
External Focusing

How it Keeps us away from Panic and Anxiety

When anxiety comes around in any form – and this includes anticipatory anxiety – we want our attention and our FOCUS, to be on *external* things, not on our internal feelings. Our feelings or our emotions are not always accurate – they do not tell us the truth – especially when we’re anxious or fearful.

If we do the wrong thing and focus on the way we feel inside – which may be anxious or nervous – we only reinforce and re-invigorate our anxiety. So, we don’t want to focus internally on how we’re feeling.



Instead, we want to focus externally on the things in front of us: other people, other tasks we need to accomplish, enjoyable activities we can *do* – ANYTHING that might be interesting or helpful to our

future – ANYTHING that will get our minds away from feeling and thinking anxiously.

Say to yourself: *“I need to call my anxiety (which is irrational) **exactly** what it is – UNTRUE – and then I will focus **away** from it. I will focus externally on something outside of myself. I do NOT need to sit, dwell, ruminate, and scare myself to death by letting my anxiety grow. I need to get ACTIVE and get my mind moving in a positive direction related to some external situation.”*

We’re following a logical progression as we get better, so our FOCUS should be outward and away from ourselves. Our focus should be on external situations and events, other people, other settings.

We must not get into the habit of “checking in” with our anxiety, and then do things on the basis of how we feel. Feelings are more irrational than thoughts. And negative feelings, like anxiety, love it when they can trap us into paying attention to them. Our emotions and feelings lie to us. And if we dwell and focus on them, they will grow stronger and more negative – and they will make us more anxious.

Do not pay attention to your anxiety. Do not “check in” with how you feel. Instead, pay attention to things outside yourself. Focus on other people, other situations, other jobs, other activities.

Accept yourself and the present moment – as gently and as peacefully as possible – walk through anxiety by paying attention to the present moment and all it offers for the future.

Your focus needs to be on something **outside** yourself. Inside our head is where all the worry, doubt and fear exist and where the ANTs like to trap us by getting us to over-think and over-analyze every problem. The solution to anxiety is a paradox, so if anxiety causes us to turn inwardly, then we need to do the opposite of that and become EXTERNALLY focused.

That is the answer to the problem. I accept it peaceably and gently – and walk through anxiety by paying attention to external circumstances and events.