



WHAT IS TEST ANXIETY

Test Anxiety is described as "an unpleasant feeling or emotional state that has physiological and behavioral components, and that is experienced in formal testing or other situations of evaluation". Test anxiety has direct debilitating effects on school performance. It's easy to confuse lack of preparation which can cause difficulty with real test anxiety. The most common sign of test anxiety is freezing up during the test... when you know the answer but can't get it out. Maybe the words suddenly stop making sense, even though you know the topic inside-out. Maybe you know that you know the answer, but just can't remember it. Or maybe you're having problems learning anything in preparation for the test.

Test anxiety is more common than most students realize, and the symptoms are the same for almost all people who experience it – regardless of age or knowledge.

- * Nervousness
- * Heart pounding
- * Tense muscles
- * Cold and clammy hands
- * Feeling anxious
- * Can't concentrate
- * Feeling faint and nauseated
- * Butterflies

The physical aspects of test anxiety are biological, consisting of hormonal, chemical, and muscular changes in the body. The by-product of this condition is interference with the thinking process. When the physical symptoms are present, basic thinking processes like remembering, analyzing, and problem solving are affected. That is the reason that students who experience test anxiety feel that their brain is just not working right.

The biological state of fear or anxiety occurs in response to a perceived threat. The purpose of this biological reaction is to keep the body vigilant, ready to run or fight if necessary. This is what is known as the "fight or flight" response which is a psychological reaction that occurs in the presence of something that is terrifying, either mentally or physically. The "fight or flight" response can be triggered due to both real and imaginary threats. A person's natural reaction is to run away from, or avoid a perceived threat. This is not possible in the classroom, and being required to remain in the presence of a perceived threat (the test) can only increase the symptoms. The physical symptoms and anxiety become a vicious cycle from which the person cannot escape. If the anxiety becomes too great, a person's brain

will in effect shut down. This is the body's way of dealing with an intolerably high level of stress that cannot be removed.

WHERE DOES IT BEGIN?

Different theorists believe that test anxiety emerges for some students during the pre-school or elementary school years, when parents begin to make unrealistic demands or hold overly high expectations for their children's performance. The parents then react negatively to their children's failure to meet their expectations, and the children in turn become fearful of evaluation in achievement situations and overly concerned about adult reaction to their academic successes and failures.

As a child gets older they may wish to rank in the top of their class or attain higher grades. This can be a result of parental, peer, or self-induced aspirations and expectations. This will place many students under strong pressure to achieve at a higher and higher level which can result in "test anxiety" especially in our highly competitive educational system and society, and, this pressure only increases with age, well into adulthood.

Theories further suggest that anxious children are more sensitive to failure and react more to evaluation from adults than low-anxious children. More specifically, high anxious children have strong motives to avoid criticism and failure because they fear negative evaluation. In contrast, low-anxious children are relatively more motivated to approach success and obtain praise since they do not have as much fear of failure. These different motivational patterns have important behavioral consequences. Low-anxious children are more likely to choose, persist in, and enjoy the challenge of evaluative situations, be less concerned with adult reaction to their performance, and strive to do well on relatively difficult tasks. In contrast, high-anxious children try if possible to avoid highly evaluative situations and are overly concerned with adult evaluation.

HELP FOR TEST ANXIETY

Although you may think you *always* had test anxiety, you were not born with it! Test anxiety is very real and extremely self-defeating but it is not an insurmountable disease. The good news for students who experience test anxiety is that it can be easily conquered if one is willing to follow some guidelines and practice a very simple yet very effective technique. Research shows that when students have tools and strategies that build both emotional skills and healthy physical habits, overcoming test anxiety and its associated symptoms is attainable. As a result, they improve their ability to prepare for and perform on exams.

REFER TO THE POWERTAPPING WORKBOOK, APPLY THE QUICK AND EASY TECHNIQUE AND OVERCOME TEST ANXIETY FOR GOOD!

Sources:

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