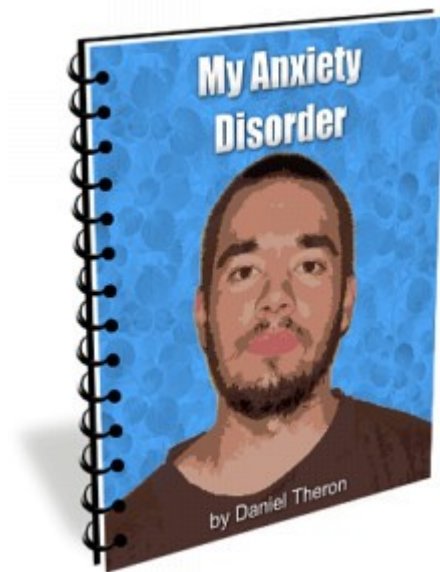


My Anxiety Disorder



by Daniel Theron

Free report compiled and edited from blog posts at <http://myanxietydisorder.wordpress.com/>

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Introduction

My name is Daniel Theron and I suffer from depression and anxiety. I have realized that from a young age I have been prone to worry excessively, often expecting the worst to happen. Here is my experience...

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

I have probably been struggling with generalized anxiety disorder for much of my teenage years and young adult life. I have recognized that I regularly experience the following anxiety symptoms:

- Feelings of sadness, worthlessness and guilt
- Depression
- Recurring thoughts of death and suicide
- Poor concentration
- Chronic fatigue
- Getting easily exhausted
- Restlessness and irritability
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Gastrointestinal discomfort
- Substance abuse (nicotine and caffeine)
- Losing motivation and interest in life
- Persistent worrying

General anxiety disorder may be described as excessive, unrealistic and continuous worrying about everyday things persisting for at least 6 months. In my experience I am mostly anxious about money, job security, past failures and future concerns, my character flaws, how much I smoke, how I will die, if I am good enough, the end of the world, loneliness and disease.

Anxiety Attacks

I recently realized that I experienced a few anxiety attacks when I was still a young boy. I was probably 6 or 7 years old at the time. I experienced these terrible attacks quite a few times in the dead of night. I would wake up with my heart racing, in the grip of an overwhelming fear. I would call out to my mother and she would come and light a candle for me. I eventually went back to sleep.

Why was this an anxiety attack? Well, because there was no imminent danger. I did not wake up with a racing heartbeat and a feeling of overwhelming fear because a burglar was standing next to my bed with a raised knife. Neither was the house on fire or the roof caving in. I cannot remember waking up because of a bad dream either. Fact is, these were most probably anxiety attacks. Eventually it stopped and I forgot about them.

Years later, when I was in my early twenties and working, I started to experience anxiety attacks again. I would experience a racing heartbeat, sweating palms, dizziness and

tingling sensations in my neck and arms. I was afraid that I was having a minor heart attack or something. I made an appointment with a doctor who examined me, drew some blood for tests and asked me a few questions. The blood tests did not show anything out of the ordinary. I did not have heart problems or some terrible disease. These attacks eventually stopped and I forgot about them for the most part.

A few years later I had a few more anxiety attacks. I eventually stopped fearing them when I started accepting the fact that [panic attacks do not harm you](#). Well, not physically anyway. It does however have a serious impact upon your emotional, business and social life. I may experience more anxiety attacks in the future, but at least now I know that I will not die from it.

Anxiety Treatment

I am currently using antidepressants as prescribed by my doctor for my generalized anxiety disorder and depression. It has helped me in some ways, although I am now realizing that just taking anxiety medication is not going to cure me. I have to look into other forms of supplemental treatment such as:

- Learn and practice balanced thinking and unlearn negative thought patterns.
- Do physical exercises at least 3 times per week.
- Maintain a healthy diet with sufficient vitamin B6, B12, C, zinc, selenium and magnesium.
- Do deep breathing exercises on a daily basis.
- Limit or stop the use of caffeine and nicotine.
- Practice meditation each day.

I may also consider exploring herbal anxiety treatments, although I should probably not start using any herbal products while I am still on anxiety medication.

- Chamomile tea: has a mild calming effect, helps with sleep and minimizes inflammation in the skin and mucous membranes.
- St. John's Wort: useful for depression and anxiety disorders, helps with insomnia and restless sleep. **Do not use while on anti-depressants.**
- Ginko Biloba: increases cerebral blood flow and oxygenation, helps with depression and anxiety.
- Ginseng: boosts the immune system, helps with fatigue and increases stamina.

I do experience withdrawal symptoms such as nausea and headaches when I forget to take my anxiety medication.

The will to live is the most basic instinct that keeps us going in the face of real or perceived danger. The intensity of this instinct varies from person to person. My will and ability to live is weakened by the constant fear and anxiety that I experience. In order to survive, I must practice and increase my desire to never give up, regardless of the situations I anticipate or face.

My Definition of Common Anxiety Disorders

Are you uncertain about all the different anxiety disorders and what they are? There may be some confusion involved. I will now attempt to explain and define the most common anxiety disorders for you.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder -- It may be defined as constant worrying or doubt about your life for at least six months and longer. These worries occur in relation to anticipated and imagined danger and fear. Anxiety symptoms may include uncontrollable anxious thoughts, sadness, guilt, muscle tension, headaches, dizziness, fatigue and sleeping problems.

Social Anxiety Disorder -- It may be defined as the constant avoidance of social interaction or public performance because of fear and doubt. This anxiety includes situations such as public speaking, using public restrooms and attending social events.

Panic Disorder -- It can be defined as having frequent anxiety attacks that may be triggered by certain situations, certain foods or extreme fatigue. Anxiety symptoms can include rapid heartbeat, sweating, shortness of breath, tingling or numbness, nausea, dizziness and the fear of dying or losing control.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder -- It can be defined as the occurrence of obsessive thoughts and impulsive behavior that causes much anxiety and stress for the person experiencing them. It leads to the performance of compulsive rituals designed to relieve the anxiety created by these intrusive thoughts. Ritual behavior may include frequent washing of the hands, frequent brushing of the teeth and reciting words or phrases.

Post-traumatic Anxiety Disorder -- It may be defined as a severe reaction to a stressful or traumatic event that a person experienced in the recent past. The person usually keeps on reliving anxiety and flashbacks of the traumatic experience. This greatly impairs the normal functioning of a sufferer.

These are definitions for the most common anxiety disorders and do not include specific phobias. My definitions are probably mediocre, but there they are. You may now have a clearer definition of the different types of anxiety disorders.

How To Start Coping with Anxiety Disorder

I have been trying to cope with the physical and mental effects of anxiety disorder for some time now. In my personal opinion, I have not done very well so far. I still wrestle with impulsive behavior, anxious thoughts, imagined fears and failures, hypersomnia etc. But to say that I have made no progress at all would be untrue.

The best way is to grow out of an anxiety disorder towards a calmer and stronger lifestyle. Constant growth is achieved through constant practice and better habitual behavior. I can share some of my experiences with you now.

Get a goal -- I admit that I have gone through my life so far like a ship being blown around on the open ocean by a storm. I do not really know what I want to do with my life. Therefore it really helps to have a goal or numerous goals and destinations in life. It keeps you motivated and moving forward. It diminishes anxiety and depression. If you have a goal, you still have a reason to live. I am learning the value of this now, although I would have liked to have known this a decade or more ago.

Creativity is critical -- According to the book of Genesis in the bible, humans were made in the image of God. Since God is the creator of the universe and life, it stands to reason that creativity is a critical part to maintaining the image of the creator on earth. Sadly there are things and attitudes on earth that would like to inhibit creativity instead of nurturing it. I had to learn this lesson the hard way. I thought that I would fit in much better if I were more perfect and less creative. Instead I still did not fit in and I frustrated my creative mind. This led to some destructive thinking and behavior on my part which I am still trying to unlearn. I started to write again recently and it really helps to express yourself. It lessens anxiety and frustration. Creative expression and imagination is vital to mental health. So start doing a new creative hobby or continue an old hobby you have not done in years. It will occupy your mind with creative things instead of destructive anxiety.

Do deep breathing -- I started to do some deep breathing for 10 to 15 minutes once every day and it has made a difference. I do it in the evening before I go to sleep. I used to struggle with insomnia, but now I fall asleep faster and easier. It oxygenates my body, calms my thoughts and clears my lungs. I definitely recommend that you learn and practice the art of deep breathing on a daily basis.

Avoid stimulants -- I would also recommend avoiding stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine and loads of sugar. What you may want is to calm your anxiety, not to feed it. I know this from experience since I am a cigarette smoker. If I smoke too much cigarettes in a day, my thoughts are difficult to control and I then worry about my health. I have tried to quit smoking a few times before, but I usually don't quit for longer than a week. So, if you are still a non-smoker, please stay that way. You don't need to aggravate your anxiety disorder even more. You will also worry less about your physical health. Physical and mental health are the first two freedoms you can possess.

Start socializing -- I have found that hiding away and avoiding social contact is the worst thing you can do. You don't have to go to big events or parties, but you definitely should spend time with friends and meet some new people. It is true that mental health degrades in the absence of social contact. I used to stay at home and not see anyone else but my family for weeks on end. Bad idea. You need to get out of the house at least once a week.

Movement and Exercise

I have found that movement and daily exercise is important for helping with anxiety. Sometimes when I become wrapped up in anxious thoughts, I decide to take a walk. It gives me something else to focus on and helps to relax my body.

I also do some daily exercise (most days of the week anyway). I normally do some squats and a few pushups.

You may do other exercises which you enjoy. You may like to swim, ride a bicycle, do martial arts or whatever. Just get moving and keep breathing.

Deep Breathing For Less Anxiety

I have started to do a deep breathing exercise and it seems to help decrease my anxiety in general.

Here is what I do:

1. I usually lie on my back. You may also choose to sit in a chair.
2. I place one hand on my lower abdomen (just below my navel) and inhale deeply letting my lower abdomen rise. If your breathing is shallow, you can note that your chest and shoulders rise. Lower abdominal breathing requires that your lower abdomen rises and not your chest and shoulders.
3. Then I hold my breath for about 3 to 7 seconds.
4. I then exhale completely and let my lower abdomen contract.
5. I then repeat this easy process.

Your hand should tell you whether you are breathing deeply with your lower abdomen or shallowly with your chest and shoulders. This is a very short explanation, but it may get you started. You can start doing deep [breathing](#) once a day for 15 to 30 minutes if you want to.

Caffeine May Increase Your Risk Of Anxiety Attacks

I recently received an email which highlighted the fact that consuming excessive amounts of coffee or other caffeinated beverages can cause anxiety attacks in anxiety sufferers. This risk is increased when an anxiety sufferer does not get enough sleep, exercise and relaxation. Caffeine may create symptoms such as the following:

- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Restlessness
- Nervousness
- Insomnia
- Mood swings

I have therefore begun drinking less coffee. I rarely drink excessive amounts of coffee, so I was never at a great risk. Large amounts of caffeine may also dehydrate you, which is not good either. I now try to drink more tea and water and less coffee and Coca Cola. If you do not suffer from an anxiety disorder, then regularly consuming large amounts of caffeinated beverages will not induce anxiety attacks.

You can decide to drink less coffee and more tea if you suffer from [anxiety attacks](#). Caffeine is not the only trigger of anxiety attacks, but at least you will be one step closer to a low anxiety life style and more calmness.

Conclusion

In conclusion there is only one way to cope with anxiety disorder: Never give up on getting better. Your will to live is your primary motivation. So don't deny it, but practice it in a creative manner.

This report contains some of the things I have experienced and learned from my anxiety disorder. You may also visit my [blog about coping with depression and anxiety](#) for more information. Thank you for reading this free report and good luck to you.

Towards more calmness,

Daniel Theron

<http://myanxietydisorder.wordpress.com/>

<http://copingwithdepressionandanxiety.com/>

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