

Anticipatory Anxiety

The exercises below are to relieve anticipatory anxiety about social events. Anticipatory anxiety is a fancy name for worrying about upcoming events/situations. It's the fear of what will happen in a specific situation.

For example, you might be invited to a meeting for work and you have all sorts of doom scenarios in your mind about what might happen.

You might be thinking: "What if I am in the spotlight?", "What if I have to speak and I freeze up?", "What if they laugh at me?" "I always make a fool out of myself", etc.

All these worries and anticipatory fears cause you to feel really anxious.

What if...!!

What you can do is release some of these worries, fears and limiting negative beliefs around the situation you're afraid of. And by doing so...

... you will have a lot less fear and discomfort about it. And possibly none at all.

Use the exercises below and keep using them *as often as you can* when you feel anticipatory anxiety. A big problem for most people is they don't tap enough. And that limits your results.

When should you tap?

Whenever you are anxious, TAP!

Whenever you experience excessive negative emotions, TAP!

Whenever you experience anticipatory anxiety, TAP!

Use the below 5-step exercise to reduce or let go of anticipatory anxiety.

Anticipatory Anxiety Exercises

#1. Pick a situation/event you have anticipatory anxiety about.

For example:

- Entering a room where people are already seated
- Going to a birthday party
- Attending a meeting
- Etc.

#2. Write the event you picked down.

#3a. Ask yourself the question: “What do I fear about this situation/event?”

And then write down a list of all the things you fear.

#3b. Do the “What if-game”, a similar exercise as above designed to uncover your fears.

It goes like this...

Think about the event you dread.

Then ask yourself: “What if...?”

And then this is your time you allow yourself to be negative and write down anything you fear or worry about might happen.

Examples:

- What if they stare at me?
- What if they talk about me?
- What if they tease me?
- What if they laugh at me?
- What if I become embarrassed?
- Etc.

#3c. Finish these sentences and add them to your list:

The negative thing that I expect will happen is...

What I'm most afraid will happen is...

What negative thing I just know will happen is...

#4. Tap away the fears one by one:

Pick one of the fears you have about an upcoming event. Then tap continuously on your karate chop and say the following phrases out loud while visualising the thing you fear:

Even though I fear -say the thing you fear- , and I feel this fear in my -say where you feel the fear inside your body- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Even though I fear -say the thing you fear- , and I feel this fear in my -say where you feel the fear inside your body- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Even though I fear -say the thing you fear- , and I feel this fear in my -say where you feel the fear inside your body- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Then start tapping on the points:

EB What if -say the thing you fear-

SE I fear -say the thing you fear-

UE This fear in my -say where you feel the fear in your body-

UN I fear -say the thing you fear-

CH What if -say the thing you fear-

CB This fear in my -say where you feel the fear in your body-

UA What if -say the thing you fear-

LP I fear -say the thing you fear-

WR This fear in my -say where you feel the fear in your body-

TH What if -say the thing you fear-

Example:

Even though I fear -them staring at me- , and I feel this fear in my -chest- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Even though I fear -them staring at me- , and I feel this fear in my -chest- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Even though I fear -them staring at me- , and I feel this fear in my -chest- I want to accept myself and my feelings

Then start tapping on the points:

EB What if -they stare at me?-
SE I fear -that they will stare at me-
UE This fear in my -chest-
UN I fear -them staring at me-
CH What if -they stare at me?-
CB This fear in my -chest-
UA What if -they stare at me?-
LP I fear -them staring at me-
WR This fear in my -chest-
TH What if -they stare at me?-

Do this tapping for every fear you have, collapsing them one by one. Use the troubleshooting below if you get stuck and cannot release a fear.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

When a worry/fear/belief doesn't go down to a 0 of 10 (either in how you feel about it or in how true it feels):

A. There is most likely resistance to letting go of that worry/fear/belief.

This resistance can in most cases be neutralised by simply verbalising it. Below are some of the most common resistances. Simply state the resistance phrases out loud, one after the other, while tapping over the tapping points.

Resistance clearing phrases:

I don't believe I can let go of this worry/fear/belief

I don't deserve to let go of this worry/fear/belief

It's not safe for me to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I'll be a different person if I let go of this worry/fear/belief

It's too hard for me, I can't really let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can never let go of this worry/fear/belief

This worry/fear/belief is part of me

I haven't got what it takes to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief completely

If I let go of this worry/fear/belief I'll lose my excuse

I refuse to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief for whatever reason, whether that's conscious or subconscious

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief because... -fill in what you *guess* might be a reason-

Example:

EB: I don't believe I can let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

SE: I don't deserve to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UE: It's not safe for me to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UN: I'll be a different person if I let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

CH: It's too hard for me, I can't really let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

CB: I can never let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UA: This worry that I'll be laughed at is part of me

LP: I haven't got what it takes to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

WR: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at completely

TH: If I let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at I'll lose my excuse

EB: I refuse to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

SE: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at for whatever reason, whether that's conscious or subconscious

UE: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at because... -fill in what you *guess* might be a reason-

After having mentioned all of the resistance phrases once, focus back on the worry/fear/belief and continue to tap until you are at a 0.

B. If the worry/fear/belief is not neutralising completely after the resistance tapping, there might be a, or some S.E.E.'s (Significant Emotional Experience; a negative life experience) that need to be treated with tapping in order to let go of all the negative emotion/belief.

You are likely fearing something painful happening that has happened to you before. There is an emotional wound in your past. And your mind cannot let go of the fear completely until that painful experience is healed.

When there is no longer an emotional wound, there is no longer the fear of experiencing that pain again as your mind no longer has a reference of that pain. It can then safely let go of the fear.

For example, you might fear being laughed at. It's then likely you had an experience in your past where you were laughed at that was painful, or uncomfortable.

Say that you had to do a presentation and you forgot your lines and you were laughed at. You became red in the face and felt embarrassed. This can then be the emotional wound that needs to be addressed.

As you use the tapping to let go of all the pain, the embarrassment, the shame, the belief that you're incompetent, and whatever you learned from that painful experience, you eliminate the evidence your mind has for fearing being laughed at.

As you no longer have the reference point that being laughed at is painful, the fear can safely be released (keep in mind that you may need to use the resistance phrases to clear any resistance).

You will specifically focus on uncovering and treating these painful experiences later on in the the Social Confidence System. However, if you want to do some healing right now, you could ask yourself:

What do I fear happening most in this situation?

Then imagine that this worst case scenario is happening right now. And then as you are feeling all the discomfort of this, ask yourself:

- What does this fear/feeling remind me of? Or,
- When is the first time I can remember feeling like this?

Your mind will then likely come up with a memory. It can be very vague, or a very clear Significant Emotional Experience (S.E.E.)

Use the "Clearing a S.E.E." articles to neutralise the S.E.E.'s and then come back to the fear you couldn't release and try again (use the resistance phrases to clear any more resistance!).

NOTE: There might be more than one S.E.E. that needs to be released. Keep in mind that when you cannot get a fear to go down completely, it's usually due to either resistance or S.E.E.'S.

#5. Worst Case Scenario (WCS) Tapping:

A. Keep the same scenario that you have worked on in the exercises above.

B. Start tapping at the EB point (no set up on the karate chop 'KC' required). And then let your negative mind rattle on (out loud) as you describe the worst case scenario you fear happening.

Every time you utter a new sentence you go to a new tapping point.

Keep asking yourself "and then what negative thing would happen?" and "what is bad or scary about that?"

Example: (start tapping over all your tapping points already just by reading this example)

EB - I'm entering the party and everyone is looking at me

SE - I see an old friend who used to tease me

UE - He comes up to me and mocks me

UN - I get embarrassed (and then what would happen?)

CH - He laughs at me

CB - I try to laugh it off but everyone sees how awkward I feel (what's bad about that?)

UA - I get into a state of panic

LP - I don't know what to do with myself, don't know where to go

WR - I try to find someone to walk towards to escape, but I can't

TH - More people gather around me

Etc.

Of course this will most likely not happen in real time. I just made this up. But your negative thinking plays such tricks on you that you may imagine such ridiculous doom scenarios to really happen.

By tapping over all your points while telling your worst case scenario story you get the emotion out of the story you are telling/imagining.

Keep tapping and telling the worst case scenario until you have zero negative emotion left.

This causes you to be calm thinking about the event, AND it also causes you to be calm during the actual event. This is because you have already experienced the worst case scenario in your mind and you have already dealt with your emotional responses with EFT beforehand.

Use the troubleshooting below if you cannot get the emotion to go down completely.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

When a worry/fear/belief doesn't go down to a 0 of 10 (either in how you feel about it or in how true it feels), there is most likely resistance to letting go of it.

This resistance can in most cases be neutralised by simply verbalising it.

First get specific on the things that you cannot become more relaxed about. Focus in on the image (people looking down on you, for example), or the specific thought (I'll look like a loser, for example) that you fear the most.

Now use the below common resistances. Simply state the resistance phrases out loud, one after the other, while tapping over the tapping points.

Resistance clearing phrases:

I don't believe I can let go of this worry/fear/belief

I don't deserve to let go of this worry/fear/belief

It's not safe for me to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I'll be a different person if I let go of this worry/fear/belief

It's too hard for me, I can't really let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can never let go of this worry/fear/belief

This worry/fear/belief is part of me

I haven't got what it takes to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief completely

If I let go of this worry/fear/belief I'll lose my excuse

I refuse to let go of this worry/fear/belief

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief for whatever reason, whether that's conscious or subconscious

I can't let go of this worry/fear/belief because... -fill in what you *guess* might be a reason-

Example:

EB: I don't believe I can let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

SE: I don't deserve to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UE: It's not safe for me to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UN: I'll be a different person if I let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

CH: It's too hard for me, I can't really let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

CB: I can never let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

UA: This worry that I'll be laughed at is part of me

LP: I haven't got what it takes to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

WR: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at completely

TH: If I let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at I'll lose my excuse

EB: I refuse to let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at

SE: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at for whatever reason, whether that's conscious or subconscious

UE: I can't let go of this worry that I'll be laughed at because... -fill in what you *guess* might be a reason-

After having mentioned all of the resistance phrases once, focus back on the specific worry/fear/belief and continue to tap until you are at a 0.

B. If the worry/fear/belief is not neutralising completely after the resistance tapping, there might be a, or some S.E.E.'s (Significant Emotional Experience; a negative life experience) that need to be treated with tapping in order to let go of all the negative emotion/belief.

You are likely fearing something painful happening that has happened to you before. There is an emotional wound in your past. And your mind cannot let go of the fear completely until that painful experience is healed, because it's simply remembering the pain from back then.

When there is no longer an emotional wound, there is no longer the fear of that pain as the mind has no reference of that pain anymore, and it can let go of the fear.

For example, you might fear being laughed at. It's likely you had an experience in your past where you were laughed at that was painful, or uncomfortable.

Say that you had to do a presentation and you forgot your lines and you were laughed at. You became red in the face and felt embarrassed.

This can then be the emotional wound that needs to be addressed. As you use the tapping to let go of all the pain, the embarrassment, the shame, the belief that you're incompetent, and whatever you learned from that emotional wound, you eliminate the evidence your mind has for fearing being laughed at.

As you no longer have the reference point that being laughed at is painful, the fear can safely be released (keep in mind that you may need to use the resistance phrases to clear any resistance).

You will specifically focus on uncovering and treating these painful experiences later on in the the Social Confidence System. However, if you want to do some healing right now, you could first focus in on the specific thing (image, thought, etc) you fear happening most, tune into it by maintaining your focus on it, and then imagine that this worst case scenario is happening right now.

And then as you are feeling all the discomfort of this, ask yourself:

“What does this fear/feeling remind me of?” Or,
“When is the first time I can remember feeling like this?”

Your mind will then likely come up with a memory. It can be very vague, or a very clear Significant Emotional Experience (S.E.E.)

Use the “Clearing a S.E.E.” articles to neutralise the S.E.E.'s and then come back to the fear you couldn't release and try again (use the resistance phrases to clear any more resistance!).

There might be more than one S.E.E. that needs to be released. Keep in mind that when you cannot get a fear to go down completely, it's usually due to either resistance or S.E.E.'s.