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Panic Attack Lesson: Don't Try to Tough It Out



Nicholas Pollak / April 9, 2012 /

OP-ED (<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com/category/op-ed>)

[img]560|left|Nicholas D. Pollak|remove link|no_popup[/img]I received a call from a new client, an accomplished 23-year-old graphic designer, constantly being asked to work by a variety of entertainment studios. At his age, he said, he is very lucky. He has more work than he can handle, more money than he needs and a wonderful girlfriend. What could be wrong?

Within the past week he had begun to suffer debilitating panic and anxiety attacks. He used to have them when he was much smaller. That they appear to be coming back now, unbidden, was very upsetting to him. The attacks were affecting his work and his relationship.

Suddenly and for no reason, he felt that in an uncontrollable downward spiral. He wanted to stop it before it became worse. I commended him for that decision.

Too often when people start to experience panic and anxiety, they try to tough it out, hoping that the most recent attack would be the final one. When attacks become more severe, more frequent, the sufferer is in a terrible state.

My client felt time was slipping by, and he was not accomplishing what he wanted to do. He worried that his work would disappear, that he would not have enough funds to cover his many expenses. He fretted about losing his girlfriend, failing at his extra studies, earthquakes, storms, traffic, driving. Worse, he was afraid of people and what they might do to him. I told him his fears could happen at any time, but they are not happening now.

Now and the Past

It was okay to think these things, to create a plan to resolve your concern may be. But it was not all right to spend days obsessing on them. That was unhealthy. Once he understood attacks were not happening now, his fears eased. He focused more on the present.

I gave him tools for dealing with panic and anxiety:

Box breathing helps a person to breathe normally when in a panic attack, regulating the oxygen intake and carbon dioxide output to prevent hyperventilation.

Hyperventilation compounds the sufferer's panic by causing the body to tingle and the heart rate to increase, sweats and nervousness. The person fears he is having a heart attack.

A series of hypnotherapy sessions helps the sufferer to understand the attack does not have control over him. He has control over the attack. He learns to create an attack and just as quickly eliminate it. This is done under hypnosis in a calm office setting when the client is hypnotized and experiences the attacks from an observational point. I remind the client he is in a safe, comfortable and secure place while hypnotized.

Attention to Diet

Thirdly, the client is offered a diet, low in carbohydrate, high in protein. He is asked to ensure he will follow the diet eating small meals every two hours. This ensures a stable blood sugar level. When the blood sugar level has high highs and low lows, the client will

Panic suffer from sweats, tremors, nervousness, irritability, insomnia, hyperventilation and severe mood swings.

Often when experiencing these symptoms, the client attaches what he is doing at the time to the symptom. Without realizing it, he has trained his subconscious so that this panic is the reaction that is supposed to occur when he is doing what he was at the time of the first attack. An association has been formed between two completely separate factors. One was the act and the other, a blood sugar level drop caused by inadequate sugar levels.

Last, the client learns that the attack is nothing more than a feeling. Just because the body is experiencing a feeling does not mean the mind has to react to it. An example I often give is those mornings when you wake up feeling ill or in pain. You realize there are tasks you simply had to do that day. You still get up and attend to them. This is enough for the client to understand the power of the choices..

As for my client, he adopted the ideas presented to him. Previously, the only cure offered to him were medications that would mask the panic symptoms, not eliminate them. Within a few short weeks he was back to his old self –without drugs.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone, 310.204.3321, or by email at nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net (mailto:nickpollak@hypnotherapy4you.net). See my website at www.hypnotherapy4you.net (http://www.hypnotherapy4you.net)



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