

When Life Gives You Anxiety, Make Lemonade

生活給你焦慮時，試著變苦為甜

How to be constructively anxious

Have you ever been at a party where that one guest seemed bent on bringing down the vibe? You're not even sure they were invited in the first place, but wherever you turn, there they are. All twitchy and sour-faced. Ruining everyone's fun and refusing to leave.

Anxiety is like that unwelcome guest. Not always invited, but here anyway, making life unpleasant and uncomfortable for millions of us every year.

It's estimated that as many as 62% of us regularly experience anxiety. When unaddressed, routine anxiety can become more serious, with the Anxiety and Depression Association of America estimating that 31% of all U.S. adults will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives.

Why, Anxiety? Why?

Basically, anxiety is our psychological and physical response to worry or fear. Like other natural stress responses, it serves a useful purpose when it motivates us to avoid danger, make reasonable contingency plans, or take positive action.

However, anxiety becomes problematic when it's habitually focused on things we can't control.

Constant, Unfocused anxiety can:

- Distort reality, making things routinely appear worse than they are
- Frighten us into avoiding necessary or enjoyable activities
- Make us speak or act negatively, harming our self-esteem and relationships
- Cause us to be indecisive or to act against our own interests

如何將焦慮變為建設性的力量

你是否曾經參加過一個聚會，而其中有位客人似乎一心要破壞氣氛？你甚至不確定他們是否被邀請了，但無論你轉到哪裡，他們總在那裡。神經兮兮，愁眉苦臉，破壞大家的樂趣，還不願意離開。

焦慮就像這樣一位不受歡迎的客人。並不總是被邀請，卻總會不請自來，攪亂我們的生活，讓人不舒服。

據估計，多達62%的人經常感到焦慮。如果不加以處理，這種常見的焦慮可能會演變成更嚴重的問題。根據美國焦慮和抑鬱協會的數據，31%的美國成年人在一生中的某個時刻會經歷焦慮症。

焦慮？為什麼？

基本上，焦慮是我們對擔憂或恐懼的心理和生理反應。和其他壓力反應一樣，當它促使我們避免危險、做好應急計劃或採取積極行動時，是有益的。

但如果焦慮總是圍繞著我們無法控制的事情，那它就會變成一個問題。

持續且無明確焦點的焦慮可能會：

- 扭曲現實，使事情看起來比實際情況更糟糕
- 讓我們害怕去參與必要或令人愉快的活動
- 使我們負面性地說話或行動，傷害我們的自尊和人際關係
- 讓我們猶豫不決，甚至做出對自己不利的決定

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To avoid these problematic anxiety traps, it's helpful to recognize that it comes in two different forms.

Constructive vs. Unconstructive Anxiety

Constructive Anxiety

- Has a solvable problem
- Is focused on one problem at a time
- Lasts 10 minutes or less
- Focuses on influence over control

Unconstructive Anxiety

- Has no solution
- Focuses on multiple or spiraling problems at once
- Is persistent or constant
- Fantasizes about absolute control

Example. Say you have an important presentation at work tomorrow, and a big storm is expected during your commute. Constructive anxiety says, "OK, I'll get up early, check my weather and traffic apps, and pick the best departure time and route. Done."

Unconstructive anxiety says, "What if the whole world floods, and even if I get to work without dying, the rain ruins both my laptop and flash drive backup, and my hair is a mess, and I'm covered in mud, and...and. Let's make a blanket fort, binge-eat junk food, and imagine all the things that could (im) possibly go wrong."

Those unconstructive examples may sound a little tongue-in-cheek, but they're not that off-base. The point is that unconstructive anxiety is often illogical, and when it spirals, that's when it causes the most trouble.

Constant, Unfocused anxiety can:

Here are some techniques that can help you differentiate between the two types of anxiety and focus on productive, positive solutions.

為了避免這些焦慮陷阱，我們需要認識到焦慮有兩種不同的形式。

建設性焦慮 與 非建設性焦慮的區別

建設性焦慮

- 關注的是可解決的問題
- 只關注一個問題
- 持續時間不超過10分鐘
- 關注影響而非控制

非建設性焦慮

- 沒有解決方案
- 同時關注多個或不斷惡化的問題
- 持續或經常存在
- 幻想自己能完全掌控

舉個例子。 假設你明天有一個重要的工作演示，但天氣預報說你通勤時可能會遇到一場大風暴。建設性焦慮會這樣反應：「沒問題，我早點起床，查一下天氣和交通信息，選個最合適的出發時間和路線。搞定。」

而非建設性焦慮可能會想：「如果整個世界都被淹了怎麼辦？即使我能安全到公司，雨水也會把我的筆記本電腦和備份弄壞，我的頭髮會亂糟糟的，全身都是泥……等等。還是我們搭個毯子堡，狂吃垃圾食品，想像所有可能出錯的事情。」

這些非建設性的想法聽起來可能有些誇張，但並非完全脫離現實。關鍵是，非建設性焦慮往往是不合邏輯的，一旦它開始失控，就會帶來更多麻煩。

拒絕被焦慮控制，而選擇採取行動

以下是一些方法，能幫助你分清兩種不同的焦慮，並集中精力找到積極有效的解決方案。

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Acknowledge, Don't Avoid. Viewing anxiety as normal/routine can reduce its power to paralyze you. When you feel anxious, examine it mindfully and calmly and try to understand where it's coming from rather than getting caught up in it.

Question the Unlikely. If your anxiety puts you in a fear spiral, take a deep breath and ask yourself calmly if what you're imagining is likely to happen or if it's the anxiety making things look worse than they are. If a bad outcome is likely, what's the first step you might take to keep going in the aftermath?

Mind Your Influence. What about this situation (if anything) can you control? If it's out of your control, is there anything you can do to influence the outcome or take a positive action? Focus on those things within your power and use mindfulness to let go of anything that isn't.

Reframe and Motivate. If you're anxious about something, that means it matters to you. When looked at that way, anxiety isn't bad; it's trying to tell you something important. Engage a growth mindset by thinking about the challenge as an opportunity instead of a problem and using that perspective to inspire action.

正視而不是逃避。把焦慮看作正常的反應，這樣可以減輕它對你的影響。當你感到焦慮時，試著冷靜地觀察，理解它的來源，而不是讓情緒主導你。

質疑不太可能的擔憂。如果焦慮讓你感到恐慌，可以嘗試深呼吸，問問自己，這些擔心的事情真的會發生嗎？還是焦慮讓你放大了問題？如果確實可能發生，那你能採取哪些措施來應對？

專注在可控的方面。在這件事情中，有什麼是你可以掌控的？如果無法掌控，你能做些什麼來影響結果或採取積極行動？聚焦在你能掌控的部分，放下那些無法控制的。

轉換思維，激發動力。如果你對某件事感到焦慮，說明這件事對你很重要。換個角度看，焦慮其實是在提醒你一些重要的事情。把挑戰看作成長的機會，而不是問題，用這種心態來激勵自己採取行動。