

CHAPTER 1

MEASURING AND TRACKING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Anxiety and depression can wreak havoc on your personal, professional, and social life if it goes untreated for an extended time. Many people try their best to ignore the symptoms, thinking they will get better after a specific situation is over or when they finally get out of a particular circumstance that has triggered them into feelings or reactions of anxiety or depression. By the time most people seek help for these problems, it's often out of their control and has taken over their lives. Once this happens, the battle can become fierce and often very painful for them and all who are involved in their life. This downward spiral can lead to despair and a distorted perception of reality that entails hopelessness and helplessness for the individual.

Over the past few decades, we have made great strides in understanding more about what anxiety and depression are as well as the difference between the two. However, much of our learnings and understandings have not become common knowledge amongst the general population. In modern society, when people feel anxious for extended periods or experience a panic attack followed by pain or pressure in the chest, they believe they are suffering from anxiety. When people experience sadness for an extended period or they are going through a mental low in their life where they cry excessively, they believe they have depression, which is usually followed by a visit to their primary care doctor or physician, where they are prescribed some form of antianxiety or antidepressant medication to help them cope. Sometimes medications can be of great assistance in managing anxiety or depression brought

on by temporary external situations such as when facing the loss of a loved one or dealing with a significant sickness that interrupts the normal flow of life. But what about long-term anxiety and depression? Or when you find yourself in repeated cycles that diminish the quality of your life? What about when anxiety and depression are commonplace in your everyday existence?

Though I don't work with medications directly, I do believe that everything has value to some degree, depending on the situation and how it is applied. Many years ago, I was prescribed Effexor XR to help me through a time of grief. Another time, when I was going through a major depression, I was prescribed Celexa. (This was before I began to live based on the philosophies in this book and understand how to work with the subconscious mind to overcome anxiety and depression.) However, I only took them long enough to help me get back on my feet so I could move forward in my life. The purpose of medication is only to help you get back on your feet when you've been knocked down by life in a major way. That's it. Unfortunately, many people end up taking them for years and even decades to try to live normal, healthy lives. They become dependent on these medications, which end up creating addictions, codependency, and even more anxiety or depression in the end. It does not have to be this way. Over the course of the following chapters, I will teach you my philosophies as well as how to utilize the subconscious mind to help you achieve a life free from debilitating anxiety and depression. In addition, you will learn to effectively manage these conditions as well as improve the quality of your life in the very same way I achieved it and have helped many others achieve it.

Whether you suffer from one of the many forms of anxiety such as general anxiety, social anxiety, agoraphobia, or even OCD, you *can* live a normal, healthy life. The same applies to depression. I repeatedly watch people become free from these debilitating conditions and begin living their lives with passion, purpose, peace, and freedom. Everybody gets knocked down in life and catches bad breaks here and there. That's life! It happens to all of us, some more than others. You or someone you know may be one of those who have been knocked down by life and

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can't seem to find their way back to solid ground long enough to get back up. I'm here to tell you that you can and it's time to get back up. When working on these issues in the conscious and subconscious mind, incorporating these philosophies, and utilizing specific psychological tools, the result of relief can be permanent and often much faster than medications. Moreover, there is an additional bonus of no adverse side effects—not something you hear often these days, huh?

A certain level of anxiety and depression are normal conditions that everybody experiences from time to time. But that's not the anxiety and depression I'm discussing in this book. I'm speaking to those of you who experience anxiety or depression regularly. Those of you who have just about lost all hope or are tired of being on the prescription merry-go-round. Those of you who are unhappy in life as it is and believe you are all out of options. And those of you who have become everything you never wanted to be and want nothing more than to get back to that vibrant person who was once so passionate about life that you know is hidden somewhere deep within you, just waiting to break free. I'm speaking directly to you, the one who has picked up this book with hopes of finding something that finally works. Nevertheless, there is one stipulation: you must be ready to let go of the things that are causing you pain and step into a new way of thinking and being. Surprisingly, many people are not yet willing to let go of the things that are making them sick in order to become well. Every behavior and feeling has a purpose and a payoff.

As you begin working on overcoming anxiety or depression in your life, it is essential to know if what you are or have been experiencing in your life is anxiety or depression and to what degree you are suffering. I use the Burns Anxiety Inventory and the Burns Depression Checklist to measure what level of depression and anxiety my clients experience, which helps me to understand what level of treatment is necessary for them as well as keep track of their progress as we work together. Take a few moments to go through the following two questionnaires to measure your levels of anxiety and depression. These scales should give you an accurate reflection of the levels you currently experience in

your life. As you work through this book and implement these teachings and tools, use these assessments weekly to help you track your progress.

Burns Anxiety Inventory

Directions: Select the number that best describes how much each symptom or problem has bothered or affected you based on how you have felt over the past week, including today.

0 = Not at all 1 = Somewhat 2 = Moderately 3 = A lot

1. Anxiety, nervousness, worry, or fear
2. Feeling that things around you are strange, unreal, or foggy
3. Feeling detached from all or part of your body
4. Sudden unexpected panic spells
5. Apprehension or sense of impending doom
6. Feeling tense, stressed, uptight, or on edge
7. Difficulty concentrating
8. Racing thoughts or having your mind jump from one thing to the next
9. Frightening fantasies or daydreams
10. Feeling that you're on the verge of losing control
11. Fears of cracking up or going crazy
12. Fears of fainting or passing out
13. Fears of physical illnesses or heart attacks or dying
14. Concerns about looking foolish or inadequate in front of others
15. Fears of being alone, isolated, or abandoned
16. Fears of criticism or disapproval
17. Fears that something terrible is about to happen
18. Skipping, racing, or pounding of the heart (sometimes called palpitations)
19. Pain, pressure, or tightness in the chest
20. Tingling or numbness in the toes or fingers
21. Butterflies or discomfort in the stomach
22. Constipation or diarrhea

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23. Restlessness or jumpiness
24. Tight, tense muscles
25. Sweating not brought on by heat
26. A lump in the throat
27. Trembling or shaking
28. Rubbery or "jelly" legs
29. Feeling dizzy, lightheaded, or off-balance
30. Choking or smothering sensations or difficulty breathing
31. Headaches or pains in the neck or back
32. Hot flashes or cold chills
33. Feeling tired, weak, or easily exhausted

Score Results: _____

0-4 = Minimal or no anxiety

5-10 = Borderline anxiety

11-20 = Mild anxiety

21-30 = Moderate anxiety

31-50 = Severe anxiety

51-99 = Extreme anxiety or panic

Burns Depression Checklist

Directions: Select the number that best describes how much each symptom or problem has bothered or affected you based on how you have felt over the past week, including today.

0 = Not at all 1 = Somewhat 2 = Moderately 3 = A lot 4 = Extremely

1. Feeling sad or down in the dumps
2. Feeling unhappy or blue