

# Freedom from Stress and Anxiety with Hypnosis and Mindfulness

By Helen Hart – Clinical Hypnotherapist, Reiki Master and Relaxation Coach



We live in interesting times, no longer are we governed by fight or flight responses. It is a unique time in the history of humans and we are very lucky as we can create our own life, just as we want it. We are not victims. We are 100% responsible for the life we have. If we think it can be better, then we have the power to change our attitude and actions and begin to make it better. Always remember, whether you think life sucks or you think life is great, either way, you're right.

## Historically Speaking

Stress and anxiety is a major issue in our society today. Studies have shown that it is the root cause of many illnesses, conditions and disease. Why do we stress and feel anxious? There are many contributing factors however the reason may stem back to our ancestry; in days gone by it was imperative to have these feelings in order to survive. We needed to be alert and ready to fight or run if faced by a wild animal or an outside threat. Our lives have changed in such a way that we are no longer in constant threat but these instincts remain intact.

## The Relaxation Revolution

I would like to welcome you to the relaxation revolution. Here is how hypnosis and mindfulness can assist you to turn down the volume on stress and anxiety in your life. I use the words 'turn down the volume' for a very good reason. We still need to feel stress and anxiety so we know when we are in danger or a difficult situation. Stress isn't always bad, in small doses it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But many people are constantly running on emergency mode and their mind and body will ultimately pay the price.

Our body can't make a distinction between physical and psychological threats. When you're stressed out because you are busy, or you can't pay the bills, your body reacts just as strongly as if you were facing a life-or-death situation. Most of us live lives full of responsibilities and worries, therefore your emergency stress response i.e. fight or flight response may be in the 'on' position most of the time. The more this is activated the harder it is to shut off. This is a problem as it means we cannot function properly and make decisions clearly and easily. This in turn can lead to illness both physically and mentally.

## Hypnosis

You might be wondering; can hypnosis help? The answer is yes! We are constantly learning and creating patterns in our brains called neural pathways (which are the signals in our brains). The more we do something the more that pathway is reinforced and the faster and faster and more permanent those signals become. So, if we are always feeling stressed or anxious then our mind continues to reinforce this pattern. Long term stress re-wires the neurology in the brain. Hypnosis can help by breaking down the connections of those pathways and creating new pathways reinforcing a pattern that works better for us. In essence it creates the wanted pathways in the correct area of the brain. The benefits don't end there. Hypnosis is a gentle, non-intrusive therapy. In short, you get to sit back and have a lovely relaxing experience while your subconscious mind is put to work.

## Mindfulness and Relaxation

In addition to hypnosis, there are many relaxation and 'stress less' techniques to assist you. There is a whole bucket load of recourses that you can integrate easily into your day-to-day life.

For instance, everyone has heard that 'laughter is the best medicine', well...it turns out that, while it might not be the best medicine, it has many benefits including lowering blood pressure. When we laugh it causes our mind and body to react in many beneficial ways. So, switch on your favourite sitcom or look up funny cat antics on YouTube or ring a friend that always makes you laugh. This is just one example in a list of endless simple solutions to stress and anxiety overload.

Mindfulness is also a wonderful way to calm the mind. It is essentially a short meditation that can be done throughout your day to help you centre and focus. There are literally thousands of ways to practice mindfulness. An example is to just concentrate on the immediate task at hand. If you are walking, think about the movement of your body, your posture and what you can see and how you feel. As thoughts surface, simply put a name to them and

place them to the back of your mind and start again. Or while eating your lunch, focus on how it looks, tastes, smells, feels and the movements you make. I guarantee that this one will help with overeating too, because you are focused on what you are doing, you will notice when you feel full.

So as you can see, there are many benefits to incorporating hypnosis and mindfulness into your life to reduce stress and anxiety. Please read Carolyn's story below on how hypnosis helped her gain back control over her life and her anxiety issues.

**Want to know more about how hypnosis and mindfulness can help you?**

Contact Helen Hart [www.helenhart.com.au](http://www.helenhart.com.au) 0409682429 or [helen@helenhart.com.au](mailto:helen@helenhart.com.au)

Or join Helen for her weekly relaxation class: <http://www.helenhart.com.au/#!news-and-documents/c20d9>

## Carolyn's Story

It was the middle of August 2004 and I was in Melbourne on a business trip. It was the day my life changed forever. It was the day I had my first panic attack.

Before I tell you my story I'd like to explain my life BPA, that is "Before Panic Attacks". As the middle child of three girls I was a naturally outgoing kid. I'd spent years travelling before settling in my home town of Perth and marrying the love of my life. Professionally, I'd spent years in frontline sales and sales management followed by a change in career to become the national training manager for a large organisation. I eventually moved into a State Managers role for a multinational transport company, with a side portfolio of national procurement. In short, I was used to presenting to large groups of people regularly and was successful at it.

So what happened? Where did it all go wrong? What changed in me or my circumstances to cause me to suffer debilitating panic and anxiety attacks? Those are questions I've pondered at length for the past 10 years! I hope in essence my story explains the beginnings of what was to become my private hell and eventual journey to mental peace.

At the time of my first panic attack I was under enormous stress. I had just ended a difficult, though short lived marriage, endured the death of my grandmother and best friend and become persona non grata with my parents. Tough times!

As I mentioned earlier, I was in Melbourne on business, delivering training for a brand new software program being rolled out across the business. Training was going well however I just never felt 100% confident with the product or my understanding of it. Quite simply, I didn't believe in what I was selling. On day one of training I got up to go to the bathroom whilst another presenter delivered their session. As I was flushing the loo I began to breathe erratically, I had no idea what was happening to me but I knew it was mental rather than physical.

I eventually went back into the office and then a private meeting room. I rang a friend in absolute panic and he explained that I was having a panic attack. I didn't really know what that meant. I called my boss in the meeting and asked him to come and see me; he also immediately diagnosed my reaction as a panic attack. I was extremely fortunate in that he also suffered from panic attacks and gave me some coping mechanisms that I used for many years.

Over the next four years I suffered from these attacks with increasing regularity. The birth of my daughter in 2007 brought additional stress as I was eventually to understand that I suffered from Post Natal Depression. By 2009 the attacks had increased to unmanageable proportions following the death of my sister in the November. They had were by now recurring up to 20 or 30 times a day; by this point I really thought I would have to enter a psychiatric facility. Quite simply I thought I was losing my mind.

In February 2010 I made the first step in my eventual recovering by contacting a hypnotherapist, I explained my problem and she was immediately understanding of my issues and explained how she had treated many other

sufferers similar to me the in past. Immediately this gave me hope and I attended my first session a few days later. This session brought immediate relief to me, that is not to say I was immediately cured, but I did begin to gain control over the attacks and decrease their regularity.

Over the course of the next few months I underwent hypnotherapy on a semi regular basis. The impact was extraordinary. The most significant improvement was regaining the feeling of control; something I had begun to understand was my trigger to a panic attack.

Today I am able to live what was once inconceivable, a normal life. Over the past four years I have experienced the benefits of hypnotherapy for a number of unrelated problems; including giving up smoking over two years ago. I have continued to improve since that first session and now attend conferences for my business without sitting in a state of panic and without the constant feeling of wanting to take flight, which I had suffered extensively from in the past. I can speak to a room of people and not hear a piercing noise in my ears. And most importantly, I don't feel like I'm going crazy.

Carolyn – Perth Eastern Hills WA