

Anger Defeats Fear, Stress, and Anxiety (Take Control with Science)

Description

If you desire greatness, you must perform well under pressure.

Using a scene from the 2nd season of Peaky Blinders, we'll cover 3 science backed tools used by Tommy Shelby for remaining cool, calm, and collected. These are in addition to the feeling that he is already dead. You might have seen this clip analyzed before, but no one's mentioned what we are about to reveal. Do these things and you'll stay in control of anxiety, fear, and stress, even in the most tense situations.

Tommy has a mysterious meeting with two people to carry out a valuable task. At this point we don't know much about the task. We just know these people appear to be influential, and Tommy is keen on pairing up with them.

Anger

"Good. Anger defeats fear."

This really is a genius line, whether the writers were aware of what they were doing or not, because anger actually defeats fear, at least [neurologically](#).

"Imagine you are chasing a cat with a broom. If you corner the cat with the broom, it will attack you, even though it is just a cat. The reason for that is that fear will facilitate freezing or escape. But sometimes fear isn't the right response, and anger will suppress fear. And so one of the tools we have at our disposal psychologically, is anger as an anecdote to the terror that would otherwise freeze you."

– [Peterson](#)

If you've watched some of Peterson's videos, you might have noticed him getting aggressive at certain points. He finds some aspect of the question irritating and leans into that anger. We can't help but wonder if he is purposefully triggering this state, to deal with the pressure.

The problem is, using anger to dispel fear can actually embarrass you in certain social environments, as it can be out of place.

Breath

Don't worry. We discovered another technique in this scene that you can use anytime.

Right as he enters, Tommy does a sniff and exhale. This seems simple, partially because the action was probably involuntary, but is important.

[Neuroscientists](#) discovered a way push the body towards a state of calm using the diaphragm. Controlling the diaphragm lets you control your heart rate, which lets you control arousal, which lets you reduce stress.

First you take a long breath in through your nose, followed by a second quick sniff. Then you do a long exhale. When this process is repeated roughly three times, it brings you into a state of [calm](#).

Vision

There is actually a similar trick that uses peripheral vision. When we focus on one thing, like our phones, our eyes change, which signals to the brain to increase alertness. In contrast, when we use peripheral vision, our pupils change, alertness decreases, and stress levels fall. In other words, “zooming out” turns off stress and anxiety.

To harness this, keep your gaze forward and don’t move your eyes. Move your attention to the sides of what your eyes can see, to the left and right. Stay this way for a few minutes. Stress will decrease.

Reframe & Assert

Warning, the next technique can be challenging for some to use. But Tommy draws on it all throughout the show, so we included it.

Science shows that in high pressure situations the brain will fill with various chemicals.

Contrary to what you’d think, they can be quite useful, depending on how skilled you are at using them. If harnessed correctly, they prime us for action by bringing clarity of mind, improved reaction time, focus to our thoughts, and an invitation to act.

But left unchecked, they create fear, anxiety, and poor performance.

As the intensity mounts and stakes rise, Tommy doesn’t stay in his head. He quickly asserts himself. He tells the woman what he knows and how he can strike back.

Become skilled at using stress by reframing how you see it. Stress isn’t a predictor of impending doom. It is an early warning system. These negative feelings are simply notifications from your brain that you need to act now.

If we listen to stress and act, we gain all the focusing and clarifying effects, while avoiding the poor performance, anxiety, and fear that come from waiting too long. And studies on CBT agree. Reframing stress like this, and then acting, has been proven to reduce anxiety.

Here is an example.

Social situations can be stressful. Instead of waiting around like prey, be the first mover. Introduce yourself to a new group or person right when you start to feel stress. Volunteer to speak first at the meeting. Go on the offensive in a debate by asking for, and challenging their evidence. If you start to consider procrastinating anything, see the thought as an invitation to act.

Does Anger Defeat Fear?

Yes. [Studies](#) show anger defeats fear. In fact cornered animals instinctively get aggressive in response to fear. Aggressive and angry reactions reduce the effects of the chemicals that produce fear. See the linked study.



Move into action to defeat fear, anxiety, and stress.

3 Ways to Quickly Overcome Fear and Anxiety (Article Summary)

1. Reframe anxiety and fear. Stop seeing those feelings as negative. Instead, realize that these stress chemicals are there to tell the brain it is time to act. Assert yourself the moment you start feeling stress. This means initiating a social interaction, starting a difficult task, or having a difficult conversation.
2. Eliminate stress with breathing and eye movement science. Take two quick breaths and a long exhale. Instead of focusing closely on one thing, pay closer attention to your peripheral vision. Both have been proven to quickly lower stress, fear, and anxiety levels.
3. Use anger to turn the fear switch off. Getting angry directly switches off fear. Find something irritating about why you feel anxious.

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