
The Anxiety Plan

The Anxiety Plan is a chance to change your life from the ground up. If you change how you feel, you'll think and act differently, too. That's the order in which change needs to happen.

You do it on your own. There are no roles for other people, with one exception explained below. The plan asks you to pay close attention to your real life: what you do, when you do it, and what happens when you do. Not the version your mind plays back to you like a reminder you're mad. You're not.

This world is.

It draws on qualities that self-help culture tends to treat as problems: the perfectionism that notices when something is off, the stubbornness that keeps you going, the introversion that lets you think about things on your own without needing to immediately share them. Those are assets. Ordinarily, however, you could say they're being run by someone or something that tells you what your problems are and then sells you the solution without seeing *they are the problem*.

This plan is a stand against them. It's free. It works.

The plan is based on current science and on years of working with people struggling to cope with addiction, dependency, and all the other ways we try to survive.

So, you may think you are lazy, or stupid, or worse. I've heard it all; and thought it, myself. Fuck that shit. Get to work.

The Anxiety Plan isn't easy. You'll miss days, give up and do something silly.



Then get back to this, work out what happened, and keep going. Stick with it, and please tell me how it goes.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Register and sign in

Go to The Anxiety Plan. Get involved. It demands your attention *a lot* at first but it will become easy to use after a short time. Play with it. It's supposed to help you understand yourself, how life affects you and the effects of how you respond to it, better than you ever have.

You will see a sign-in screen. Click **Create an account**. Choose a username (at least 3 characters) and a password (at least 6 characters). Use a name that makes you anonymous. I can't be liable for your information getting hacked. So choose a name that's for you alone to know. Your entries are stored under your account and are not visible to anyone else.

Once registered, sign in with the same username and password each time. You will stay signed in until you click Sign out.

The one rule that involves another person: each day, before you fill in the daily log, you must tell someone – anyone – one thing from your day. It does not need to be about anxiety. It does not need to be significant. It needs to be said out loud to a real person: a colleague, a family member, someone you pass regularly, anyone. When you fill in the daily log, you record what you said and who you said it to. This is the only part of the plan that requires another person.



TAB 1

Plan **PLAN**

This is a weekly grid, with seven days across the top, all 24 hours down the side. Today's column is highlighted in red.

Use **Prev** and **Next** to move between weeks. Use **This week** to return to the current one.

To fill in a cell: click it. A form appears with three fields:

What

What you will be doing in that hour. Be specific – not "work" but "write report about cat behaviour" or "weed vegetable patch".

Where

The location or context – in the bathroom, hiding under my bed, in my tent, in a waiting room, or in my office.

Notes

Anything else that comes to mind. Just fling down some thoughts.

Click **Save**. The cell turns pink. Click it again at any time to edit or overwrite.

Fill in the whole week before it starts. Include everything that takes time: work, travel, meals, sleep, appointments, rest. Leave a cell blank only if the hour is genuinely undecided, not because you want flexibility.

Do not revise the plan during the week. If something changes, note it in the daily log. Adjust the plan only after the weekly review.



TAB 2

Daily Log **DAILY LOG**

Fill this in at the end of each day. The form is on the left; the last seven entries appear on the right.

Date

Defaults to today. Change it if recording a previous day.

What I intended to do

A brief summary of what was on the plan for today.

What I actually did

What did you actually do? Be honest. The more honest you are the clearer a picture will become of how you respond to life's demands.

In credit or deficit?

Choose one: **Credit** (did more than planned), **Balanced** (roughly as planned), or **Deficit** (fell short).

Something I shared today

One thing from your day – a thought, an observation, something that happened – that you said out loud to another person. It does not need to be about anxiety or the plan. It needs to be something you actually said to someone today, not something you thought about saying.

Who I shared it with

A first name, or a description: a colleague, my neighbour, the person at the till. You do not need to explain the relationship. Say something about how you think they reacted.

Click **Save**. The shared thought appears in the entry list, attributed to the person you named.

If you have not yet said something to anyone today, do that before filling in this section. The log is a record of what happened, not a plan for what you intend to do.



TAB 3

Snapshot **SNAPSHOT**

Complete this once at the end of each week, after finishing the last daily log entry for that week.

The tab shows three sections: '**FELT TOWARDS YOURSELF**' (how you felt about yourself) and '**FELT TOWARDS OTHERS**' (how you felt towards other people) and '**AS YOU FEEL IT FROM OTHERS**' (how you believe others feel about you). Save each one separately using its own Save button.

You focus on eight emotional states: Curiosity, Fear, Anger, Panic, Sadness, Care, Love & Lust, Joy. These are based on Jaak Panksepp's emotional instincts, but they are not the same. Sadness is included separately from panic, and play is called joy.

For each emotion, set three sliders between 0 and 100:

Intensity

How strong was it when it appeared?

Presence

How much of the week did it occupy?

Volatility

How unpredictable or changeable was it over the course of your week?

Set the sliders quickly. Do not spend time calculating. The bar chart below each section shows the shape as you adjust. Save Self first, then Others.

You then need to describe your experiences of how **time passes** and **space**. Not the measurements from a clock, or a map or a technical drawing, but what they felt like. Your felt sense of time and space tell you a lot about how you are experiencing life. Different mental states affect the way you perceive life and react to it.



Do not look at the previous week's snapshot before completing this one. Do it from memory, then compare afterwards if you want to.

TAB 4

Interrupt **INTERRUPT**

Use this tab when your anxiety increases sharply. Try to make an entry at the moment it happens, or within a short time of it. Then act accordingly.

The form asks you to try and name two things pulling in different directions ... which is one way of describing what will leave you feeling so anxious:

First feeling or urge

What really you want to do. This is usually deeply *felt*.

Second feeling or urge

What you think you also want to do. This may be deeply *known*.

What is the thing you feel trying to protect or make happen?

What does the first urge want to achieve or avoid?

What is the thing you know trying to protect or make happen?

What does the second urge want to achieve or avoid?

Reflection

What we feel to be true is sometimes not. What we know to be true is often not felt to be. Notice the space between the two – you don't need to close it. A sentence is enough.

Click **Save**. The entry is timestamped. Recent entries appear on the right.



TAB 5

3-Point **3-POINT**

Use this when you need to respond to a request from someone at work or at home, and you find what they have asked for makes you feel cornered. When this happens, however much you feel like replying straight away ...

DON'T.

Count to three and then say 'hang on a moment'.

If you can't do this, where are you? In a hostage situation? Facing down the barrel of a gun? No. Life is not like that (unless you are actually in a hostage situation or having a gun pointed at you).

However, for many of us it often feels like that. Feeling a need to reply immediately, either positively or negatively, is generally something to be thought about very carefully indeed. If life is about anything it might be about getting yourself into fair relationships.

Instead, excuse yourself and go to the **three-point** tab.

1. Repeat back

Type exactly what they said, word for word. Not your interpretation – their words.

2. Acknowledge

Write a sentence showing you understand why they might make this request. This is not agreement. It removes the "you don't understand" response before it arises. You may, in the end, be forced to conclude that the person is utterly unreasonable.

3. Your position

State what you can see needs to happen. Not a contradiction – a statement of your view. Say the same thing each time if the conversation continues.

Click **Save**.



After saving, return to whoever wants something from you and reply along the lines you now see are necessary. Don't try to get into a confrontation - although that may seem unavoidable if the person is unreasonable.

Represent yourself. Keep safe.

Call a help line if you can't call a friend you can trust to give you unprovocative advice (ie. they won't encourage you to inflame the situation). Then get back to following your plan.

Replies are timestamped and listed on the right. Review them at the end of the week alongside the daily log.

TAB 6

History **HISTORY**

This is where you get to look at the shape of your life. There's nothing to fill in.

On the left: your last 30 daily logs, with credit/deficit shown in green or red, and each day's shared thought included.

On the right: your emotional snapshots by week as small bar charts, so you can compare weeks at a glance. Below that, your loop interrupts in order.

Open this tab once a week after completing the snapshot. Look for anything consistent across more than one week. Use it to make one adjustment to the following week's plan – not more than one.



TAB 7

Index **INDEX**

This tab calculates your **Freedom Index** for the week. The aim is to make you less of a servant to your emotional ups and downs – to give you some distance from them, and eventually some choice about how you respond to them. It reads directly from the data you entered in the Snapshot tab, so there is nothing extra to fill in. Return to it after completing each week's snapshot.

The index is a three-part code, for example **A11** or **D23**. Each part corresponds to one dimension of your week:

The letter (A to Z) – emotional balance

How balanced your emotional life was across the week and across all three scopes. A is the most balanced state; Z reflects a week dominated by distress. The score draws on the eight emotional states from the Snapshot tab, weighted by how much the emotions associated with anxiety – fear and panic – dominated, and how much the emotions that protect against it – curiosity and joy – were present.

The first number (1 to 3) – sense of time

How your nervous system was organising experience in time. 1 means time felt broadly continuous and present-oriented. 2 means time felt somewhat distorted – pulled toward the past or the future. 3 means time felt significantly disrupted. This is not a measure of how busy the week was. It reflects the time sense sliders you set in the Snapshot tab.

The second number (1 to 3) – sense of space

How your body experienced its physical environment. 1 means space felt open and safe. 2 means it felt somewhat constricted or watchful. 3 means it felt significantly contracted or threatening. For people living with conditions such as EDS or POTS, this number often reflects what the body is doing physiologically and may differ from the emotional picture the letter describes (and their emotional life may be affected differently).



Beneath each factor is a link reading **What does this measure?** Clicking it opens a fuller explanation of that factor. You do not need to read these every week – they are there if you want to understand what the score is based on.

Below the three factors, the interpretation is set out in several sections: **Emotions**, **Time**, **Space**, and **Overall**, followed by **Safety** and **Notes**. The first three describe each factor on its own. The Overall section is the most important. It reads the combination of all three and names what that combination means, and it also gives a broader read of how the week sat with you, whether you seem to be getting what you need from life or struggling to. It appears every week.

If your emotional letter is good but your time or space numbers are high, the Overall section will say so directly. This contrast, managing emotionally while the body registers something different, is common in people with chronic somatic conditions and in people with a history of trauma. The index is designed to make that split visible because it matters, and because it is easy to overlook.

The **Safety** section appears every week. It is there because the index can flag a week that needs more than self-help, and because nobody should be working with this on their own if they are at risk. Read it. The **Notes** section points to my clinical writing, which sits alongside this plan and may be useful.

The lower section of the tab shows your progress over time: a table of the last twelve weeks, each with its index code, the week date, and a small bar representing your emotional balance. The bar shifts from green toward red as the letter moves from A toward Z. Over time this gives you a picture of your trajectory that no single week can show.

Use the index as a prompt for your weekly review, not a verdict on the week. A single code tells you where you were. A series of codes tells you where you are going.

