

Spiritual Growth Through Anxiety

Introduction	
Notes from the video:	
What's different about this approach?	
Notes from the video:	
Travely on the class.	
Common Christian Approaches to Anxiety:	
What is different about this approach:	

Individual Exercise #1
Describe a current anxiety:
Write out in the space below one thing you have been anxious about recently. This coul be something at work, in family, in a relationship, about finances, health, something happening in society.
Try to describe the scenario(s) that you fear will happen:
List adjectives that describe your experience of this anxiety. Here are some starter options: angry, scared, insecure, vulnerable, overwhelmed, paralyzed, obsessed, etc.

Prayer Exercise	
For individuals:	
Spend the time in conve describing to a friend wh	rsational prayer with your Father God. Pray like you are nat you are realizing about what is going on for you inside
For small groups:	
Split into pairs and discu	ass what you wrote about in the previous exercise.
Notes:	
Gospel Evidence	
Notes from the video:	
Group Poll:	
_	you tend to feel most strongly?
☐ Health	☐ Reputation
☐ Interpersonal	
☐ Performance	☐ Spiritual
☐ Provision	Other

Inserting Yourself Into the Gospel Story

Ν	lotes from the vi	deo:			
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Individual Exercise #2

The woman with the flow of blood.

Read the story below found in Mark 5:23-34, following these steps:

- The first time, read it so that you can visualize the basic action of the story. Try to picture the scene.
- The second time, read it more with your emotions. Imagine what the woman feels as she approaches Jesus. Imagine what she feels as Jesus responds.
- Now, pause and refresh yourself on the anxiety you identified at the beginning of the session. Recall how you experience this anxiety.
- For your third and final reading, insert that experience into the story. Imagine yourself as the person approaching Jesus with your own feelings of anxiety. Imagine what it is like to experience Jesus' response to you.

Mark 5:23-34

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw Jesus, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him, and a large crowd followed and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd to touch his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Reflect on the experience:
Journaling or Discussion Exercise
For individuals:
Journal about what the experience was like for you. After you've journaled, spend a few minutes just talking to God, sharing with Him what it was like. Listen for any sense of how your Father God might feel about that experience.
For small groups:
Split into groups of three and discuss your experience in the previous exercise. Close by briefly praying for each other.
exercise. Close by briefly praying for each other.

In Between Sessions Exercise – from Session 1

Practice inserting yourself into another story of an anxious person approaching Jesus. Choose one of the passages below, and follow the steps outlined above in the individual workbook exercise #2.

- Mark 4:35-41: The disciples afraid in a storm at sea
- Mark 6: 30-44: The disciples worried about not having enough for the crowds
- Mark 9: 33-37 and Mark 10: 35-41: The disciples anxious about their comparative status

Notes:				

Get Present

G.R.A.I.N.*

G: Get present R: Recognize A: Accept

I: Investigate

Notes from the video:

N: Nurture holding capacity

at https://www.tarabrach.com/rain/

Notes from the video:

Intro to Nature Exercise

*Note: This framework takes inspiration from Tara Brach's R.A.I.N. material found

Individual Exercise #1

Get present to nature.

When you are outside or at least looking outside, do the following.

- Pay close attention to at least three things in nature that are at least 10 feet away from you. For each thing, try to observe some new detail you may not have noticed before.
- Then engage as many other senses as you can. What do you smell? What do you hear? What does the air feel like on your skin? Pay close attention to each sensation.

e	Iot down what you noticed in the space below.			

Self-Study or Small Group Discussion

Matthew 6:25–34 (ESV):

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

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- Underline where Jesus talks about the following topics: anxiety, observing nature, and present versus future.
- How does Jesus connect these three topics?

• Record your reflections below.

For small groups:

Take 7 minutes to have a "popcorn discussion" as a small group where everyone offers quick observations.

Hijack to the Future

Notes from the video:

Individual Exercise #2

Make a plan for nature. When during this week will you get present to nature?
Where will this happen?
What do you need to arrange to make this happen?
Uses swill was too to met brocent to nature land not just have nature correspond
How will you try to get present to nature (and not just have nature serve as background scenery to your anxiety)? What exercises of observation could be helpful?
- The state of the

Mindful Breath
Notes from the video:
Cuided Evereise in Mindful Proothing
Guided Exercise in Mindful Breathing
Notes from the video:
Importance of Practicing
Notes from the video:
Individual Exercise #3
Make a practice plan for mindful breathing.
Do you wish to tractice mindful breathing more namelagles
Do you wish to practice mindful breathing more regularly?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If "no," can you identify another practice of getting present that might be more
attractive? What is it?

If "Yes," identify 5 minutes during the day that you can practice mindful breathing regularly. When?
What is the setting?
What do you need to do to memind yourself?
What do you need to do to remind yourself?
Journaling or Discussion Exercise
For individuals:
Journal about your intention for getting present. Here are some prompts for your time:
 How do you feel about trying these new practices? What can you do to maximize your chances of actually doing them this next
week?Spend some time talking to God about what you're hoping to experience.

Recognize

Check In

For individuals:
Spend time reviewing your in-between sessions exercise answer from Session #2
For small groups:
The in-between sessions exercise from Session #2 was to practice some form of getting present, either by connecting with nature or by practicing mindful breathing. Have everyone report on what happened—or didn't happen—during the past week. Each person should take no more than 30 seconds to share. This time is simply for everyone to check in, so avoid responding to specific issues or engaging in problem solving at this stage.
Review and Introduction to <u>Recognize</u>
Notes from the video:

Individual Exercise #1

Read the story of Jairus (Mark 5:22-42) imaginatively

"Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk."

Where is Jairus' attention throughout this story?	
How is Jesus trying to direct Jairus' attention?	
Jesus Recognizes Anxiety	
Notes from the video:	
Reflection or Discussion Exercise	
For individuals:	
Journal about your experience with anxiety. Use the followir	ng prompts:
• How readily do you recognize when you are feeling anxious?	
• How are you tempted to narrate anxiety as an external problem happening "out there" versus an inner state to process with Jesu	

For small groups:		
Split into groups of three and	d discuss the following questions:	
 How readily do you recognize when you are feeling anxious? How are you tempted to narrate anxiety as an external problem happening "out there" versus an inner state to process with Jesus? 		
Recognizing Physical Syn	nntoms of Anxiety	
Notes from the video:	inptoms of finishety	
Croup Poll.		
	w you would answer the following question: ou feel most strongly when you are anxious?	
☐ Stomach Discomfort	Pounding Heart	
Headache	☐ Rapid Breathing	
☐ Tight Chest ☐ Trouble Sleeping	Musical Tension or PainTrembling or Shaking	

After 30 seconds, the small group leader should read out each option above and ask for a show of hands.

Recognizing Relational Symptoms	
otes from the video:	
Individual Exercise #2	
Recognizing relational symptoms of anxiety.	
Accognizing remindral symptoms of analogy.	
<u>"FIGHT"</u>	<u>"FLIGHT"</u>
Toward the threat	
Insisting and aggressive	Away from the threat
Critical and irritated (with others)	Deferring and passive
Jumpy and flitting	Self-critical and self-blaming
Angry	Paralyzed
Loud	Sad
Demanding immediate action	Quiet
Putting self forth	Resistant to change
Obsessively consume news, charts,	Hiding Cat videos
experts	
Which side ("Fight" or "Flight") do you tend to	n laang

Think of a relationship interaction where you noticed a "Fight or Flight" response to anxiety in yourself or in the other person. Try to name what were/are the underlying anxieties.
Prayer Exercise
For individuals:
Engage in conversational prayer. Tell your Father God what you are realizing from the previous exercise (and the entire session). Listen for what the Father says in response.
For small groups:
Split into pairs and discuss what you realized from the previous exercise.

In Between Sessions Exercise - from Session 3

Develop your anxiety profile. Which areas in life trigger anxiety for you: family, friendships, work, finances, health, something happening in society? How does it show up? How does it feel physically?

ow does it	show up in rel	ational pattern	us?	
hat are th	a fight og fligh.	t damamian?		
nui ure in	e fight or flight	- aynamics:		

Accept

Check In

For individuals:

Reread the anxiety profile you developed in the previous in-between sessions exercise. If you haven't completed the profile yet, now would be a good time to do so.

Note one insight gained from doing this exercise.		

For small groups:

The in-between sessions exercise from Session #3 asked people to develop their own anxiety profile.

Give one minute for everyone on their own to review (silently) their written anxiety profile.

Then go around and ask everyone to share one insight gained from doing this exercise.

Everyone should take no more than a minute or so to do so. This time is just for everyone to check in, so don't spend time now to respond to specific issues or do any problem solving.

Review and Introduction to Accept

Notes from the video:
Individual Exercise #1
Your feelings about your anxious self.
1. What is your picture of your idealized self? What image do you want to project to others? Write out some adjectives that describe how you want others to view you.
2. Review your anxiety profile again. What does this picture of your anxious self do to your picture of your idealized self?

escribe the internal battle between your idealized self and anxious self. urnaling or Discussion Exercise individuals:
flect on what you realized from the previous exercise. Record your oughts in your journal below.

3. How do you feel about your anxious self? To help you get started, here are some possible

For small groups:
Split into groups of three and share what you realized from the previous exercise.
Jesus and the Leper
Notes from the video:
Individual Exercise #2
Coming to Jesus as our anxious self. Set a timer and do one minute of mindful breathing. Then, read the passage below in an imaginative fashion. Read the passage three times slowly:
 Read it to imagine the action; Read it to imagine the emotions of the characters; Read it by inserting your own anxious self in the place of the leper.
And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.
Mark 1:40-42
1. As you imagine your anxious self coming before Jesus, how does Jesus respond?

2. What does Jesus say to you?	
3. How do you respond?	
3. 110 w do you respond:	
4. How is your idealized self responding?	
The Acceptance Move	
Notes from the video:	

Prayer Exercise

For individuals:

Engage in conversational prayer with God about what is emerging for you from this session. Then schedule time during the upcoming week to do the in-between sessions exercise.

For small groups:

Split into pairs and share what is emerging for you from this session. Close the time by praying for each other. Remind each other to schedule time during the upcoming week to do the in-between sessions exercise.

In Between Sessions Exercise – from Session 4

Discovering your "acceptance move."

Spend 5 minutes doing Jesus-centered mindful breathing. Ask Jesus to give you some ideas for an "acceptance move" – some action that will remind you that your anxious self is accepted by Him. This move could involve touch, movement, repetition of words, or anything else.

Write down what comes to mind:					

Close by asking Jesus to remind you to practice this "acceptance move" the next time you are feeling very anxious.

Investigate

Introduction to Investigate

Psalm 139: 23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And s if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.			
The Anxiety Formula			
ANXIETY = X			
Notes from the video:			
Individual Exercise #1			
Psalm 139:23-24			
Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.			
Investigating loss:			
Identify a particular anxiety that you have been feeling recently. You can use the one you identified in the beginning of Session 1 (see your workbook for a reminder), or you can pick another one.			
Write out this anxiety:			

Pray the words of Psalm 139:23-24 (see above).
Investigate your anxiety through the mental formula "Anxiety = Loss." Seek to identify the different kinds of feared loss that may be underneath your anxiety. To do this, set a timer for five minutes . During this time, write freely what comes to your mind, trusting that God is helping you in the process. Don't self edit or think too much. Don't assume that you have to get to the "absolute bottom" in this exercise. <i>Just start writing and see what comes out</i> . Try not to stop until the time is up.
Journaling or Discussion Exercise #1
For individuals: Reflect on what your realized from the previous exercise. Record your thoughts in your journal.
For small groups: Split into pairs and share what you realized from the previous exercise.
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~ -
~ -

Individual Exercise #2	
Investigating your avoidance move.	
"AWAY" (MENTAL "FLIGHT") MOVES	"AROUND" (MENTAL "FIGHT") MOVES
Avoiding certain conversations	Rumination (looping thoughts)
Social media addiction	Obsessive compulsive behavior
Shopping impulses	Rehearsing scenarios (past or present)
Workaholism and/or compulsive busyness	Badgering others
Substance abuse of alcohol or other drugs	
Pornography	
1. Which way do you tend to lean in your av	oidance move: away or around?

Avoidance Moves

2. Describe a particular avoidance move that you make.	
3. How does it feel to practice your avoidance move? What is its effect on you - specially on your anxiety levels?	
4. How convinced are you that your avoidance move is futile?	
ournaling or Discussion Exercise #2	
For individuals: Journal in the space below about what you realized in the	
previous exercise.	

For small groups:
Split into groups of twos or threes and share what you realized from the
previous exercise.
Confessing the Idolatry of Our Avoidance Move
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Notes from the wides
Notes from the video:

Closing Prayer

For individuals and small groups:

Close the time in prayer. Below are a few suggested types of prayers:

- *Invite* God to further "know our anxious thoughts," including the spiritual nature of your avoidance moves
- *Confess* any "offensive way in us," including any way that your avoidance moves are a form of idolatry
- Ask God to "lead us in the way everlasting"

Remind yourself and one another to schedule time this upcoming week to complete the in-between-sessions exercise found in your workbook. Taking time to do this exercise will be especially helpful as preparation for our next session.

In Between Sessions Exercise – from Session 5

4. Ask yourself, "How effective is this avoidance move in preventing any possibility of that loss occurring?"
5. What is the possible "offensive way in me" involved in this avoidance move? Are you looking to this move to accomplish something that only God can accomplish?
6. If you sense that this avoidance move is actually a form of idolatry, confess this to God and ask him to "lead you into the way everlasting."

Nurture Holding Capacity

Introduction to Holding

Notes from the video:			

Individual Exercise #1

Facing the loss of all losses.

1. Prayerfully read John 12:24-25 again, asking Jesus to convey truth to your mind.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

John 12:24-25

- 2. Go back to your worksheet exercise from Session 5: Investigating the loss. Review the feared loss that was a part of your own "Anxiety = Loss" formula
- 3. Ask yourself: How does death, the loss of all losses, make that loss unavoidable in the long run of your life?

Note: Ask Jesus to get at the underlying nature of that loss. For instance, you may fear losing your current job. Underneath that particular loss may be the deeper loss of security, self-image, sense of belonging, feeling of being productive, etc. It is those deeper losses that are ultimately unavoidable because of death.

4. If you find yourself resistant or uncomfortable or angry, ask Jesus to show you the reasons for your reaction.
5. Rate your desire for an alternative to your current avoidance formula? (0 is none and 5 is Very Strong).
Notes:
Holding Moves of Jesus
1. Choose to
2. Trust the3. Take hold of
Notes from the video:

Individual Exercise #2

Grieving with Jesus

- 1. Review again the feared loss identified in the last workbook exercise.
- 2. Write out how some aspects of that loss are already present. For example, you may be afraid of losing your job and the associated sense of security and provision. Identify how you right now in the present are already experiencing some loss of security and provision.
- 3. Take a moment to ask Jesus to help you hold the loss and experience grief.

4. Set a timer for five minutes. During this time, just grieve with Jesus. This may include feeling sadness, anger, regret, or any other emotion. The key is to allow Jesus to bring up whatever feeling and not avoid what comes up. It is also OK if you struggle to feel much of anything. Just sit with the loss in Jesus' presence for these five minutes and accept whatever happens.
Holding Moves of Jesus - Continued
Notes from the video:
Reflection or Discussion Exercise
For individuals: Journal about the question: What is a change in thinking that I desire to adopt from today's session?
Engage in prayer with God, offering up your desire to Him and ask for His help.

For	small	groups:
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- 1. Spend the first 4 minutes in individual silent reflection on this question: What is a change in thinking that I desire to adopt from today's session?
- 2. In the next 10 minutes, go around as a small group with each individual sharing about a desired change in thinking.

3. Glos	se with 3 mi	inutes of c	open pray	yer for the	e desires e	xpressed.	

In-Between Sessions Exercise – from Session 6

Practical steps for nurturing your holding capacity.

Gaining a correct understanding of the resurrection promise – especially how it is a promise that takes us THROUGH loss and not AWAY/AROUND loss – is critical for spiritual growth.

Perhaps no Christian thinker of our contemporary era has done more to provide this correct understanding of the Resurrection than N.T. Wright. In our opinion, his book on this topic, *Surprised by Hope*, should be on the reading list of every Christian.

For your assignment, you are invited to engage this material in one or more of the following ways.

For your assignment, you are invited to engage this material in one or more of the following ways.

- 1. Read the book *Surprised by Hope* yourself. Consider reaching out to another friend in your small group and commit to reading it together. You could also choose to read and discuss the book as the next thing you do together as a small group (there is a book group guide and even a small group video curriculum that you could use).
- 2. Watch a video summary of the material by N.T. Wright. Consider watching some excellent videos that Zondervan Press has produced with N.T. Wright. Start here with <u>this introduction available on YouTube.</u>
- 3. Familiarize yourself with N.T. Wright's overall thinking <u>with this visual guide</u> that summarizes his thinking in 50 pictures, including ones that clarify the true nature of Christian hope.

Session 7

Review & Making a Plan

Session 1		
Key idea:		
<i>V</i>		
Key move:		
Session 2		
Key idea:		

Key move:	
ndividual Ex	vousiss #1
Cakeaways from	sessions 1 & 2: Which of the KEY IDEAS are especially helpful?
Which of these K	XEY MOVES do I want to keep practicing?
·	

Reflection or Discussion 1 & 2

For individuals: Note the KEY IDEAS and KEY MOVES you identified. Ask God to confirm or modify what you identified as His desire for you.
For small groups: Go around as a small group and share the KEY IDEAS and KEY MOVES for each person. Note any patterns within your group.
Session 3
Key idea:
Key move:

Session 4
Key idea:
Key move:
Individual Exercise #2
Takeaways from sessions 3 & 4: Which of the KEY IDEAS are especially helpful to me?
Which of these KEY MOVES do I want to keep practicing?
The state of these 1221 120, 20 at 1 want to help fractioning.

Reflection or Discussion #3 and #4

For individuals: Note the KEY IDEAS and KEY MOVES you identified. Ask God to confirm or modify what you identified as His desire for you.
For small groups: Go around as a small group and share the KEY IDEAS and KEY MOVES for each person. Note any patterns within your group.
Session 5
Key idea:
Key move:

Session 6 Key idea: Key move: **Individual Exercise #3** Review of Sessions 5 and 6 Which of the KEY IDEAS are especially helpful to me?

hich of these	REY MOVES do I want to keep practicing?
Reflection	or Discussion #5 and #6
For individua	
	IDEAS and KEY MOVES you identified. Ask God to confirm or you identified as His desire for you.
_	<i>tps:</i> Go around as a small group and share the KEY IDEAS OVES for each person. Note any patterns within your group.
Making a P	lan
Notes from th	e video:
<u>-</u>	

Closing Exercise

For individuals:

Complete the final exercise and then share your intentions with God in prayer. Spend some time being open to what God may be saying to you in response.

For small groups:

- Pair up with someone else in the small group.
- In silence, each person spends 4 minutes doing the final exercise.
- Take 6 minutes to share your plans with each other and pray for one another.

Final Exercise #4: Making a Plan

- 1. Possible key moves to try
- 2. Inserting yourself in a gospel story of anxiety
- 3. Getting present to nature
- 4. Mindful breathing
- 5. Recognizing your physical symptoms
- 6. Recognizing your relational symptoms
- 7. Developing your "acceptance move"
- 8. Praying the "search my anxious thoughts" prayer
- 9. Grieving
- 10. Understanding the resurrection promise

The Plan

1.	1. The key move that I would like to practice:						

How long L	am committing	to bractice t	his mogra (a c	for the next	month).
110w tong 1 t				. Joi the next	
What I need	d to arrange in	order to inc	roaso tho libo	lihood that I v	will actually do so
S Who will h	old me accounte	ahle (and ho	on that herso	n will do so).	
· W HO WHI H					