**Gratitude Lifts The Weight of Anxiety**

Let me tell you why the art of gratitude is such a great tool for ending anxious thoughts.

A lot of people write telling me how their anxiety makes them feel very cut off or removed from the world around them. This sensation can be distressing as people fear that they will never be able to feel normal again.

This feeling is common and in my experience is mainly fueled by a cycle of anxious thinking.

A person with a panic disorder or a generalized anxiety disorder will spend much of their day mentally **“checking in”**.

Checking in is a term I use to refer to how people with anxiety constantly monitor their mind and body.

“Am I feeling ok?” “How are my thoughts ?”

“Am I feeling secure or on edge right now?”

The reason regular checking in happens is because anxiety has such a powerful effect on the mind and body.

People tell me that they can deal with the anxious bodily sensations but it is the anxious mind that causes them most distress. That is what I want to address today.

Anxiety can often feel like a thick fog has surrounded your mind. Nothing really seems enjoyable as you are always looking out at the world through this haze of anxious thoughts and feelings. This fog steals the joy out of life and can make you feel removed or cut off from the world.

The anxious thoughts act as a barrier to experiencing the world and this sensation of separation then leads to feeling even more upset as you fear losing touch with yourself.

**So how do you get this anxious fog to lift from your mind?**

When someone is very caught up in anxious thoughts they are top heavy so to speak. The constant mental activity they are engaged in has caused an imbalance where all of their focus is on their mental anxieties.

A powerful way to move out of this anxious mental fog is to switch your focus from your head to your heart.

By simply making a deliberate shift of attention to your heart you will find the anxious thoughts dissipate more easily and the mental fog starts to gradually clear.

**You can make this switch by practicing the art of gratitude.**

I am sure you have heard of people speaking about the art of gratitude and the benefits it can bring to you.

Did you know that it has now been scientifically proven that regular practice of gratitude can dramatically change your bodies chemistry giving way to a more peaceful body and mind.

The Heart Math Institute has 15 years of scientific research proving that a simple tool like the art of gratitude can dramatically reduce stress and improve performance for individuals and organizations.

**Many Fortune 500 companies are now starting to use this technique to reduce work related stress.**

I am going to outline the technique briefly in a very straight forward exercise so you can start practicing right now.

When you practice this exercise you will feel a lightness and greater sense of perspective on any matter that has been troubling you. This activation of your heart emotion will lift the sensation that anxious thoughts create.

This is a very simple exercise but it is really powerful. Print it off and try it someplace where you can be alone.

**Are you ready?**

-Begin by closing your eyes and moving your attention to your heart area.

-Imagine a feeling of warmth emanating from the center of your chest.

If appropriate place your right hand there. If you are around people or driving etc. simply imagine your right hand resting on your heart area.

Imagine this area glowing warmly for one to two minutes.

-Now, begin to focus on something in your life that you feel a genuine sense of appreciation for.

This can be one or more things that you really appreciate having in your life (e.g., family, health, friends, work, your home, a beautiful day etc).

It is important to focus on things that spark a real sense of gratitude and appreciation. If you really appreciate the thing you are thinking about, you will immediately feel a response from that area by way of a light warm sensation in your chest or an involuntary smile (remember those).

It does not really matter what you think about as long as it evokes this feeling of warm appreciation from your heart area.

**Don’t struggle with this exercise.** Everyone has something they can be grateful for. (Remember, the cemetery is full of people who would love to have your problems!)

Do not worry if you are thinking of your partner/family and you do not feel this. Some days it will be people close to you that will spark the heart feeling, other days it may be gratitude for very simple things like the fresh air you breath. It depends on the mood you are in, -remember it is the feeling you after.

The feeling we are looking to achieve is unmistakable, it is a positive change in your emotional state.

I say it is best to do this exercise alone because you will need to stay with this feeling for as long as you can.

Then, when you feel you have taken it as far as you can, open your eyes.

There is no time frame on this exercise, it can be a few minutes to half an hour. Again it is about establishing a heart/mind connection and getting your awareness out of the anxious thoughts and more into your body.

After a few attempts you can incorporate this into your daily routine.

Do it in the car. Do it sitting at your desk. Do it before you sleep at night.

**You have to practice it frequently.** Just like a muscle your heart will get more accustomed to this state and you will be able to switch into that feeling in seconds.

With practice you can also use this exercise in the middle of any stressful situation. You will be surprised at the positive outcome in terms of your own stress levels and the change in others around you.

This simple exercise can completely transform the outcome of interacting with other people, be it work or personal relationships.

This is especially true where there is conflict or misunderstanding between you and other people. Try it out, see what happens!

Be creative with it and make it your own daily ritual for yourself.

I am sure you agree that it is a worthwhile exercise to incorporate into your daily life. It is my experience that most people do not have the patience or time to make major lifestyle changes. By using this one simple exercise you can make a dramatic improvement to the quality of your life.

The simplest things in life are free and this is one of those gems.

**Don’t pass it up**

Kind Regards, Barry McDonagh

Learn more about Panic Away here: [www.PanicAway.com](http://www.panicaway.com/)

All material provided in these emails are for informational or educational purposes only. No content is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your physician regarding the applicability of any opinions or recommendations with respect to your symptoms or medical condition