

Facing Fears

When the brain perceives a challenge, it will decide if the challenge is worth it or not to follow through. However, when we experience fear, the perception of a challenge is not always logical, and as a result, we may lean towards avoidance of the perceived challenge and remain reactive and static. By facing our fears, we are able to create a sense of safety and connection, giving us the ability to grow and be flexible. Use this worksheet to better understand and work through your fears.

Example

What is the fear or perceived challenge you are facing?

- I've been asked to do a presentation at work and the idea terrifies me

What about it is causing you fear?

- It's the public speaking, I don't like speaking in front of people, it makes me nervous

What do you think could go wrong if you were to face the fear?

- I forget everything and look ridiculous
- I say the wrong thing and my coworkers react to it
- I have an anxiety attack in front of my coworkers
- There's a problem with my slides
- My presentation isn't what was expected and I look like I do my job terribly

Look at what you previously listed. Sometimes when we have a fear, it is easier to see all the ways it could go wrong, even if some of the outcomes are not realistic. How realistic do you think these outcomes are? If they seem realistic, what can be potential solutions?

- I forget everything and look ridiculous
 - This isn't very likely to happen, because I can keep notes on my slides preview to prompt me
- I say the wrong thing and my coworkers react to it
 - This isn't very likely to happen, and even if I stumble on my words, I can just apologize and carry on. It isn't likely that they will think as much about it as I would anyways
- I have an anxiety attack in front of my coworkers
 - While I know my anxiety levels may be higher, I can do some grounding exercises before and take short pauses for deep breaths to keep myself grounded
- There's a problem with my slides
 - This could potentially happen, but I can prep ahead of time, and worst case scenario, sometimes there are just problems with technology that are out of my control
- My presentation isn't what was expected and I look like I do my job terribly
 - This isn't likely to happen, I'm familiar with the topic and I do my job well



Make a plan for how you can face the fear. This could include things to warm yourself up to it beforehand, creating smaller steps in facing it so it seems less challenging, etc. This can be anything that may be a step towards facing the fear and that will make it more manageable. Make sure it is realistic and doable.

Days Before the Presentation:

- I will work on the presentation and my notes
- I will ask my partner to listen to my presentation
- If the opportunity arises, I can ask a few more friends or family for a bigger crowd that feels safe
- I will take some time for self-care the night before, not thinking about it — I'll perform better if I make sure I take a break from it and get a good night sleep

Day of the Presentation:

- Morning of the presentation I will listen to some music to pump me up while I get ready and wear clothes I can feel comfortable and confident in, with layers in case I overheat
- I will set up for the presentation early and run through the slides to make sure that everything runs properly
- I will do some grounding exercises just before to help myself stay calmer

How will you take care of yourself afterwards? This could include self-compassion, self-care, journaling, etc.

- Take my break early so it comes just after the presentation (this will help me to unwind before carrying on with my day)
- Self-care - I will make my comfort meal for dinner and watch a comfort movie; if my muscles are tense from the stress, I will do a PMR grounding exercise
- Self-compassion - I will be gentle with myself, regardless of what happens. I know that I did my best and was really scared about it, but even if I stumbled or needed a second to catch my breath, I know I am good at my job



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