

Anxiety

Our reaction to stress

Quantum Mind Energy

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Graham M Killoran
CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGIST



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Clinical Director, Psychologist, Graham Killoran has been helping Australians since 1987

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Relieve Stress

mind energy - the most unused power on the planet

Change your thinking

Your mind is your life

Change your behaviour

Deal with feelings



Change your life

Retrain
the brain

Graham M. Killoran M.A.P.S., M.C.O.P., * M.S.A.S.H., M.A.S.H., C.M.A.H.R.I.

* Founding Public Officer and Executive Board Member

Graham is our Consulting Psychologist, he is a Specialist in
Organizational Psychology, Clinical Hypnosis and Human Resource Management

Ph + 61 7 4126 2224 Mb 040 911 9445 Email 1: mypsychologist@bigpond.com

Email 2: graham@myspsychologist.com.au Web Site mypsychologist.com.au SKYPE mypsychologist2

Stress is thought to be the major culprit stopping us from being healthy and happy.

This is just not true! - It's not stress that causes the problems it is our reaction to it.

How anxious we become in response to stresses is the effect that we now commonly describe as stress. It's very easy to become sensitized to the stressful situations, which are happening around us nearly every hour of the day. It's equally easy to slip into the habit of over-reacting to these situations and as a result becoming highly anxious. It's important to realize that stress itself is inescapable. It would also not be desirable to remove all stresses from our lives. We need periods of stress to face challenges and meet new situations as they occur. It is only when stress becomes excessive and our reactions to it fail to resolve the stress or when we repress or deny our true feelings about the stressful situation for periods of time, those anxiety problems may begin, and what **a formidable list of problems they can be:**

☐ Indigestion ☐ Fatigue (lethargy) ☐ Headaches ☐ Overeating ☐ Diarrhoea ☐ Allergies
☐ Lack of focus/concentration ☐ Over dependence on drugs ☐ Explosive anger ☐ Poor sleep
☐ Increased dependence on alcohol ☐ Ulcers ☐ Heart attack ☐ Constipation ☐ Lack of
productivity ☐ Sexual Problems ☐ Aching neck or shoulders ☐ The inability to slow down
☐ Increased errors ■ tissue inflammation (C reactive protein readings), an inflammation marker
increase)

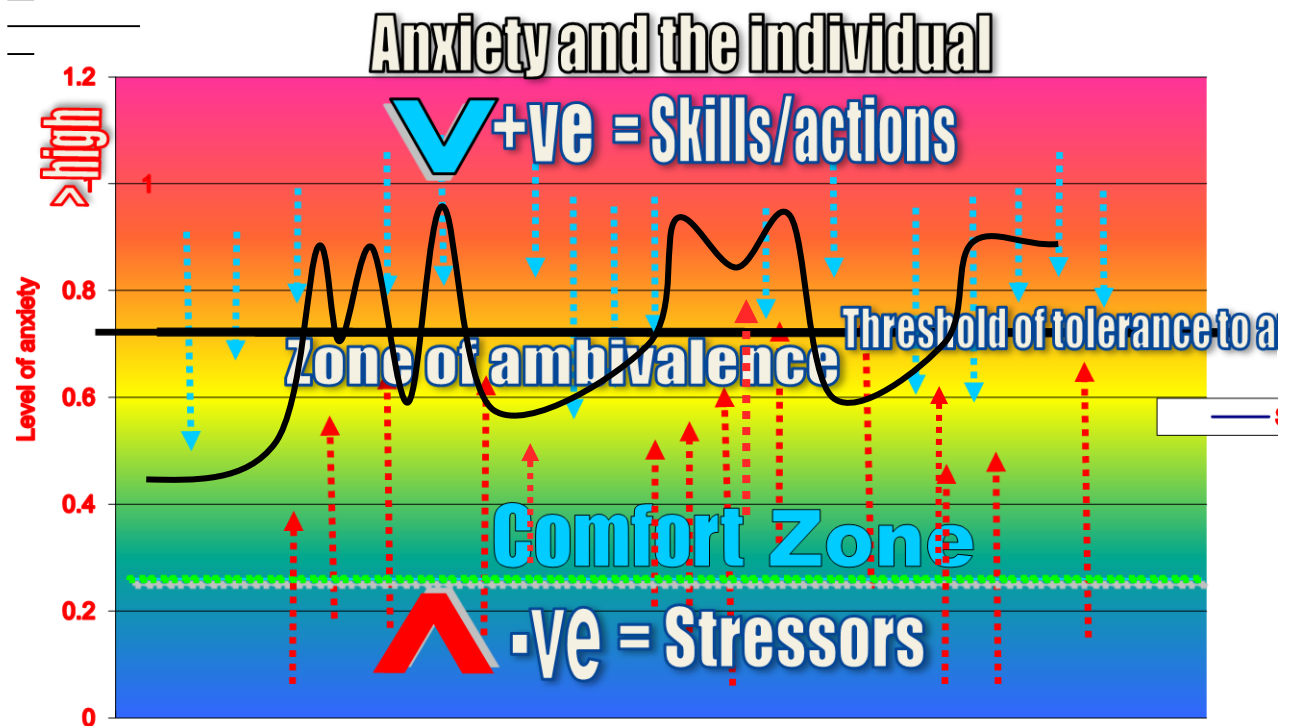
- People who suffer from high anxiety are usually operating towards their threshold of tolerance for coping with life stresses and frequently are operating over this level. Their general basal anxiety is above the "comfort zone ".
- Typically, they are tense, somewhat irrational and generally function inefficiently in their lives. These people often report doing things they regret or saying things, they do not mean.

Current university research now confirms
that stress can trigger inflammation.

- Overactive adrenal glands the result of experiencing a continuous high level of anxiety will cause you to use up energy and feel tired all the time. It may also result in your immune system becoming weaker causing you to be less resistive to colds, flu and infection in general.
- People suffering from anxiety are commonly found to be “stressed and are often reactive” and find it difficult to behave rationally.
- Relationships with friends and loved ones often become strained.
- Learning to integrate the skills of relaxation into one’s life style will enhance one’s capacity to function. Actions begin to be based on reason rather than emotive reaction when the person becomes practiced at using relaxation skills effectively they report experiencing a feeling of “being in control”.
- Stressed persons sometimes initially do not perceive themselves as suffering from stress. Many seek help to cope with their job demands and/or various lives situations. They lose confidence and feel out of control. They generally seek a physical explanation for their woes.

Stress - inescapable but defeatable

Stress - inescapable but defeatable



Being tense & anxious or “stressed” as we often describe it becomes the norm.

The inability to cope with stress can over time increase one's general basal anxiety level (this is best described as the level of tension remaining in your body when you are completely relaxed)

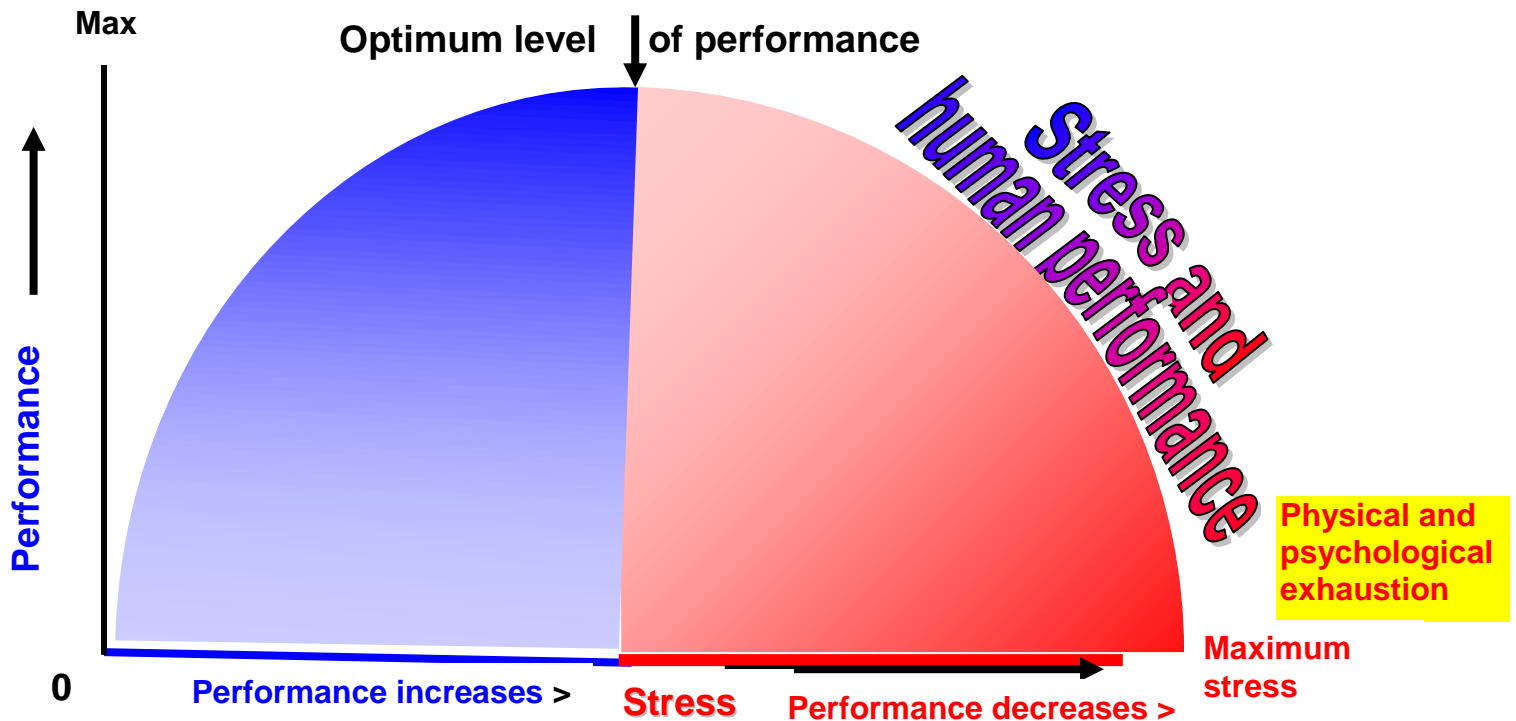
The effect of high basal anxiety can make your life miserable and even amplify any medical symptoms such as pain..

How high is your stress level?

We each have varying capacities for dealing with stressful situations. Physical and psychological factors are our self testing cue, which is how we work out that we are stressed. *When we have reached our limit*, we may experience a general feeling of not coping, of not being in control of our life. Usual life activities become too much. Normally simple tasks become difficult. Feelings of lethargy may develop and physical problems previously mentioned may serve as pointers to our over-anxious condition.

Many people suffering the effects of a high level of general anxiety see their doctor and are appropriately given a myriad of medical tests ranging from blood and urine tests to a number of organ imaging techniques such as X-rays, C.T. scan, Ultra Sound and nuclear med. Scans, MRI's etc. and often with nothing being found. The doctor may tell the (by this stage) highly sensitized person that there is nothing physically wrong. The person, by this time, perhaps a little paranoid, is shocked at the prospect that it may be psychological. Psychological suggests to some people that it may be imagined and therefore is not "real". Nothing could be further from the truth! Some of us have a tendency to ruminate and worry over matters and put our resultant anxiety inside ourselves we then can become a victim of our condition and look to an expert to fix our anxiety.

We all have a maximum level of stress at which point we can perform at our most efficient and beyond this point, our performance level falls away.



Behavioural changes

Changes in behaviour may be the only outward sign of a person's changed psychological state. Changes in temperament and reliability may be the behaviour we notice first. The following contrasting behaviour changes may indicate a person is not coping;

- ✓ A lack of confidence displayed by a normally confident person.
- ✓ Indecisiveness displayed by a usually decisive person.
- ✓ A shortness of temper displayed by a normally even-tempered person.

Caution: It must not be concluded that a person is suffering from anxiety on the basis of one single indicator. Investigation and careful assessment by a professional is required.

Hypnosis - unlocks the power within

Part of your treatment may involve the learning of self-regulation stress techniques. Through the process of hypnosis you can learn to be calm and focused. You will experience the absence of tension, both mentally and physically and this will have a profound effect on both your mind and body. Hypnotic techniques are a proven medically and psychologically long-term antidote for stress. Less tension, new thinking, adopting new behaviour will make you feel more powerful and give you a sense of relief as you dispense with old tension habits. When we are relaxed, our heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow to the muscles and muscular tension is all decreased. The exact opposite is going on in our bodies when we are under stress.

Learning to effectively calm your body and mind

will assist you in the following ways:

- + To alleviate both mental and physical tension reducing your general anxiety level.
- + To allow you to recognize the times when stress or tension is becoming excessive.
- + To enable you to bring an attitude of calm into your daily life for the times when stress becomes excessive. You will feel relaxed, confident and in control as you begin to reduce the tension and anxiety in your life. Remember change will take time practice, focus & persistence. You have become practiced at being stressed so practice to reduce stress takes time but becomes easier and more enjoyable as each day passes.

Relaxation is not a chore.

Never try to relax - this will almost always be self-defeating. Regard each in home practice session, with pleasurable anticipation. For your practice sessions choose a quiet spot where you will not be disturbed.

It also helps to practice in the same place, as you begin to associate this area with relaxation. All people can learn to calm their life and it will work for you as it does for others. A constructive persistent attitude will enable you to enjoy the benefits of being truly calm and you will begin to take the relaxed demeanour into your daily life.

Benefits that last

What you will feel

The sensation of deep calm is something similar to that "twilight " period we sometimes experience between waking and sleeping. It's a pleasant experience. Don't become discouraged if you feel you are not getting the desired result immediately, practice is necessary and makes the next session that much easier and your efforts will be rewarded. It's worthwhile saying that you should not be put off by the simplicity of the process. Some people tend to think that the more difficult or complicated something is, the better it is. Not true! **Always remember that high basal anxiety is an acquired habit. Like any other habit it can be changed and more functional behaviour substituted.**

Over many years we learn to over-react to certain situations. Hypnosis and our in home techniques will provide you with an effective way of meeting each new situation in the appropriate fashion. If you have experienced tension for a number of years, you cannot expect to change overnight.

Practice is necessary - become mindful of the changes over time.

In most instances you can expect to feel some benefits almost immediately. In the first few weeks however, be prepared for ups and downs, good days and bad days, for the occasional times when you feel yourself becoming tense and anxious. Remember you did not become anxious overnight and it will take a little time to learn these new skills and adopt new ways of responding to people and situations.

Life style tips

Stress symptoms will become attenuated (diminished) over time because your life in general will become more relaxed as your expertise in practicing and using self hypnotic technique increases.

Some simple tips:

♣ Watch your caffeine intake. (caffeine reduces our capacity to handle pain & stress)

This powerful drug, found in many common drinks, is capable of raising catechol levels in the blood. Two cups of coffee (250mg of caffeine) will triple blood catechol levels. (Catecholamine (Catechol) is an enzyme that catalyzes the degradation of catecholamines, including the neurotransmitters dopamine, epinephrine (adrenaline), and nor epinephrine (nor adrenaline). Caffeine certainly activates our body's sympathetic nervous system whilst at the same time reducing our body's ability to deal with pain & stress.

Caffeine remains in the blood for quite some time. The "half-life", that is the time for half of the dose of caffeine to be removed from the circulation and from the body, is from four to ten hours. The effects of caffeine on the body are the effects of sympathetic activation - increased heart rate, constriction of the blood vessels and general readiness for vigorous exertion. If you are experiencing tension in the muscles, a massage or a muscle relaxant, such as Valium can be effective in the short term. The goal for the long-term however is to learn how to relax those muscles you without such drugs?

♣ We can create a large amount of stress for ourselves

Poor planning, procrastination, struggling with longstanding conflicts and other self-defeating

♣ **Exercise is often useful in helping to relieve stress.** It stimulates the production of chemicals in the body that give a sense of well-being and helps combat tension. Further it stimulates blood flow and deep breathing brings additional oxygen to the brain. When you are experiencing stress, your body undergoes a number of dramatic changes, preparing itself to either stand firm or run away from a perceived danger. Exercise helps your body adjust to and cope with stress.

♣ Important benefits of being calmer.

When you learn the skill of calming your body and mind you can reasonably expect to enjoy a number of other benefits in addition to being able to handle tension and stress. *You will begin to apply your new skills with effect when faced with unexpected difficult and stressful situations.*

You will be able to quickly trigger yourself into a relaxed state and face difficulties and trauma more confidently and effectively. You will notice changes in yourself. They may be subtle at first but they become increasingly obvious.

Some of these will include:

- Feeling more active and vital.
- Developing more confidence.
- Finding yourself looking forward to new challenges and situations.
- Your productivity will probably increase.
- You may notice improvements in memory and concentration.
- You may enjoy better relationships with family and friends.
- You may feel more creative.
- You will find you have a greater ability to cope in difficult situations.
- You will be less reactive.
- You will find that things do not irritate you as much as they once may have as your basal stress is reduced to a comfortable level.
- Your ability to solve problems will seem to become greater.
- You will find yourself getting more and more enjoyment out of everyday life as you begin to achieve more things.

*Our clinician will assist you to apply your newfound skills and deal with any **repressed anxieties or traumatic experiences from the past**, should these events appear to be contributing to your high general basal stress level*

behaviour leads to increased stress. Setting unrealistic goals for you can also create stress. So too can expecting the worst.

We are all really little more than the sum total of our own thoughts and ideas about ourselves. We carry on an "inner-dialogue" with ourselves all the time. What we say makes a great difference to the way we feel. If we send ourselves confusing and self-destructive messages, we increase the stress in our lives. If we tell ourselves positive things we develop a healthy and optimistic outlook, which resists the destruction effects of stress. Eating habits can be another source of stress. Regular meal times should be established so that your body becomes accustomed to rises and falls in blood sugar levels. If your body never quite knows when it is going to get the food, physical stress is created. Similarly regular water intake (2litres/day) is necessary to lessen internal physical tension

The importance of self regulating methods for stress management

(Some references)

"While tranquilizers have helped us to live with the symptoms of distress, they do not modify the underlying response mechanisms. In time more and more patent drugs are needed just to maintain the desired response and to afford relief from the still present stress. Furthermore, tranquilizers do not provide internal control over the external stress but simply increase dependency on the external support (drugs) to counteract the effects of lack of internal control. The potentially dangerous side effects associated with frequent drug use are a third complication with regular reliance on tranquilizers. At best, drugs alone provide only temporary relief; at worst, they may have serious complicating side effects that contribute further to stress.

The most important self regulating procedures for stress management are;

- 1) Progressive relaxation,
- 2) Autogenic imagery training,
- 3) **Clinical Hypnosis,**
- 4) Biofeedback, training,
- 5) Cognitive behaviour therapy. (The truth is that all the 5 procedures are hypnosis based)

Each of these procedures has proven to be particularly effective for controlling stress.

Dr Christopher Margarey Associate Professor of Surgery, University of N.S.W. "If you suffer from nervousness it is important to understand that your reactions, although they may seem devastating, are merely your own body's response to the way you think. Change the way you think and your reaction will change, however long you may have suffered. ...Dr Clare Weekes Honorary Consultant Physician, Rachael Forster Hospital, Sydney. "A relaxed body is a physical sensation, entirely different from anything else you have ever experienced. You will recognize your mislaid ability to relax when you truly learn to relax." Anxiety, depression, boredom, anger and stress are emotions that very often trigger a vicious cycle of tension/eating/more tension/more eating. If we can train ourselves to respond to troubling ideas without physical tension, we can protect ourselves from the ravages of uncontrolled emotion". As Dr Joseph Wolpe of Temple University was to discover, this self training is possible if we learn to relax our bodies at will and then to visualize thoughts while we are relaxed". ...Dr Richard Stuart, Psychological Director, Weight Watchers. "Relaxation is a way to a better life. Anyone can learn to train his/her mind to be at ease when faced with the discomforts of daily life and can bring this feeling of ease into many aspects of our daily lives at home, work, at play... Relaxation training is the best antidote that I know to the negative and at times destructive effects of tension. Relaxation is a must for people in and you'll like it". ...Dr David Fink, Author of "Release From Nervous Tension". "It has been amply demonstrated that attempting to use effort or will power to change beliefs or to cure bad habits has an adverse rather than beneficial effect on our currently held beliefs, whether good or bad, true or false, were formed without effort, with no sense of strain and without the exercise of "will power". Our habits whether good or bad, were formed in the same way. It follows that we must employ the same process in forming new beliefs, or new habits, that is, in a relaxed condition". ...Dr Maxwell Maltz "the ability to let go and relax has saved many people from impending breakdowns and all who master the art find they have greater health and vitality because of it. Lyle H. Miller PhD., Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine and Chairman of the Department Biobehavioural Sciences.

"The case for the use of the relaxation response by healthy but harassed individuals is straightforward. It can act as a built in method of counteracting the stresses of everyday living". ... James Hewitt, author of "Relaxation Nature's Way with Tension". "Relaxation training is not the only strategy, which has been used in helping people to resolve anxiety or boredom eating, however relaxation method has been one of the most consistently effective according to Dr Michael J. Mahoney, Psychologist U.C.L.A.

Associate Professor Herbert Benson, Harvard Medical School. Director of hypertension Boston's Beth Israel Hospital. Anxiety, depression, boredom, anger and stress are emotions that very often trigger a vicious cycle of tension/eating/more tension/more eating. If we can train ourselves to respond to troubling ideas without physical tension,

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"Relaxation is a must for people in pressure jobs or whose efficiency is threatened by tension. When we relax, we enjoy what we do. We become more productive and our capacity in such things as concentration and decision making rather than be lessened, is improved".

....Dr Lyn Barrow, Australian Psychologist.

"Relaxation is a state of mind which has profound effects on the body. When we are relaxed, our heart rate, blood pressure, blood flow to the skin and organs increases. The exact opposite is going on when we are under stress.

Relaxation techniques give the body and the mind a respite"

... ..Denise Winn, Former Editor of "Psychology Today" Being overweight isn't just a social handicap, it's also a health hazard. In recent years professionals concerned with the problems of obesity have come to the conclusion that the most successful weight reduction programme is one, which combines psychological support with a well- balanced low calorie diet and a conscious effort to change eating patterns. Hypnosis and relaxation therapy has had remarkable success in reducing tension. People who have suffered badly from stress for many years and then undergone relaxation therapy have found that in a remarkably short space of time they are calmer, better able to cope with life free of many psychosomatic disorders"

....Helen Townsend, Author of "Where to go when your doctor can't help ". "Anything that helps us to feel positive, to focus our attention on a positive outcome for ourselves, is going to allow us to get in touch with our natural healing potential" Professor Sanford Cohen M.D. Chairman, the Division of Psychiatry at the Boston University Medical School.

Recent research shows clearly that too much stress can trigger inflammation in our bodies.

CONFIDENCE AND POSITIVE THINKING

At the outset it is important to realize that poor confidence and negative thinking are habits that have been acquired or learned. You were not born this way you actually learned to be unconfident and to think negatively and as a consequence to lack motivation. In addition, by now you probably also suffer from elevated anxiety. The process took many years and may have started in early childhood Sometimes experiences in life rip away the fabric of yourself respect and cause you to doubt your abilities and your worth as an individual. Everyone at one time or another experiences a lack of confidence in themselves and/or their abilities. All of us also experience shyness at some point in our lives. When a lack of confidence and positivity become chronic and begins to intrude in your daily life and prevent you from doing the things you would like to do, it is time to do something about it. William James who is often referred to as the father of modern Psychology once said; "Act as if, and in time, the way you act will become you ". In some ways it's surprising that any of us are confident enough to greet people or even to get out of bed in the morning, let alone having the polished positive personalities required for social and professional interaction. From childhood most of us are bombarded with negative style messages: "Don't be silly don't be naughty you can't do this you can't do that if you do that, you will not be allowed to go out next week ".

One estimate is that throughout or early years we receive 20 negative messages for every one positive one.

Is it any wonder that we begin to doubt ourselves? Over a period of years all of us develop a mental image of ourselves. This image, whether true or false, is generally the way we become. Our thoughts and actions and our very lives are ruled by the mental concepts we have of ourselves. A lack of confidence and positivity are both linked to the image you have of yourself. Here's the good news! Change this self image, the way you see yourself and your confidence and self esteem will be automatically restored.

This guide has been prepared for you to use throughout your time with us and in your future life. Please refer to it often and make your own notes as thoughts occur. There is a difference between shyness and lack of confidence although the two are closely interrelated.

Shyness relates to your interaction with other people. It is wanting to stay out of the spotlight. It is being bashful and uneasy in company. Lack of confidence occurs when you doubt our own worth as an individual. Lack of confidence also involves being reluctant to take things on because you doubt your ability to succeed. Lack of confidence can be real or imagined. Confidence is not blind faith in your own abilities. It is the recognition of your own value as a person irrespective of your skills, education, personality and appearance. It is natural however to lack confidence in areas which demand skills, which you do not currently have. You should not, for example, be confident about going into heavy surf if you are not a strong swimmer. Similarly, you should not think you could win at tennis if you have never played the game. If you wish to develop confidence in the many areas requiring specific skills there is no alternative but to develop those skills. Most of us learn to recognize those things that are beyond our level of skill. In these things we very naturally lack confidence. Shyness and lack of confidence become a problem when we have the necessary skills but fail to act because of a lack of esteem for ourselves.

Here are some frequently stated reasons for being shy and lacking in confidence
Which one/one's might apply to you?

Anxiety: A major cause. When we fail to effectively handle tension and stress in our daily lives we begin to lose our self-esteem and begin to doubt our own abilities and to think negatively about ourselves. Prolonged failure to handle tension and stress effectively increases anxiety and creates poor stress management skills/habits. We soon come to believe that we are in some way lacking. We think of ourselves negatively. A vicious cycle develops because, when we are confronted by a situation that calls for confidence, we become even tenser and our performance is further affected. We may even begin to perform badly in areas in which we previously were competent.

Fear of success: The fear of being a success can affect your confidence. Success might bring added responsibility, which you may find difficult to handle. It could threaten your relationships with certain other people. It could cause you to lose the affection and support of your friends or workmates. Being a success might change your life in ways that require you to learn to cope with new things, which may in themselves reduce your self-confidence. Negative thinking: Are you a negative thinker in your daily life? A major contributor to shyness and a lack of confidence, negative thinking should be identified. Let us examine some of your attitudes towards life.

Fear of failure: Failure is a natural part of life but many of us hold back for fear of failing. Stated simply, you cannot win all the time. Every actor, writer, politician and salesperson can tell you about failure. Fear of failure can cause us to act hesitantly, to be inhibited and awkward, or not to act at all. Confident people tend to develop an expectation of success. They regard their failures as temporary setbacks along the road of life.

Fear of what other people think: When you are very conscious of what other people think you can become oversensitive to the real or imagined disapproval of others. When you care too much you begin to monitor every word and action looking to confirm an already negative view of yourself. Your actions become dependent on the negative disapproval of others. Positive feedback is often ignored, unrecognized or even interpreted as negative in error. You create unnecessary tension, which makes you inhibited and self conscious.

A QUICK SELF ANALYSIS OF YOUR NEGATIVE THINKING

Tick the statements, which you think most apply to you and makes some private notes **Do You;**

**Examine your
thinking**

- 1) Spend large amounts of time worrying about your own inadequacies?
- 2) Avoid new challenges?
- 3) Often compare yourself to others with unfavourable results?
- 4) Limit yourself in the way that you dress?
- 5) Worry about change or breaking established patterns?
- 6) Don't express your views because you don't think they are good enough?
- 7) Expect most things to turn out badly?
- 8) Think of yourself more as a failure than a success?
- 9) Worry unduly about what has happened in the past or what might happen in the future?
- 10 Do you have a specific issue that concerns you and you do not deal with it?

If you are to become confident and positive it is essential to the success of your treatment that you learn to be generally calmer in all situations by using medically and psychologically recognized hypnotic method. It will assist you in numerous ways:

In the first instance, if you confront any situation while calm and relaxed you are going to perform better. You will behave in a reasoned and controlled manner rather than a tense and reactive out of control manner. Hypnotic calming techniques will help you to remain calm in most if not all situations you will discover how to control tensions and stress and keep your anxiety at an appropriate level. You will be shown how to create the mental environment where you are able to replace the negative ideas from the past with new and more productive ones. As you learn the skills and techniques you will begin to see yourself as a relaxed, confident and positive person and you experience the benefits in your life as you begin to behave accordingly.

To achieve any goal we must first believe that we can be successful. There is a great power in words. Around the turn of the century French pharmacist, Emil Coue, coined the now-famous phrase: "Every day in every way I am getting better and better". Coue recommended to his patients that they repeat the phrase to themselves 20 times every day. Coue maintained that all of our thoughts become reality. In other words you are what you think you are. If you think happy vibrant thoughts, you are happy. If you think sad thoughts you feel unhappy. If you think anxiety provoking thoughts you become tense and anxious. It is the same with shyness and lack of confidence. You quite literally think yourself into being this way.

Every advertising agency knows the power of repetitive messages. They are used to sell everything from pet food to politician's promises. If you hear a brand name or a sales message often enough you eventually buy the product. Throughout life we maintain an internal dialogue with ourselves. Eventually we "buy" our own message, whatever that might be.

We come to accept our thoughts and internal messages as true. Fortunately this psychological trait can work equally for us as against us. You can actually think yourself into the way you would like to be. One of the best ways to do this is through the repetition of positive thoughts and ideas. As simple as it sounds it is well recognized that remarkable changes have been brought about in the lives of many through positive thinking.

CONFIDENCE BUILDERS

*** Practice** mental rehearsals. Before you confront a situation, which causes you concern, create the situation in your mind's eye. Let yourself relax and breathing gently, in and out, picture the scene in your mind's eye exactly the positive way you would want it to turn out.

*** Listen** to your internal dialogue. Every time you catch yourself making a negative statement cancel it. Mentally picture the word "stop" and then continue with whatever else you may be doing at the time. When you practice you will find that you automatically begin to convert negative statements into positive ones.

*** When** confronted with a situation, which seems difficult break it down into smaller tasks which, when approached individually and in single file, seem so much easier. Never try to be someone you are not as you will become tense and inhibited, just relax and be yourself at all times without being unduly concerned what others may think.

*** Make a conscious effort to use your talents** repetitively and in doing so you will cause them to be further strengthened.

*** Create a word or a symbol for the confident person you are becoming.** Refer to this positive mental image frequently.

*** Picture yourself, as you would like to be.** Fill in every detail. Take time out each day to relax and picture yourself the way you wish to become.

*** Confidence is built upon experiences of success.** Start training for success. Succeed at small tasks and then go on to bigger and better things. Savour your successes and the feelings they bring. Form the good habit of remembering your successes and forgetting your failures, except what you have learned from them.

*** Develop self-acceptance.** Nobody is perfect, learn to accept whatever faults and shortcomings you have but dwell more on your abilities and assets.

*** It may sound trite but a sense of humour is often helpful.** Develop a sense of humour. Nothing is as bad as the mental image you build of it and learning to see the funny side of some situations will help you put things in correct perspective.

*** Work actively on developing a liking for people** and an acceptance of their faults and weaknesses. Those to whom you relate will automatically respond to the unspoken signals that you send.

" Everyday in everyway I am getting better and better ".
Now, write some positive affirmations that apply to you.

1)..... 2).....
3)..... 4).....
5)..... 6).....

N.B. POSTIVE AFFIRMATIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS APPROPRIATE DURING THERAPY.
YOUR CLINICIAN WILL GUIDE YOU IN USING AFFIRMATIONS.



Graham M Killoran
CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGIST

