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## Relapse Anxiety

Today I want to discuss an anxiety relapse.

What do I mean by this?

Relapse is defined as a recurrence of symptoms after a period of improvement. You may have thought about relapse in the sense of an addiction to alcohol, a drug or another disease but perhaps haven't thought about relapse in the context of anxiety and panic attacks.

I'm in no way suggesting that if you have overcome your anxiety and panic attacks that you will definitely have a relapse, but rather I would like to write this in the event that that may happen but more so in the event that your fear of having anxiety and panic attacks is holding you back.

My intention is to help you have a piece of mind over the thought of a relapse – not just with the actual situation of an actual relapse – although you'll be prepared for a relapse of anxiety should that happen too.

I want you to view your anxiety and panic attacks as something you can handle, but I want to talk about the subject of relapses in the context of what I will refer to as the “relapsing tendency”.

What do I mean by this?

Have you've known people that have had the tendency to start new things, like exercising or something healthy, who then always seem to go back (or relapse) into to their previous behaviours (in this example they go back to not exercising). One becomes cynical about them whenever they try something new and thinks “oh yeah here we go again, let's see how long this will last”

Perhaps you're someone that has exhibited what I call the “relapsing tendency” from time to time.

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That's where I want to really chime in!

You don't have to be overcome by "relapsing tendency"

First though I need to dig a little deeper into this "relapsing tendency"

The folks discussed above who you see relapsing into their old behaviours get trapped not actually because they've had a relapse because of what they do after the relapse happens.

Simply put, the problem is not actually a relapse in itself, but rather what you or I (or anyone who has a relapse) does AFTER the relapse occurs.

Again the problem is not actually the relapse itself but rather what you do AFTER the relapse occurs.

What do I mean by this?

Well let me discuss an example of someone who is successful in his or her career. A successful person actually makes mistakes throughout the day, but he/she moves on from the mistake while someone else might really agonize over the fact that they made a mistake and not be willing to have any insight into what can be done to move forward.

Going back to the previous example of those who relapse back into their behaviours let me look at specific example. Someone is on a diet and one night "pigs out" and overeats. He/she then later feels very badly about this and then engages into negative self-talk and then continues to overeat in the long term, in other words goes back to the way they ate before.

How does this all this on relapse relate to anxiety and panic attacks?

Well a person who successfully works through their anxiety and panic attacks (when I use the term "successful" I am not making a judgment but simply referring to someone who does not become immobilized after a panic attack) he/she moves on after the event and employs the anxiety toolkit that has been provided throughout this newsletter. If you're not currently a subscriber, do not despair: my newsletter is free and you can follow the link at the end of this document to sign-up for it.

I'm not suggesting that it shouldn't be uncomfortable when a panic attack happens. I'm not suggesting it's bad if you do become completely immobilized following a recurrence of a panic attack.

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What I am suggesting is that there is something that you can do if you are someone that tends to become immobilized.

I want you to see that it is not the relapse of a panic attack itself that is ultimately problematic but it is the falling into certain traps.

Here are some examples:

Thinking things like:

“I was doing so well; why have my panic attacks returned?”

“I knew this was going to happen again!”

Concluding that none of this “stuff” works

However if we go back to the example of the “successful” person and imagine a “successful” panic attack recoverer, he/she does not become immobilized by a recurring panic attacks and only engage in negative self-talk, but rather, for example, remembers all of the techniques that have been discussed in my newsletter and continues to apply them. Again if you’re not currently a subscriber, do not despair: my newsletter is free and you can follow the link at the end of this document to sign-up for it.

For example, using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy “CBT” to analyze underlying thoughts to locate the cognitive distortions and then to substitute realistic thoughts that can make you feel better, or going back and looking at the many other suggestions and techniques discussed in my newsletter and then implementing a plan to ensure that concepts learned get practiced on a regular basis.

All of the strategies discussed in this newsletter are not simply intended to be things that only make you feel good in the moment but rather things that can allow you to move forward and avoid becoming immobilized by anxiety and panic attacks for the long term.

Overtime should you have suffered a relapse of anxiety or a panic attack you can say to yourself “oh that” referring to the symptoms of the panic attack rather than taking things beyond the panic attack and catastrophizing.

Even if you do become immobilized after becoming anxious or having a panic attack, you can always begin to move forward from there. Going back to the example of persons with a “relapsing tendency”: falling off the wagon, so to speak, does not mean things are over, but rather, that you simply need to get back up again and get back (or keep up) with employing the strategies that have been conveyed to you in my free newsletter.

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I hope you'll ponder things over and begin to apply them should you have any of the challenges discussed today.

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