

# CONSCIOUS ANXIETY PRACTICE

There are gifts in anxiety? Yes! It may be surprising to learn that anxiety, like every emotion, is useful. Anxiety recently became described as a disorder or disease which is a strange phenomenon when you understand the neurochemistry and purpose of anxiety.

Plus, we are taught to identify emotions only when they're in a heightened state. We tend to think of intense, gut-wrenching anxiety rather than the information and energy it provides.



Anxiety (related to fear) helps you plan for the future and complete important tasks. If you connect with your anxiety, it can give you focus, energy and motivation by planning for 'what if's' and concerns. Plus, trying to ignore or suppress anxiety takes a lot of emotional energy, leading to depression (freeze), procrastination and exhaustion.

A woman with vibrant red, wavy hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a white knit sweater. She is holding a white ceramic mug with both hands. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing a quote in bold black text.

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**"In its intense state, anxiety may be a feedback loop, feeling anxious about feeling anxiety which is initiated by things internally, such as an increase in adrenaline, cortisol, heart rate, or other physical conditions unrelated to anxiety's real message. When you realize anxiety is trying to help you and you are curious towards it and working with it, anxiety subsides."**

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Karen McLaren, EdM



## CONSCIOUS ANXIETY PRACTICE

### WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

- Use your journal or some paper and get something to write with
- A timer on your phone or clock

### 1. BEGIN BY SETTING TIMER AND SAY ALOUD

"I'm consciously questioning my anxiety now."

- Set your alarm for 10 to 30 minutes
- Write freely unfiltered about EVERYTHING on your mind, your worries, concerns, should's, terrors and "what if's"
- Use the questions on the following pages if needed to help understand your current anxiety more

### 2. MAKE SURE TO ASK

"What are my what if's, both short terms and long term?"

"Anxiety, what needs to get done right now?"

"What actions can I take today to help?"

### 3. WHEN TIME IS UP, CLOSE WITH SOMETHING LIKE

"Thank you anxiety, I am wrapping up the practice now."

### DISCIPLING ANXIETY THROUGH THE DAY

At any point during your day, if you feel anxiety or your mind wants to loop into worrying, you can gently let yourself know that you will give it time during your next Conscious Anxiety practice that you have scheduled (ideally a specific time each day). You can also have impromptu practices as needed if you are going through high anxiety.

## CONSCIOUS ANXIETY PRACTICE

### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Is there anything I think I should be doing or shouldn't be doing or at least prioritizing?

Anxiety, what do you really need to get done right now?

If I could take ANY ACTIONS today, what actions should be taken?

What have I completed recently that may have loose ends? Anything unfinished that I have avoided or forgotten about?

What are my "what if's?" right now?

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### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Are there any upcoming due dates I may be concerned about?

Do I need more information about anything going on right now?

Is there anything I have overlooked? Have I been avoiding or procrastinating anything lately?

What are the BIG things in life that are really disappointing me right now or bothering me?

Who or what do I need to remember to place as a priority?

Can I delegate my tasks or is anyone else capable to help? Who could I ask and how could I communicate this to them?

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### EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR ANXIETY

Can I delegate my tasks or is anyone else capable to help? Who could I ask and how could I communicate this to them?

What do I need to do to prepare for any major concerns right now?

Do you have more "What if's" that you haven't already listed above? For example, "What if I am single forever?" "What if I'm sad forever?" "What if overweight forever?" List as many "What if's" that show up.

**Ask your Anxiety if it trusts you to listen to it and take it seriously. If you have high-levels of anxiety it is likely your anxiety does not TRUST you to listen to it or take it seriously.**

Since you may have made some agreements to take action, it is essential to do what you've agreed to for yourself. Plan for action steps in the right direction for anything you need to prioritize right now.

A woman with long brown hair and glasses is looking out a window. She is wearing a light green sweater. The background is a blurred view of a building and a sky with some lights.

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**"Anxiety helps you organize, plan for, and complete your tasks – it's related to fear, but it helps you orient to the future rather than to the present only. Anxiety is your task-completion superhero."**

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Karla McLaren, EdD





#### MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

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If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, in danger of hurting yourself or others, feeling suicidal, overwhelmed, or in crisis, you can access the following resources to find help.

If you are experiencing an emergency dial 911

Crisis Text Line [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

Suicide Prevention [988lifeline.org](http://988lifeline.org)

National Domestic Hotline [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)