

LEARN TO BREATHE

When we are overwhelmed, one way to control the feelings of panic and worry is to engage in what is called box or cycle breathing. Practice the following in 2-3 cycles and see the benefits of this process reducing your heart rate, controlling your blood pressure, and allowing you to focus on the task at hand.



Breathe in slowly to the count of
1...2...3...4

Hold your breath to the count of 1...2...



Breathe in slowly to the count of
1...2...3...4

Hold your breath to the count of 1...2...



ASSESSING YOUR FEARS AND WORRIES

Make a list of the fears and worries you have. After you have this list, take a different color pen and rate each fear or worry with one of the following descriptors: 1) realistic fear about something that could happen, 2) while this could happen, it is unlikely it would occur, or 3) it is very unlikely that this fear or worry would happen.

ORGANIZING YOUR TO-DO LIST

Make a list of the things you must do. This first pass of this list should be an open, brainstorming list where you capture everything that is waiting to be completed. This list should include things like doing the dishes, getting a haircut, studying for an exam, booking a hotel for an upcoming trip, talking to a friend whose birthday you missed, going to the dentist, buying shoes for work, etc. Once the list is complete, organize the items on the list into three categories: 1) things you need to do immediately or things that are already late, 2) things that are due within the week, and 3) things that you need to complete in the next month or by the end of the semester.

CONSIDER SOME QUOTES

- “Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” — Mark Twain
- “What is there to be afraid of? The worst thing that can happen is you fail. So what? I failed at a lot of things. My first record was horrible.” — John Mellencamp
- “I am an optimist. It does not seem too much use being anything else.” — Winston Churchill

FIVE HELPFUL STRATEGIES

1. Prepare for the morning the evening before. Choose breakfast, make plans for lunch, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc.
2. Don’t rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to do the laundry, when library books are due, and when papers need to be turned in.
3. Allow yourself time - every day - for privacy, quiet, and introspection.
4. Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective.
5. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.