

Exposure Therapy



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Perhaps you are in the habit of thinking about the possibility of winding up broke on the streets in your old age, which probably elicits an unpleasant feeling. This common habit is largely unrelated to age, income or wealth and it can have a significant impact on the quality of your life. Perhaps you fear that your partner will leave you, that your kids will not, or that you will be eaten by a shark. If you are not distressed by such future possible catastrophes then there may be some regret or resentment from the past about which you are in the habit of suffering. Missed opportunities, bad decisions, and personal betrayals are popular in this category. Physical violence, accidents, abuse and war can all result in *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, in which the traumatic event is experienced repeatedly in all its original horror. The treatment for all of these very different conditions is exposure therapy.

The goal of exposure therapy is to recondition the emotional experience associated with a problematic thought or memory. This is accomplished by inducing and maintaining a pleasant state of mind for as long as possible while the problematic thought or memory is recalled. The pleasant state of mind can be maintained by means of bio-feedback, breathing or eye-movement exercises, spa music, hypnosis, nitrous oxide or a soothing conversation in my office. In any case, with repeated exposure to the stimulus this pleasant sensation gradually neutralizes the original association of horror and anxiety so that you can move on to more productive thoughts. This simple technique is a sort of cognitive weed abatement project, clearing a space in your mind for finer things. Trust me. Call me.

Relief, Recovery, Resolution

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