

Introduction

Anxiety is a psychological, physiological condition experienced in both body and soul constantly occupying thoughts causing somatic symptoms and ailments such as headache, chest tightness, skin rashes and others.

Anxiety extends to affect the mood, emotions as well as behavior. Examples are impatience, loss of temper, uneasiness and discomfort. Anxiety is the result of both external and internal influencing factors. It is also a natural reaction to lots of stressful situations and concerns.

Normal anxiety is a healthy welcomed anxiety required in a balanced amount as a stimulation to put up with and successfully overcome stressful situations and promote performance. Without this anxiety people would fall into slackness and indifference and forget about planning ahead, meeting deadlines and organizing their time.

Abnormal anxiety is excessive anxiety that supersedes the normal level rendering its victim dysfunctional crippling his capacity to think, plan ahead or make any sound decisions. Such type of anxiety disorder is considered pathological and deserves clinical treatment.

Anxiety and Fear

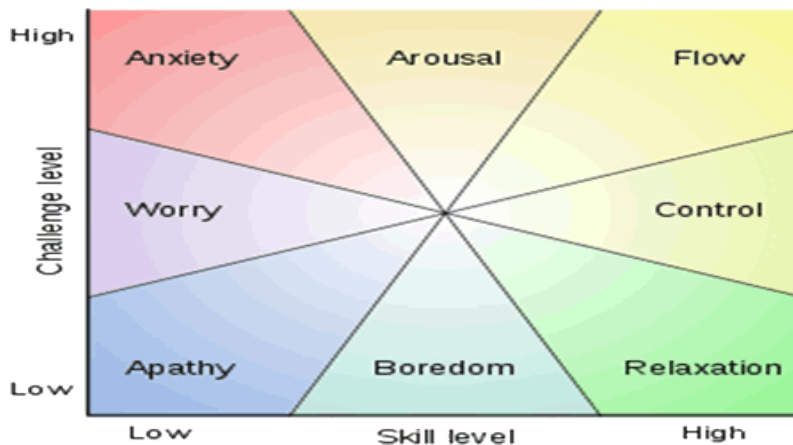
While fear is a reaction to a present threatening element or frightening action (for example fear from a dark room or a wild animal); anxiety is a negative unpleasant anticipatory concern about the future (for example anxiety about losing one's job or family members). Fear can be eliminated by eliminating the cause. Anxiety, on the other hand, cannot be removed so easily because the stimulant is not in the here-and-now but in the unseen future.

Causes of Anxiety

1. Innate Factors: Researches in the field discovered some chemical changes in the body accompanying anxiety. This finding led to the assumption that anxiety could be a natural type of God-given protective type of defense mechanism whereby we are warned to take measures against an anticipated danger or unpleasant situation.
2. Environmental Factors: Researchers have found that the anxiety offered by the environment we live and grow up in is bound to affect us and be transferred to us. For example anxious parents will have anxious kids.
3. Pathological Factors: Some physical ailments can lead to excessive anxiety. For example a

traumatic accident or dangerous terminal diseases.

The Relationships Between Talent, Challenges and Anxiety Researchers have found a strong correlation between the degree of anxiety and the underlying challenges facing a person while trying to use his talents (see Fig 1).



1. A limited talent + a few challenges = low anxiety
This is classified as apathy whereby a person unprepared in terms of talents, knows that the situation is not so difficult and therefore does not care that much about it.
2. A limited talent + a considerable amount of challenges = worry
This is classified as healthy worry that requires response.

3. A limited talent + a lot of challenges = high anxiety

This situation requires a lot of efforts.

4. Considerable talent + small challenge = relaxation

Here the individual is in control of the situation

5. Considerable talent + big challenge = flaw

Here the individual is still in control of the situation.

Types of Anxiety

1. Existential Anxiety: is related to one's physical, moral and spiritual existence. Threat to any of these three areas of one's existence cause anxiety:

a. Physical: ex. The spread of epidemics, pandemics or natural and environmental disasters.

b. Moral: any threats to one's moral and social standards or reputation such as bad rumors, malice.

- c. Spiritual: any spiritual emptiness or sin can cause anxiety. St. Augustine expressed this situation in his words. "You have created us for you, O God; and our soul will remain anxious until it finds rest in you."
2. Performance Anxiety: is related to one's achievements in exams, projects, job-related duties, interviews, etc. Performance anxiety is related to our self esteem and values.
- a. Self esteem: to a student, failure in an exam is equated in his mind with his value in society and among his friends.
 - b. Identity: associating one's identity with failure in a certain task and the shame or punishment that comes with it results in anxiety.
 - c. Time pressure: if a person fails to meet deadlines will end up with anxiety.
3. Trait Anxiety: comes as part and parcel of personality traits. Parents with anxiety traits are bound to pass them on to their off springs as a result of environmental factors.

4. Decision Anxiety: surfaces at times of decision making. The degree of decision anxiety is directly related to the size and importance of the decision to be taken. Types of situations where decisions have to be made are:

1. A win-win situation: is when a person has to choose between two good situations ex. which of the two good colleges to choose
2. A one-way-ticket situation: for example to immigrate or not to immigrate
3. A lose-lose situation: for example choosing whether to undergo a serious operation or bear the consequences of not undergoing it

Decision anxiety may afflict morally upright people when confronted with temptations from Satan. *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish"* (Galatians 5:17).

5. Paradoxical Anxiety: is generated as a result of being anxious over how to get rid of anxiety. In other words, while suffering from clinical anxiety another anxiety starts.

6. Social Anxiety: is an adult-specific type of anxiety which generates as a result of first time encounters with people. It varies in nature and duration depending on situations and develops into either just short-term anxiety or long-term chronic type that requires clinical treatment. Social anxiety is common among teenagers especially when dealing with the opposite sex. It also results from rejection by peers, parents, or social groups or

o. Non existing unrealistic anticipation of failure or rejection by social groups because of bad performance: example, a servant anticipates bad performance and dislike of his service by his coordinator or priest even before he accomplishes the task. This negative anticipation creates an inhibition that cripples the servant dooming his service to failure. This failure inadvertently confirms his anxiety and so he remains a victim of this vicious circle that he has created and which has no roots in reality.

1. Always wanting to please others: is a major source of anxiety that makes a person

vulnerable to manipulation and a victim of a lot of anxiety.

Conclusion

This article addressed the phenomenon of anxiety, the difference between fear and anxiety, types of anxiety and their causes. Anxiety can range from a simple healthy type required for survival, self defense and meeting goals to serious pathological types that require more serious clinical treatment.

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