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Emotions and Anxiety

I previously discussed reasons why it's so important to document your thoughts when you're anxious and to document their resolution (which of course involves Cognitive Behavioral Therapy). Well it's also important to document your feelings -specifically how good or bad you're feeling. You see doing so allows you to learn from your emotions.

Let me first discuss an example.

If you've ever kept a log of things you've done throughout the day list of things and later came back to the same list (a while later), you'll likely have noticed that you probably accomplished more than you thought. It can be quite encouraging. By doing this you have a reference point with what you have accomplished. You can do the same thing with your emotions.

Over time you can look back and see the progress you have made and see any other things that may have triggered your emotions. This way you have a reference point for your emotions. But there's more...

Many therapists that do Cognitive Behavioral Therapy recommend that you keep track of your emotions and specifically what events cause you emotional distress / anxiety.

But I would suggest the following process be done at a minimum of once per day:

1. All you need to do is at least describe how you are feeling, in other words list your emotions.
2. Then you would rate each feeling / each emotion. Keep things simple by using a rating system from 1 to 10.
3. Once you have described your emotions see if there are certain events that may have triggered your emotions.

You know the rest of the drill by now:

4. You then write down your thoughts about the events that may have triggered your emotions.
5. Locate the Cognitive Distortions
6. Then substitute accurate and more positive thoughts in their place.

Page 1 of 2

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Over time it can be very encouraging to see how you have improved. We often don't realize that our moods are improving when they are. We don't necessarily know when our anxiety levels are decreasing even when they are because we want to see everything in absolutes. Remember seeing things in absolute terms is called Black and White Thinking.

Doing the above process will often also show you certain times in the day when you are more anxious and possible environmental factors as well as situational factors that can contribute to your anxiety. (Of course it is not the actual environmental or situational factors causing emotions but your thoughts about them -- which you can work on!)

If there are certain parts of your routine that bother you, but these are a necessary part of life, doing the above process can help you come up with a strategy and empower you in future - emotionally.

For more information on topics such as emotions and anxiety, and much more, I would highly encourage you to sign up for my newsletter.

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