

Coping Statements

Taken from The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook, 2nd ed., by Edmund J. Bourne

Use any or all of the following positive statements to help you cultivate attitudes of accepting, “floating,” and allowing time to pass during a panic attack. You may find it helpful to repeat a single statement over and over the first minute or two when you feel panic symptoms coming on. You may also want to do deep abdominal breathing in conjunction with repeating a coping statement. If one statement gets tiresome or seems to stop working, try another.

“This feeling isn’t comfortable or pleasant, but I can accept it.”

“I can be anxious and still deal with this situation.”

“I can handle these symptoms or sensations.”

“This isn’t an emergency. It’s OK to think slowly about what I need to do.”

“This isn’t the worst thing that could happen.”

[Omitted Statement]

“This is an opportunity for me to learn to cope with my fears.”

“I’ll just let my body do its thing. This will pass.”

“I’ll ride this through – I don’t need to let this get to me.”

[Omitted Statement]

“I can take all the time I need in order to let go and relax.”

“There’s no need to push myself. I can take as small a step forward as I choose.”

“I’ve survived this before and I’ll survive this time, too.”

“I can do my coping strategies and allow this to pass.”

“This anxiety won’t hurt me – even if it doesn’t feel good.”

“This is just anxiety – I’m not going to let it get to me.”

“Nothing serious is going to happen to me.”

“Fighting and resisting this isn’t going to help – so I’ll just let it pass.”

“These are just thoughts – not reality.”

“I don’t need these thoughts – I can choose to think differently.”

“This isn’t dangerous.”

“So what.”

“Don’t worry – be happy.” (Use this to inject an element of lightness or humor.)

If you have frequent panic attacks, I suggest writing your favorite coping statements on a 3x5 card and carrying it in your purse or wallet. Bring the card out and read it when you feel panic symptoms coming on.