurking in the background, only to be added to later with more negative events which will probably turn into anxiety and panic attacks.

Am I simply blaming you for your own anxiety? No. Rather I think that the whole purpose of the warning sign is so you can do something about it. So if you have a negative event in your life that upsets you, rather than putting it aside, now is the time to bring out Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), before you're feeling more anxious and possibly in line for a panic attack.

Start working on the thoughts right away.

CBT is not something to utilize when you're incredibly anxious but something to be applied when an event happens that causes you stress.

Successful use a form of CBT.

You see many successful people who work in businesses and many entrepreneurs will often perform a variation of CBT, although they might not think of it in this way, but they often do the same types of steps that are involved in the CBT process when they're brainstorming for solutions, or working together with others on solutions. These are effective people and I think these principles are a reason for their success.

So you should do the same throughout your life.

You need to recognize the warning signs. That's what your emotions are – they are your warning signs – they're alerting you to things that will cause you stress down the road.

So:

1. Act on the warning sign by doing CBT on the event and then you can move on.

Let me give you a specific example.

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When I was in a previous business organization a colleague and I were working on a particular idea about how to document certain information about clients. I had come up with a way to perform this function that used less paper and I thought it was very efficient. And, my colleague came up with a way that did use more paper but her perspective was that things would not be as easily missed by using her approach.

What happened is that we had a disagreement and we agreed to disagree. But this didn't help anyone. Now this naturally bothered me. Fortunately though I heeded the warning sign and took action. The warning sign being my anxiety about the event.

So I did some CBT on the problem.

This is the really great thing about CBT, it allows you to look at a situation more like an independent third party would.

You may recall me discussing the importance of being able to look at things more independently from your own personal perspective – more objectively. You will likely remember me saying that you can't solve a problem with the same mindset that created it.

You can't solve a problem from the same thinking that created it – and that's why CBT is really helpful. It lets you sort of step outside of your own thinking and see it from more of an objective perspective.

That's exactly what happened. I started seeing the good points of my approach AND my colleague's good points. I was really able to see my colleague's contributions and how hard she'd worked and how her good ideas, which formed her approach, and I was able to overall analyze these things in conjunction with my ideas.

And I saw that there was an actual solution combining our two approaches that was better than the individual ones. I came back to my colleague at the end of the day and certainly felt better. I no longer had anxiety about the event.

The important point was, not only was I no longer feeling anxious about the whole event, but I now came to my colleague with the spirit of working together. I wasn't shut-down to hearing her input. She wasn't shut down to hearing mine because of my approach but it's because I had this third party independent look and this is very true in all aspects of life. You often hear of mediators who intervene between two parties when there's a dispute or disagreement. Well this third party mediator for us is CBT.

It's important to recognize warning signs throughout your life that tell you that your anxiety and panic attacks may be triggered later throughout the day.

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And that's really what it's all about in my opinion, it's about recognizing the warning signs AND doing something about them, making changes in your thinking with CBT, and you can improve your life in countless ways.

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