

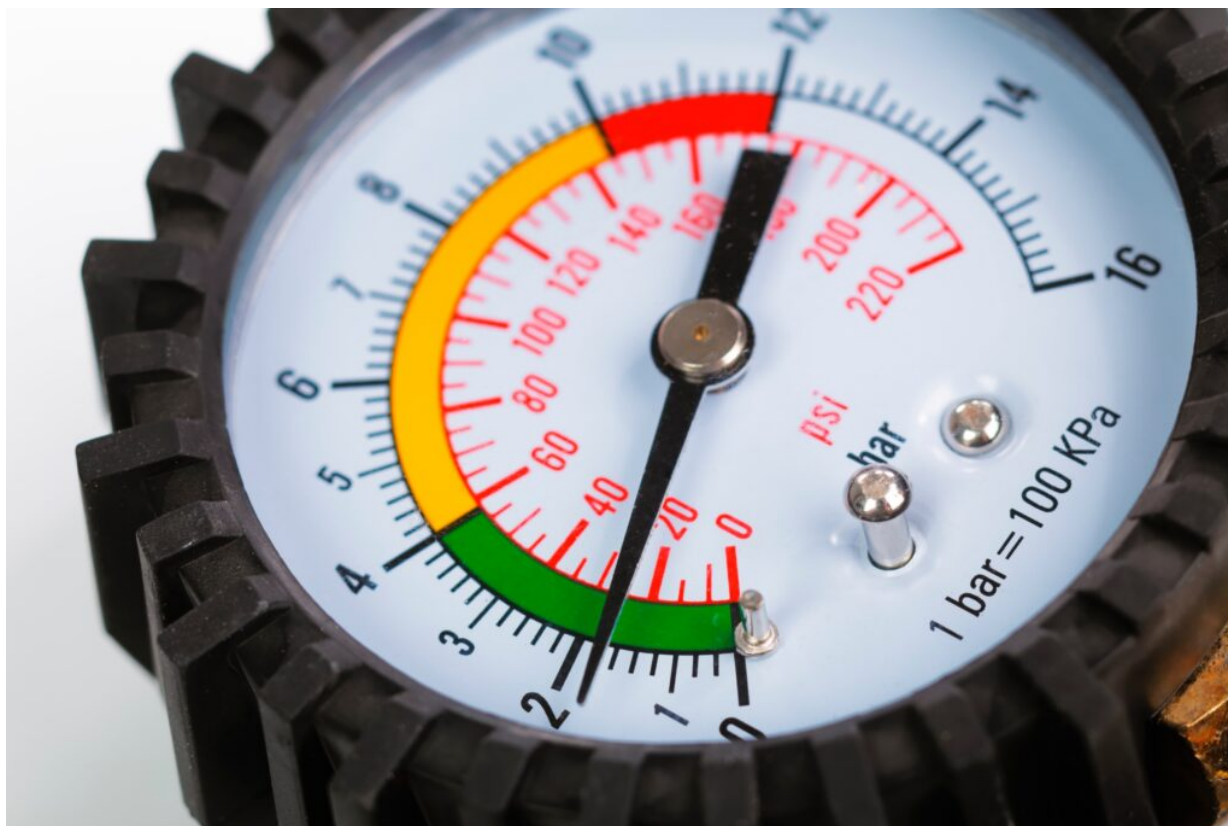
Eliminate the Word, “Anxiety”

This step is critical. Remember that anxiety is just a word that describes an extremely unpleasant sensation produced by your body in response to threat. Every living creature experiences this deep sense of dread that compels it to take action to relieve it. Humans, with language and consciousness have the capacity to name it along with a lot of other names. Here is a word progression:

- Alert
- Nervous
- Afraid
- Angry
- Paranoid
- Terrorized

These are just words. What we call anxiety is an amoral powerful reaction that keeps you alive, which you can't control with rational means. The way to diminish anxiety is to lower your stress hormones and inflammatory proteins.

The first step is to eliminate the word and substitute a phrase such as, “heightened stress response”, “elevated stress hormones”, or “increased sympathetic tone.” Any phrase that describes your body's heightened physiological activity will do. What happens with many people is that they quite feel badly about disturbing impulses. They are universal and have nothing to do with who you are as a person.



Another approach is to visualize a large pressure gauge on the opposite wall. As the above words enter your consciousness, imagine the needle indicating more pressure. Most of calming tools you'll be learning stimulate the vagus nerve, which is powerfully anti-inflammatory. Then "watch" the needle drop towards the green. Some strategies include slow breathing, mindfulness, meditation, humming, certain sounds or pitches of music, or gently rubbing your forehead. Some of the eye movement work directly stimulates this anti-inflammatory effect.

Once you can consistently separate from this reaction, which occurs all day long every day, you are free to watch it and get on with the rest of your life.