



Curing your

ANXIETY

and

PANIC ATTACKS

Curing your

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Disclaimer: Always consult a qualified medical practitioner before starting on any new treatment or medication.

The content contained within this book has been written through personal experiences and as a result of research carried out by me over a course of time. It is merely my opinion based on my experiences. I am not, nor claim to be a medical doctor. This information should only be used as a guide to the options you have available to cure your anxiety. I do not in any form or manner advocate discontinuing your current medications. Always consult a medical doctor's opinion before changing your current diet in any way.

This book is for informational purposes only.

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Introduction

'You can't breathe, your heart's pounding and you feel faint. Terror holds you firmly in its grip and you know there's nothing you can do about it.'

What I just described is only a little bit of what I went through when I suffered from Panic Disorder. Through numerous trials and errors I learned first how to cope with it and later how to prevent it. The first and most important step on the path to recovery is to face the fact that you do have a problem.

One of the very first things you'll need to do is to understand exactly what you're suffering from and how it works. If you don't fully understand the underlying causes and symptoms it becomes that much harder for you to find a remedy that works for you.

Remember, everyone is different, No two people will have ~~the same~~ symptoms. Therefore, you can't expect that what works for someone else will necessarily work for you. Similarly you can't expect your anxiety triggers to be the same as someone else's. Sure they might seem alike on the surface of things but there'll be differences and it's these differences that set you apart. I'm not promising you an easy ride or an absolute guarantee that whatever method you try will work. What I will do however, is to help you find your way through the maze of information that's out there and to pepper it with insights from my own experiences.

There is one, very important thing to always bear in mind while you read this book – I'm not a doctor, nor am I a qualified medical practitioner in any field. What I've laid down in this book are suggestions and advice based on my own experiences. Please always consult a qualified medical practitioner prior to following any advice of this type; regardless of the source. Additionally, I'm not suggesting you stop your medication altogether and I'm not suggesting that you try any of the alternative methods I've explained in the book. My aim is only to help you through troubled times with a source of information that I found hard to come by when I needed it the most.

So with that brief explanation behind us let's proceed further down this road and perhaps find a cure that's right for you.

Overview

A staggering 20 million people in America alone are estimated as suffering from anxiety and panic disorders. Coupled with the stress inducing lifestyles of today, there's a good chance that most people who suffer from anxiety and panic disorders might also be suffering from other medical conditions as well.

For a person who suffers from either anxiety or panic (or both) the last thing they'll need on their plates is to have someone telling them there's nothing wrong with them, and that it's "all in their heads". These people are right to a certain extent in that medically at least anxiety disorders have been classed as Mental Disorders as opposed to Medical Disorders.

What they're mistaken about however, is the fact that you can turn off a switch somewhere in your brain at will and magically stop the attacks. It can be done to a certain extent, but it takes time and much effort before you can accomplish this - so don't despair.

It has been widely accepted, and doctors agree that anxiety disorders and panic attacks are a serious and sometimes debilitating condition for the sufferer. So the next time someone tells you to pull yourself together when you're having an attack you have no need to feel ashamed of yourself. You're not the only person who suffers from anxiety attacks and you're not alone, there are qualified medical practitioners who can help you.

By reading this book you've already taken one step in admitting your problem and finding a cure for yourself. Even in the toughest of times when you're suffering badly and you think you're alone in this world remember that you took this giant step by reading this book, and that you did it all by yourself. It doesn't matter if someone else bought or recommended the book, what matters here is that you have the courage to read on. No one is forcing you to read it, you're doing it on your own and in my opinion that's worth at least one shining star to place next to your name.

Remember,

Hold on and be strong, things will get better

– You just need a positive frame of mind.

The Difference between Anxiety and Panic

Before I start in earnest I'd first like to outline exactly what is meant when you say that you're having an anxiety attack as opposed to what you mean when you say you're having a panic attack.

Unfortunately the line isn't as clear cut as it could be and many people use both terms interchangeably signifying one to mean the other. To hopefully clarify things a little better for you I've tried to mention exactly what could be meant when a person is talking about a "panic attack" or an "anxiety attack" in a normal context outside of this book.

From my experience, in a normal situation when someone refers or uses the term "anxiety attack" they're probably trying to convey one of the following meanings:

- The simplest being anxiety attack = panic attack. So essentially one and the same
- They could also be referring to a period of intense anxiety where someone suffers from heightened emotions without the accompanying feelings of panic
- Or if they don't suffer from intense and chronic anxiety this could relate to a time when they have feelings of slightly heightened anxiety
- They could even be referring to a lessened panic attack that isn't as intense as the usual ones

Panic disorder on the other hand (this is where you suffer recurrently from panic attacks¹), comes under the vast umbrella that is known as Anxiety Disorders as classified by the National Institute of Mental Health, or NIMH. I've discussed these disorders and their symptoms in detail in the section "Which Category Do you Fall into?"

For the sake of this book I've used the two – anxiety and panic – interchangeably so as to save on confusion. So when I refer to "anxiety" within this book you can take it to encompass both anxiety attacks and panic attacks.

¹ I've given an explanation of both Panic Attacks and Panic Disorder in the section entitled "Which Category do you fall into?"

You, Anxiety and Panic

Suddenly you can feel your heart start to pound. Blood rushes to your face and recedes again leaving you feeling dizzy and lightheaded, you're struggling for every breath and you find you're rooted to the spot. You know what you're going through isn't normal but you can't stop yourself.

Sound familiar? This is what most Panic Attack victims suffer from. Everyone's personal trigger is different but the general symptoms are the same, although the ones I've mentioned above are by no means the only symptoms that a Panic Attack victim might feel. As the list is somewhat long, and in some instances case-specific I won't go into them right now. If you want to skip ahead however, you'll find that I've listed the symptoms alongside each particular type of Anxiety or Panic Disorder I've described.

Generally speaking, if you've suffered even once from either anxiety or panic attacks you'll be dreading the feelings of overall general helplessness that you get. Once triggered there's a good chance that you'll go out of your way to avoid the same situation from occurring again. Although this is a very natural response it can become very unhealthy, especially if your life becomes curtailed to the point where you're handicapped by your debilitating fears.

Put It All In Perspective

I realize that it's hard to overcome your fears especially if the emotions you feel are overwhelming, but it always helps to put things in perspective, and that's what a good friend of mine did for me. It was difficult and some of the things she said I already knew for myself, I just wasn't able to control my attacks. You probably won't be able to either, at least not immediately, but every little helps so I've jotted down some of the finer points I found to be of help to me and which might be of help to you as well.

- Feeling any kind of anxiety or panic is normal, it's your mind's natural instincts taking over, the "fight or flight" instinct as it's known. It's nothing to be ashamed of, after all this instinct got the human race where it is today
- Most people will feel anxiety over something or other at some stage of their lives, one of the best examples being an impending

exam or perhaps even a first date. Your palms might become sweaty and your heart will race, you'll feel butterflies dancing around in your stomach. These are all natural reactions to an out-of-the-ordinary stress filled situation

- Not as common as anxiety, panic is nevertheless a regular occurrence in a lot of people's lives. Trauma or even a childhood fear can bring on a panic attack. Something as simple as being caught in the rain without an umbrella can cause panic in some people. All you need to do is remember that there's nothing unnatural about any of your feelings – they're all very natural reactions that you have

- At some point in time everyone becomes humiliated or embarrassed in public. It's nothing new and happens constantly, the only way to cope with it is to resolve the situation from within yourself. There's no way you can go back and change what happened

You'll probably be thumbing your nose at me right about now, and I can hear the tired sighs of "I've heard all of this before". My advice would be to just read on and let what I'm saying sit in your subconscious for a while. Eventually you'll come to terms with who you are – a normal person with normal fears and worries.

What is Anxiety and Panic Disorder?

So what really is an anxiety or panic attack? Perhaps you don't suffer from it yourself, but you know someone who does and you want to better understand it. If so, the preceding section probably only made sense half of the time, and you still haven't got a clue as to what makes panic and anxiety tick.

Like many mentally harmful problems anxiety disorders aren't easy to explain. Putting it in simple terms might seem to be trivializing it whereas using big medical words just makes it all that much harder to understand. So hoping that you won't think I'm trivializing what can be a debilitating condition to most sufferers, myself included, I'll try and put it in an easy to understand manner.

If you got the gist of what I was saying earlier, both anxiety and panic are natural reactions that everybody feels from time to time. The trigger for either feeling can be different for each person although a few situations exist that are universally thought of as panic inducing and stress filled.

Another good example of such a situation that I can give you would be along the lines of public speaking. Not many of us can successfully walk up onto a stage without feeling at least some form of anxiety. This is normal and we can generally fudge our way through it managing to overcome our feelings.

What happens with the debilitating kind of anxiety attack is that you freeze up and are completely unable to cope with the situation. Time might seem to go slower and you might be feeling removed from your feelings, seeing things from the outside as it were. You might go through a number of different stages of panic, from a racing heartbeat to sweaty palms to cold shivers running up and down your back. The only constant factor is your intense feelings of helplessness.

For the person who hasn't suffered from a panic attack all of this might seem slightly ridiculous but let me assure you that it's not. What I just described was very real and something that I went through before I was able to find a way to cope with the constant anxiety and panic attacks by myself. The hardest part that I remember from that day was the aftermath. Not only did I freeze up on the podium unable to deliver my speech, but I also had to deal with the humiliation that accompanied the whole debacle.

The added attention of people being kind and asking me if I needed anything, the covert looks that I received from yet other people were all bad. However, perhaps worst of all for me were the pitying looks accompanied by a slightly strained I-don't-know-what-to-say kind of look from the people who were milling about in confusion around me.

I have since then managed to walk up onto a stage and give a short address, but this was only possible through intense hard work on my part. So when I say that you can do it, you can conquer your Anxiety and Panic Attacks - I'm speaking from experience.

Hopefully I've managed to convey what I feel in a manner conducive to ease of understanding, and you're now comfortable with moving on to the next chapter to find out how you can first cope with your anxiety before moving on to finding a suitable cure.