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"The Highlights Effect"

How To Eliminate Anxiety & Enjoy Your Day With A Simple Mindset Shift

This idea will allow you to get through those tough parts of the day when all you can see and feel is that horrible feeling of dread and panic. Most times, when you begin feeling like that, you're stuck there, and nothing you do can lift you out of the hole.

But this trick is a great way to lift you up during those low moments, and it's also a great way of stopping those moments from happening in the *first* place.

I came across this idea in a book called "*The Now Habit*" by Neil Fiore. The book's nothing to do with anxiety or panic - it's actually a book about how to stop procrastination and how to get more things done in the day.

But something I love doing is finding new ideas in places where you'd least expect them, and finding ways to use them against anxiety and panic, and the other problems you'll experience if you have any form of anxiety disorder.

I think the reason I like to find ideas and solutions to anxiety in unusual places like this is because so many of the normal approaches to dealing with anxiety just don't work. Some of the best things I've found that *really* help have come from places that are nothing to do with anxiety at all.

And this idea I learned in "*The Now Habit*" is a great example.

This idea, which I've altered slightly to work for people like us, I've called "The Highlights Effect," and it takes advantage of those times in your day, or your week, when you feel your best, and we all have those times, however few they are, and however bad things get.

I remember when I was at my lowest point, and having as many as 15 major panic attacks a day and suffering with all kinds of horrible physical symptoms as a result...But even in times like those I *still* had moments where I felt okay, and I even had some moments that I enjoyed.

So this idea takes advantage of those times when you feel at your best.

But instead of waiting for those times to happen, and then being surprised by them and how they make you feel, you're going to use the power they have to lift your mood before you experience them.

And that's why I've called this "The Highlights Effect."

You're going to pick moments in the near future when you know you'll feel good, or you know you'll enjoy something, and you're going to focus on these highlights, and you're going to plan your day or your week around them.

The moments or events you choose don't have to be anything huge. All they have to be are moments you know you'll enjoy.

It could be as simple as watching your favourite TV show. Or being visited by a friend or family member. Or going shopping. Walking somewhere, having a day off, working out, whatever you enjoy will work.

And of course, these things will be different for everyone.

You might want to choose a very small highlight each day so that you can use this idea in small way each day, or you might want to choose a highlight of the week and use that highlight to focus on throughout the week.

Either way will work.

You might even want to combine both of those approaches. I'm sure that would work too.

The great thing about this idea is that it's so simple to begin to use. There's really no trick to it, and nothing to learn. We all do it already, but we usually only do it very occasionally when we have major highlights to focus on.

Say you have a job, and you work 5 or 6 days a week. And say you have a week off scheduled and you know that when Friday comes your week off begins. I can almost guarantee that the week that leads up to your week off will be an unusually good one for you - and you'll probably feel better and better as the week goes on and that week off gets nearer.

The reason you feel good is because you're focusing on the big highlight at the end of the week, and you're planning your mood and your time and your days *around* that highlight.

Well, there's no reason why you can't use this same idea *all* the time. You don't have to wait for those big occasions like holidays, vacations, weeks off, or whatever the things are that *you* most look forward to.

So maybe your favourite TV show is on Thursday nights. That can be your highlight for Thursday. All day on Thursday you can look forward to watching that show.

When you have a bad moment, let that show be at the back of your mind. Think ahead to the way you'll enjoy it.

And make the details clear - so if you treat yourself to a snack when you watch it, make that a part of what you're looking forward to. If you watch it with someone close to you and it's time you enjoy together, then make that a part of what you're looking forward to.

Focusing on these highlights and looking forward to them like this is also a great way to stop a panic attack if you feel one coming. I've found these thoughts are very calming and they also help to ground you and they stop your mind from spiralling out of control.

This idea is one I use all the time. And it's one that I know will work for you too. So I really hope you'll try to make use of it. And if you struggle for a

while to think of the highlights that will work for you, don't give up. You'll find some.

And eventually, you'll come across a few of these highlights by chance, and you'll suddenly realise you're having a better day or a better moment. When that happens, ask yourself why you feel good and what it is that made you feel that way. You may find that you can use it in the future as another one of your highlights.

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