



ANXIETY in RELATIONSHIPS

Anxiety is mental or emotional distress or uneasiness because of fear of:

1. Rejection – belief that you can't stand rejection or disapproval.
2. Perfection – belief that you are never good enough.
3. Loss – the belief that you don't deserve what you have and will lose it or actual circumstances threaten what you have.
4. Distrust – past experiences lead you to have difficulty trusting.
5. Abandonment – past neglect or present circumstances lead you to fear abandonment today.
6. Loss of Control – strong need to be in control leads to anxiety when one cannot control people, places, or things.
7. Change – change is stressful and anxiety provoking; even positive change requires adjustment and has an amount of the unknown.
8. Distance – someone is either too close or too far emotionally.

Anxiety in a relationship leads to dysfunction:

Anxiety + Reactivity = Dysfunction

More Anxiety + More Reactivity = More Dysfunction

Reactivity takes one of two major forms to manage the anxiety. People do some of either of these as a typical reaction style to anxiety:

1. **Underreact** – distance, shut-down, become dependent or incompetent, or avoid feelings by engaging in activity, pursue addictions, withdraw.
2. **Overreact** – say too much, try to control, hover, talk, fix, tell others what to do, take the lead, become emotionally intense, fight, blame, push to resolve and solve, seek

closeness and reassurance.

The best thing you can do is to face your fears and manage your anxiety to calm things down. This will allow you to make better choices. Recognizing that your loved ones are also experiencing anxiety in the relationship and reacting to it, may help you to understand why they do what they do; thereby helping you to react less to them. If you can identify the anxiety and move towards it; even bringing it up and dealing with it directly in the relationship, it will make discussion, understanding, resolution, and discussion more likely and will definitely keep things less dysfunctional and crazy even it only changes your reactions.

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