

A. “We see things as they are, we see them as we are.” Anais Nin

We need to accept and examine the lens through which we see the world. Your observation of an event is true for you, but someone else can see the same event very differently. This does not make either of you wrong. In fact, everyone’s perspective is true for them. It just is.

1. We viewed a picture: Based on our lens/perspective some saw a person with glasses, and others saw the word ‘liar’. (Most saw the negative perspective – the word ‘liar’ (See note on the NEB* further down the page)
2. [Video](#): Basketball players where you counted the passes, and most of the group missed seeing the suicidal man on first viewing. This illustrates how our brain can selectively filter our observations. Video Link: https://youtu.be/Lw-YPKR0grk?si=m4Hud_X1REKacCz3

“Does a fish know it is wet?”

B. Can we have agency over our thoughts and if so how?

Yes. By learning how we have been programed, we can take over the job and learn to program our brains.

- Parents, schools, and society tells us what to think, not how. They program and indoctrinate us and we don’t even notice. We are programmed externally with our beliefs and perspectives which are overlayed on our thoughts motivated by our unconscious. These unconscious thoughts hold the embedded lessons and experiences of our ancestors.
- Humility is key in asking if we can observe this programing, decide if it serves us, and if not, take agency (make a choice) to make change.

C. How flexible is this brain?

AMAZINGLY FLEXIBLE! – even in old age.

Hemispherectomies – [video](#) of the little girl Jodie who had half her brain removed and lives a full life:

<https://youtu.be/VaDILD97CLM?si=kL5Q8jCDuh1lPHoP>

D. There are multiple brain regions/systems at play with anxiety:**1. *The Negative Evolutionary Bias (NEB) (a system)**

We are an APEX predator (top of the food chain) because of the unique capacity of our brains to always scan for potential danger and assume the worst. Your brain is complex organ with potentially more power than a supercomputer!

The NEB is a system that has evolved to make us presume the worst outcome first (including presuming bad intentions of others) in order that we react to remain safe and ideally think about options that will keep us safe. For most the thinking part does not happen until after our actions, and that is where anxiety begins. Ie At some point your ancestor was worried about being harmed (perhaps by leaving his cave) so out of fear of danger, he came up with the idea to carry a club and travel, sleep in a pack (community).

2. The Amygdala (Your fight flight centre)**Where do those horrible feelings come from when we have anxiety and why?**

These thoughts are triggered by a primal region of the brain called the Amygdala - often called your fight flight centre. Being primal it does not rationalize or respond to logic. You cannot rationalize your way out of the symptoms. It is like a toddler – or younger – when it senses danger it cries. You can't explain the science of why monsters don't exist and expect a two-year-old to calm down!

The Amygdala has 2 tools that are two hormones (drugs) it will release for two specific reasons.

1. To get your attention
2. To help keep you safe

These drugs are called Adrenaline and Cortisol – quite alike but cortisol rises slower, lowers slower and can learn to stay at an elevated level for efficiency of access if someone is existing in a high stress environment. (i.e. air traffic controller, someone who never learned to manage anxiety and has a long time habit of suffer from it)

3. **Reticular Activating System** – we notice what we choose to look for. The brain can create selective focus, just like it did in the video of the ball game we watched noted above
4. **Habit Formation and Habit Breaking** – there is a great deal of science as to how we both create or break habits. This science is folded into the Anxiety Release Protocol (ARP).

The key to the core process to the creation of habits is also the core process to how we learn:

INTENTION, REPETITION & REWARD (IRR)

The REWARD process is critical, it is the release of the 'feel good hormone' called dopamine which makes the brain want to repeat a behaviour in order get this good feeling again.

5. **Fueling Your Brain** – your brain consumes more energy than any other organ in your body. It relies on nutrition to operate. We saw comparative brain image of a 3-year-old child with good nutrition and one with a poor nutrition. The head and brain were markedly smaller, and the brain development was clearly diminished.

If you put gas in your diesel car you would expect it to fail – you fuel your brain poorly, you can expect it to fail. Reference for good brain food: Max Lugavere's book '[GENIUS FOODS](#)' and [get the book HERE](#)

E. Why do we suffer anxiety?

Why? Negative Evolutionary Bias (APEX requirement) designed to alert you to danger and prepare your body to fight or run from the danger.

How? Gets your attention by releasing anxiety and cortisol.
(These drugs in excess are not a pleasant feeling and the cause of your symptoms.)
Keeps you safe. (Making you take action like run, fight or freeze)

Mechanism? Adrenaline and Cortisol = creates feelings that motivate thoughts.

Anxiety is actually a good thing, after all it made us an APEX species and saves our lives repeatedly?

We suffer the biological response to the hormones (A&C) that get us ready for battle

We ignore what these feelings are requesting of us.

- We FIGHT the feeling because we do not like the physical symptoms created by A&C create to get us ready for battle. This is our 'Fight/Flight Response.
- In fighting we feed the response which is preparing us to fight and it increases the hormone release now that we have confirmed we are indeed fighting!
- This is a primal system, so although you can see how it creates a feedback loop, the Anxiety Response cannot – and simply responds by increasing the hormones of A&C to help you fight a fight you just confirmed.

F. **Symptoms:** A cause effect relationship: Adrenaline and Cortisol prepare you to fight and/or run by:

- Increasing Heart rate (heart palpitations)
- Increasing Respiration (choking feeling so you inhale deeply to get more O2)
- Redirecting blood from your core to your extremities (tingly hands, head, feeling of warmth/flushed, sweating, increased strength in legs and arms, tunnel (focused) vision...so you can run or fight better
- Redirecting your thoughts to survival vs reason
- In the extreme (ie Panic Attacks) a belief you are dying as your core organs send critical demands to your brain to rebalance the blood flow as they are not getting sufficient oxygenated – homeostasis will kick in)

THE SOLUTION

STOP FIGHTING YOUR ANXIETY FEELINGS! (After all it is your fight/flight centre!)

The feelings are just like a baby crying because it feels danger or discomfort.

We know to sooth a baby and try and fix what is upsetting it – do the same for your amygdala!

BREAK THE LOOP: Fighting your Fight/Flight centre when it is so primal it cannot experience your reaction as anything more than a confirmation you are in a flight – it simply makes it releases more A&C to help you fight!

- Be kind to this life-saving system, responding to the questions your physiology is posing.
- Respond to the systems message in a helpful way. IRG
- Feed your brain – nutrition [GENIUS FOODS'](#) and [get the book HERE](#)

Anthropomorphizing: defn: applying human characteristics to a non-human thing. In the Anxiety Release Protocol (ARP) we anthropomorphize the amygdala as Homer Simpson (or any friendly cartoon).

Technique: Cornerstone of all techniques/tools/therapy: Anthropomorphizing

HOMER – shift your relationship from being rather mean to this little guy who has good intentions – to being kindness, wisdom and caring.

Learning: The key framework is: **Intention, Repetition and Reward (IRR)**

IRR Creates the new HABIT of how you respond to Homer's alerts.

At the sign of any symptom (Homer is just trying to get your attention), don't FIGHT it! Respond to it! Immediately make these statements, out loud if possible!

"Homer, you want my attention, you've got it!"
"Homer, you want to keep me safe, I AM GOING TO HELP!"

Memorize these now, so you can access them THE MOMENT you feel the first symptom or sense the symptoms coming on! You've got to stay 'on the ball' to parent Homer!

You can even use these questions prophylactically (preventatively) if you know you are heading to something anxiety provoking. It's like prepping your toddler to go somewhere they usually act out

SELF HELP TOOLS found in my book – Always use ones that make sense to you and how your brain works. No one size fits all solution – all our brains are different

You must apply INTENTION, REPITION & REWARD (IRR) to all your tools.

Why tools without direct experience change us: the brain does not know the difference between a lived experience and a memory. We saw a brain image that showed the same parts of the brain light up when we are doing something in the moment, or when we are just recalling it (Not actually happening).

Top Five Tools People find helpful once they have digested the the 'why' and 'how' of anxiety and the ARP:

1. Gratitude Therapy Link to 'how to' video:
<https://theanxiety.clinic/re-wiring-your-brain-for-happiness/>
2. Meditation/Mindfulness tools – just practicing PAYING ATTENTION to your thoughts!
3. Neuroplastic Mantras & Visualization Practices
4. EFT – 'Tapping'
5. Breathing exercises such as Cardiac Coherence with Pranayama, Horizon Breathing, Breathwork classes

These tools and more can be found in the book: [Transforming Anxiety, From Hot mess to Superpower](#)
The book is available on Amazon at: <https://bit.ly/3OfNUlm>