

Anxiety: The Power Potential Inhibitor
A Novel Approach to Anxiety Classification as a Dynamic SystemYvonne Oswald, PhD
Niagara Falls, ON, Canada

Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to present research and analysis of the debilitating emotion of anxiety and its effect on today's society. The author of the paper explores the function of anxiety as it relates to everyday life. Unrealistic expectations of childhood performance from caregivers, parents and teachers are examined as a possible root cause. Mind-body medicine suggests that all change and all learning is initiated by the unconscious mind, so the paper examines the idea that perhaps it is to the unconscious mind that we look to address the solution to this emotionally devitalizing challenge. Determining how far back anxiety begins to be generated is also scrutinized; research suggests that it could be as early as in the womb. This paper presents the importance and benefit of changing not only the unconscious processes but also its behavioral functions in order to reclaim the power potential lost through the inhibiting effect of this less than useful emotion.

Keywords: Anxiety, worry, emotions, fear, stress, overwhelm

Introduction

Negative thoughts are a normal part of daily living; they're deep wired into our neurology as a survival mechanism. In 2005, the National Science Foundation (an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering with a budget of US 7.5 billion in 2017) published an article postulating that the average person has between 12,000 and 60,000 thoughts per day. Eighty percent of those thoughts are negative and ninety-five percent are the same thoughts as yesterday (Verma, 2017).

A study on stress levels in students in 2009 by the Associated Press discovered that 85% felt stress daily; stress is well known to increase cortisol levels and lower the immune system. The 2008 Canadian survey conducted by Desjardins Financial Security on physical and mental health revealed that, even before the downturn in the economy in 2008, 85% of Canadians said that their workplace was stressful; almost 90% expected more burnout, anxiety, and depression in the future; and 74% described themselves as overworked (The Jed Foundation, 2010).

Results and Discussion

The autonomic nervous system has two messaging systems originating in the hypothalamus: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic systems. When stress occurs, the sympathetic system stimulates cortisol production, which is the flight or fight syndrome, producing the emotions of anger or fear. The parasympathetic attempts to regulate the system and, because there is no resolution, the result is paralyzing and energy-wasting loops of inaction; it is unfinished business. The name we give to this unresolved state is anxiety or worry. Neutralizing emotions such as anxiety, regret, unease and indecision serve to produce inertia and immobilization of action. The result of unmet needs and lack of impulse control is that, instead of enjoying the present, people live in an unsatisfying state or *Maya*, meaning that which is *not*. Anxiety is not, strictly speaking, an emotion because it is a response to something that hasn't happened yet. However, it is authentic for those who experience it and is both debilitating and neutralizing in its effect (Kilburn, 2018).

Part of the issue is that today's society is focused on believing that happiness depends on getting and achieving more – higher grades, more work, more pay and more material goods.

The drive to achieve future success takes over daily living. The unrealistic expectations set up by this pattern was coined the False Hope syndrome by Policy and Herman at the University of Toronto/ Mississauga (2002). The repeating pattern is a closed loop with no exit strategy; a belief on some level that we are not being enough, doing enough, or getting enough. Unrealistically high-performance expectations from caregivers, parents, teachers, employers, or friends can often be the root cause of anxiety and stress, resulting in the adult becoming too much of a perfectionist.

In an interesting study (Leahy, 2005, Study of Cornell University), scientists found that 85% of things people worry about never actually happen. Of the 15% of worries that did happen, 79% of the study subjects realized that either they handled the challenge better than they expected or that it taught them a significantly worthwhile lesson. The study concluded that 97% of anxiety-producing emotions are unjustified (Ndaba, 2020).

Fear is not the same emotion as anxiety. Fear originates from the amygdala as a reaction to a direct threat or stimulus, which vanishes when the threat is over. Anxiety also gets the body ready for danger fighting action, but, unlike fear, it is an over response to a perceived threat which doesn't yet exist! In typical non life-threatening situations the prefrontal cortex inhibits the amygdala response. However the unhealthy closed-loop and neutralizing effect of anxiety and worry stop this interaction and the result is a life draining daily override of unease. A childhood experience of trauma or constant over-controlling parenting can be deep-wired into a sense of general anxiety as the unconscious mind attempts to stay on high alert, trapped without the benefit of new information that would enable it to stand down.

Why then does the brain respond so readily to anxiety? The unconscious mind brings negative emotions to the surface and into conscious awareness for resolution and completion. We are natural seekers. Our most in-depth neural networks are programmed to complete patterns, so when something is *not* resolved the inner mind searches for answers and finalization. When an event is incomplete, the unconscious acts like a five-year-old child wanting attention – it echoes over and over until conscious attention is paid to the unresolved issue. That's why those old memories and relationships from the past that never felt complete come back over and over in your mind. Your unconscious mind is asking - Is this done? Does it still apply or can I file it away or delete it?

Anxiety can even begin as early as in the womb. The development of the cortex, which is the final brain structure to be developed, used to be thought by doctors to be the only significant indicator that experiences could be identified, understood, and remembered by the preborn. However, higher brain structures such as dendrites and dendrite spines, the nerves which accept and translate information from the rest of the body, have been proven to be in place at only twenty weeks into the pregnancy (Pert, 2010). Candace Pert discovered vast numbers of clusters of neuropeptide receptors in the initial fetal development of the brainstem. So many neuropeptide receptors are present, in fact, that she concluded that the brainstem is part of the limbic system, which governs emotions and memory. That would make a preborn aware and able to remember even during the first three months of gestation. Memory is essential to survival, so it would seem logical that memory would develop at a much younger age than was previously believed. The baby is entirely able to pick up anxiety from the mother in utero.

Emotions are the human barometer of health and happiness. Candace Pert (2010) explains that a feeling of joy produces norepinephrine. This mood-enhancing hormone attaches itself to receptors, effectively blocking potentially harmful viruses from entering the cell and lowering the immune system. On a vibrational level, typically high energy or optimism emotions vibrate at a higher frequency and boost the immune system. Low energy emotions, commonly known as negative emotions, vibrate at a lower frequency and lower the immune system. In recalling a memory from the past all negative emotions can be reframed or deleted

like an old virused file. However, unlike the main four emotions: anger, sadness, fear and guilt, which can easily be cleared permanently with fast NLP techniques, anxiety is not so quickly put to bed. By its very nature, anxiety is a future based emotion; an emotion that focuses on things that haven't yet happened, so persuading the mind to delete it and close the file is not so readily done. The recent Coronavirus pandemic has brought anxiety to the forefront as a significant source of exhausting stress and tension that lowers the immune system at the very time when we need most to strengthen and support it (Pert, 2010).

It may be true that unhappiness and stress are caused by needs not met before seven years of age, but recent discoveries in brain elasticity show that the mind has an infinite capacity to mold itself into a new and more successful model of higher thinking (Doidge, 2007). Childhood determines the happiness expectancy of life as an adult (Goleman, 1995). It is those needs that are left unmet as children that we call worry and anxiety as adults. For worry read *wants*. When needs are met, wants are few. A system that is based on want will always be found wanting. A system based on teaching and implementing self-initiated nourishment of body, mind and spirit, sustainability, self-regulation and service to others may grant an outstandingly happy life. Regularly accessing the greater resources of the prefrontal cortex to revisit the state of core consciousness during the day prevents getting into the loop of anxiety and procrastination in the first place. In the 21st century, anxiety has become the number one mental health issue in North America and it's estimated that one third or more of the adult population experiences anxiety issues. That's more than 50 million adults between the ages of 18 to 54. And those are just the ones we know about, who seek help! The cost to the US mental health industry is more than one-third of the total mental health bill (Newman, 2018).

Part of learning to do without anxiety understands how to direct and control the mind—finding new ways to redirect the unconscious mind's neural pathways is of paramount importance if peace of mind is to be achieved. Modern neuroscience supports the idea of the unconscious mind, although neuroscience is more likely to study unconscious processes rather than its behavioral functions.

The unconscious mind is a servo-mechanism, meaning that it does not have thoughts of its own but acts on automatic processes designed to preserve the body from perceived threats, or under instruction from the conscious mind. Many conventional therapies actually re-enforce the threat rather than lead the client to believe that it no longer exists. In addition, they can somatise the condition, creating significant physical complications. According to the current NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) philosophy, all change and learning is initiated by the unconscious (O'Connor, 1990). It is to the unconscious mind that we look to address the solution to this emotionally devitalizing challenge.

Deepak Chopra reminds the reader in his forward to the 1999 edition of Pert's *Molecules of Emotion*, that he too postulated the idea of a nonlocal mind, along with the importance of the role of perception and awareness in the mind's ability to transform matter. This concept, that the mind is non-localized and flexible, not fixed, expands possibilities for dynamic change to take place through means other than conventional therapy. New approaches to healing persuade the unconscious mind that the event is complete, that the response is no longer required for survival and that it can be dismissed – forever. The memory is simply deleted, like a computer file that is no longer needed, along with all of its accompanying emotions (Chopra, 2016).

So, where to go from here? Hebb's Law (1949) states, "Neurons that fire together wire together." New pathways can easily be forged inside the brain by keeping the mind flexible and open. Neuro networks are always alert to incoming ideas and stimulus in the form of interesting new perceptions or experiences, and those that are persistently stimulated become strong. New and supportive neural networks can be activated by stimulating the limbic system; the prefrontal cortex, or neocortex. This is the brain's newest part, responsible for higher

functions such as sensory perception, spatial reasoning, conscious thought, language, and the initiation of motor commands. Words and ideas have vibration and power which can stimulate emotions (Lipton, 2005). This realization is important because every word that is spoken and every action taken has an effect, albeit a small one, on the dynamic energy surrounding us, indirectly affecting the levels of possibility for human happiness.

These Anxiety elements appear in a multitude of combinations and dynamic and specific proportions. The characteristics of this "Anxiety Nurturing System" are referred to as "POWER POTENTIAL INHIBITORS." Once the specific mix of "POWER POTENTIAL INHIBITORS" are identified and classified, alignment follows a clear and precise path that brings order, coherence, and ease out of the particular anxiety recipe, stress, and confusion.

The unique MindSwitch™ Meditation system is currently an interface to filter and identify "POWER POTENTIAL INHIBITORS" and eliminate them, balancing all the systems in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual body systematically to create new thought structures and mind super highways. MindSwitch™ is the pioneering five-step leading-edge process combining goal-directed results based Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Meditation, and Hypnosis that will enable everybody to change and delete the debilitating impact of this less than useful emotion forever (Science Daily, 2020).

Conclusion

It is important to recognize the role of anxiety and its profoundly debilitating consequences; not only emotionally but also, eventually, physically. Left unattended, anxiety forms an unhealthy closed loop and the neutralizing effect of anxiety and worry results in a life draining daily override of unease. It is essential to find new ways to redirect and balance all the systems in the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual body systematically to create new and more efficient thought structures for health and wellness. The author of the paper offers a novel approach to anxiety relief with Mindswitch™ Meditation system; an interface to filter and identify Power Potential Inhibitors such as anxiety, nervousness and worry and delete them.

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