

EXERCISE

The Path to Freedom from Anxiety, Fear, and Doubt.

STEP 1: Triggers

We're going to use an event or something that happened to you recently where your anxiety or doubt came up. We're going to call that event a "trigger". Triggers can sometimes be interpreted as something really big and bad that happens, or that you feel really strong feelings about. But in our work, we use triggers to mean something that can of course be big and bad, but it can also be subtle and hardly noticeable - sometimes you only notice when you look back and realize that the cascade of anxiety had a small beginning point, so small that you didn't notice when you were first triggered.

So here are the journaling instructions: What triggered you? Describe the event that happened that started your fear or anxiety.

Here are some examples:

1. I wanted to connect with people at a work conference but stayed silent and walked around by myself instead
2. I was frantic trying to leave the house, scared of being late to an event.
3. I was thinking about speaking my needs to my landlord who was rude to me but was totally overwhelmed by the idea.

Getting to know your triggers is a super helpful way to get to know the habitual nature of what makes you anxious. You might be surprised about what you learn from regularly observing your triggers as often as you can. Begin writing down some triggers on the next page

Write your answers here:

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STEP 2: Conclusions

Now, describe what you concluded in that moment about yourself or the world or another person.

Here are some examples to help you:

1. I don't have anything to say. I won't be interesting to talk to. Other people don't want to talk to me.
2. If I don't get to this event on time and with everything perfectly lined up, it will be a terrible experience and I will be an embarrassment.
3. My landlord is not going to listen to me and I'm not going to think of the right thing to say and this is pointless and I won't get my needs met so I should just stop even thinking about this.

This is the moment where you have already concluded something about yourself or the world. It is where your already formed beliefs kick in. This is actually WHY you got triggered in the first place: the conclusion is already drawn about yourself, or another person, or about what's going to happen next. Make sure you write down as much as you can here.

Write down your conclusions that you drew, related to the triggers you wrote down in step one, on the next page.

Write your answers here:

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STEP 3: Feelings

Now, describe what you felt. Look at the feelings words list you can find in the downloads below this video and write out ALL the feelings words that resonate with you.

Here are some examples to help you:

1. I felt Shame, regret. Disdain.
2. I felt wound up, panicked, stressed, fear, anticipation of shame
3. I felt ashamed, anguished, pessimistic, doubtful, and worried.

Now, watch that you ONLY write feeling words, and NOT words that can masquerade as feeling words but actually aren't. Included in the download of feeling words you should also see a list of words called assessment words that are those kinds of non-feeling words.

Double check that you aren't including those assessment words because it is important that you are using true feeling words.

If you notice yourself wanting to use assessment words, you can add that to Step 2 and write it down as one of the conclusions you made (for example, "I concluded that I was betrayed").

Go ahead and write down your feeling words on the next page.

Write your answers here:

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STEP 4: Beliefs

And now we get to the the heart of the matter. What are you believing about yourself and the world and your place in it? These beliefs drive so much of what we feel, conclude, and ALL of our behaviors. We act out of the things we believe, even when we aren't aware of what they are. So it's very important you begin to become aware of what your beliefs are. Only once you KNOW what you believe, will you have a choice about whether you choose to believe it or not. And you DO have a choice. You can choose whether or not to believe that you are a fraud, or that you have to prove yourself, or if you are a victim or instead a clear, loving, but strong-minded person who has faith in their sense of things.

So take some time reading over the conclusions, the feelings, and the triggers and write down what beliefs come up in you. You might struggle with this and maybe you won't complete in one session. The main thing is you try, and you can always come back to this exercise and see what new insights have landed for you. Often we find that sleeping on things can yield new insights overnight. But go ahead right now and pause the recording and write down what you believe about yourself or the world.

Here are some examples to help you:

1. I believe that I am a fraud, and don't deserve to be at this conference in the first place.
2. I believe that I constantly have to prove myself, that appearances are extremely important.
3. I believe that I am always the victim when it comes to conflict and I have no power in life.

Write those things down on the next page.

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STEP 5: Insights

And now, take a moment to consider how your beliefs are actually DRIVING your experiences of the world and yourself. This may not be obvious at first, it can take time to come to these insights. But the more that we do this work, the more that we see how much power we actually have.

Here are some examples of what we mean:

1. I don't love myself so I believe that others could never love me and so I'll stay away from opportunities for connection.
2. I believe I am unworthy of acceptance and recognition so I will make sure I never get it through unconscious self-sabotaging and passive aggressive behaviors.
3. I believe I am a victim and cannot stand up for myself; there is nothing I can do about others bullying me so I don't ask for my needs or hold others accountable to agreements.

Now, do some explorative writing around this on the next page.

Write your answers here:

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