

This document is provided by PanicAttackRecovery.com. Please sign up for our free newsletter by simply visiting www.PanicAttackRecovery.com and providing your email address in the sign-up box. Subscribers can opt out of our newsletter at any time.

Catastrophizing & Anxiety

Questions:

"Why do I always feel that something horrible is about to happen?"

Why is my anxiety so much worse in the morning?"

Matthew's response:

Let's start by, as is typical, doing some Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) on the first question.

Consult the list of Cognitive Distortions by clicking on the link below (don't worry it will open up in a new window and you will not lose your place) and write down what Distortions exist. Tip: imagine everyone from the first person (as if this were your question).

I'm sure that you're familiar with the process of CBT now but I'll give you a hint: look at some of the words as they in and of themselves hold the key to what Distortions exist.

Okay, here are the Distortions:

Always - The word "always" indicates all or nothing thinking as the definition of this Distortion is "Thinking of things in absolute terms, like 'always', 'every' or 'never'. Few aspects of human behavior are so absolute."

Feel - The word "feel" indicates Emotional Reasoning as this Distortion is defined as "Making decisions and arguments based on how you feel rather than objective reality."

About to Happen - The words "about to happen" indicate Fortune Telling because this Distortion is defined as "Assuming something negative where there is no evidence to support it."

Now let's generate some alternative, more realistic, thoughts.

Page 1 of 3

The material and or suggestions in this publication are provided by www.PanicAttackRecovery.com for educational and informational purposes only, and are not intended to be a substitute for a health care provider's consultation. Please consult an appropriate health care provider about the applicability of any opinions or recommendations with respect to your own panic attacks, anxiety or agoraphobia, or any other symptom or condition. This material may not be reproduced for commercial purposes without written permission

I don't always feel that something bad will happen; I do have moments in which I feel better. I am working on my thoughts so I will work towards increasing my moments in which I feel better rather than trying to eliminate all moments in which I feel bad.

While I may feel that something bad will happen, this only represents a feeling, not necessarily reality.

There have been many times when I felt something bad was going to happen and nothing that bad happened at all.

The second question asked was:

“Why is my anxiety so much worse in the morning?”

With this second question I want to suggest an alternative strategy.

My suggestion is very much in line with a Cognitive Behavioral strategy called the "What if Technique". The idea is that rather than trying to refute a certain thought you completely buy into it and ask yourself: what if this were true? So you don't refute the fact that you will have anxiety in the morning, you work with it and confront your fear - don't deny it.

This brings me to the second part of this suggestion: learn to know that this will be the case (worse anxiety in the morning) but this anxiety will pass and then you can get on with your day. So: plan to confront this anxiety.

Think of it this way: if you could set your clock to something that you knew would happen - would it not make sense to ride it out everyday and then immediately get on with your day? Of course it would. Well the same is true for your panic attacks.

This was certainly true for me and many others. That is, by utilizing this strategy the morning anxiety eventually became no more consequential in severity than any other anxiety. So preparing in advance is a strategy that can indeed be beneficial.

Finally, for anyone in search of an explanation as to why anxiety is typically worse in the morning, here's my thinking: If you think about it waking up is a dramatic change of state. You have been in the middle of sleep, your brain waves were moving slowly. Now waking consciousness is certainly a different state of affairs. Think about this: even non-anxiety sufferers have trouble with waking up. Admittedly non-anxiety sufferers may handle things differently.

Page 2 of 3

The material and or suggestions in this publication are provided by www.PanicAttackRecovery.com for educational and informational purposes only, and are not intended to be a substitute for a health care provider's consultation. Please consult an appropriate health care provider about the applicability of any opinions or recommendations with respect to your own panic attacks, anxiety or agoraphobia, or any other symptom or condition. This material may not be reproduced for commercial purposes without written permission

The transition from sleep to waking life is an adjustment for everyone. Add to this is that anxiety can hit when we are most vulnerable and it is during this transition from being asleep to waking up that we are emotionally fragile. But remember you now have a strategy.

For more tips on recovery from panic attacks, agoraphobia, and anxiety, please sign up for our free newsletter by simply visiting www.PanicAttackRecovery.com and providing your email address in the sign-up box. Subscribers can opt out of our newsletter at any time.

This document is provided by PanicAttackRecovery.com. You may be share this document with anyone you feel may benefit from it. We only ask that you encourage him/her to visit our website and sign up for our free newsletter.