How to Gain Control Over Asthma and Anxiety

by ERIC PATTERSON

Overcoming Asthma and Anxiety Attacks

Worry plays a significant role in your life. It guides your thoughts, feelings, decision-making and behaviors. If you let it, worry would control every aspect of your life — making every second of every day less satisfying and more forgettable.

Where does anxiety come from? In many cases, worry and anxiety crop up from nowhere in particular. It could be an innate way of thinking that expands to be more exaggerated over time, or it could be something you learned from your environment triggered by several situations from your past.

Anxiety wants you to think it is a good thing, necessary for protection. In reality, the majority of the time for the majority of people, anxiety, worry and stress do more harm than good. Initially it disguises itself as security, only to get you hooked on the feeling. But with time, anxiety can actually be dangerous.

The Lie of Anxiety

Consider the example of anxiety related to asthma. If you are someone who battles asthma, or you know someone who does, you understand the connection between anxiety and asthma.

Asthma attacks are scary, and it is the goal of everyone to reduce and eliminate their occurrences whenever possible. If you worry about an attack happening, and it doesn't, your anxiety tells you your worry caused the lack of symptoms — your ability to worry prevented the attack. Of course this thought is ludicrous, but it happens unconsciously.

Every time you worry and you do not have an asthma attack, you begin to think there is a cause and effect relationship between the two negative forces in your life. Because of this, anxiety starts to become a positive aspect in your life.

This might seem shocking, but it is very common. Based on this way of thinking, if some anxiety is good as a preventative measure, more must be better, right? You begin thinking about ways to stop the asthma attacks before they occur. From here, the anxiety continues to grow.

Then, an interesting thing happens: you have an asthma attack. Of course you do — most people cannot successfully avoid every attack.

A mind not influenced by anxiety rationally accepts this attack, but the anxious mind views the attack as the lack of anxiety. Surely, if there was more anxiety paired with better forethought, this attack could have been averted. Anxiety grows further.

From here, your anxiety becomes a more significant problem than your asthma. So much of your efforts, energy

and resources are consumed by finding ways to avoid asthma that you begin avoiding life. Many people find themselves engaging in fewer positive activities and events as they lose track of the positives life has to offer. This is usually when the first panic attack happens.

People who experience asthma attacks may be confused by their first panic attack. In many ways they are similar experiences: an asthma attack is a physical phenomenon that has a negative impact on the psychology of the victim; an anxiety attack is a mental health phenomenon that has a negative impact of the physiology of the victim.

The Lie of Anxiety

Each attack will leave the sufferer with unwanted symptoms like: shortness of breath, tightness and discomfort in the chest, confusion, fear, panic, rapid heart rate, and imagining the worst possible outcomes.

Attack Anxiety

So, you have two problems to manage: asthma attacks and anxiety attacks. Both are terrifying and debilitating, but the good news is no matter what, there is hope.

By focusing on the nature of anxiety, you can prevent its escalation from controlling your asthma. Here's how to improve your asthma by controlling your anxiety.

Outsmart Anxiety

As mentioned, anxiety is a conman proclaiming it will protect you from all you fear. If you allow it, anxiety will reinforce the idea that it is helpful and you would be greatly injured or embarrassed without it.

Knowing and recognizing anxiety's undesirability at this level is essential to combat it. The only role of anxiety is to make you more anxious. This step is necessary since no progress can be made while you welcome anxiety.

Stretch Your World

After you denounce anxiety, take an inventory of your life. Are you doing what you enjoy? What do your thoughts reveal? Are your wanted and unwanted feelings balanced?

Chances are good that your anxiety was shrinking your world under the illusion of asthma avoidance. If your current world seems small, it is time to expand it back to the desired level.

Get back to doing the things you like to do with the people you like to do them with. Even if anxiety has caused damage to your relationships, take the path of apologizing and engaging your supports. Make phone calls and schedule dates to stretch your world knowing that an asthma attack may arise, but it is not something anxiety can control.

Address Anxiety

Stretching your world may reveal that anxiety has created some major changes to your thinking and comfort levels. To return these to a better place, you may need some targeted antianxiety techniques.

Professional treatment is always a valuable tool, but you might benefit from some at-home strategies before you make that choice. Begin by paying attention to your thoughts to better identify which ones are fueled by anxiety.

Take the ones that are and debate them — rational thinking will prove them wrong. There is no better solution for tense bodies and sped up minds than relaxation techniques. Research and experiment with ones that seem to match your goals, experience and symptoms. Endless options exist.

People with high-frequency or intense asthma attacks are more likely to have more anxiety. People with more severe anxiety are more likely to have increased asthma attacks. By learning the self-reinforcing trick of anxiety and identifying it as a lie, you become able to fight asthma and anxiety separately. A calm, controlled body and mind is possible.