

A Complex Case: Jack is Anxious When He Is Not In Control

by admin on August 17, 2009

“Listen Doctor, people would never guess how fearful I am. I come off as Mr. Confidence himself. The truth is I cannot imagine getting on a plane it feels like a death sentence. Flying is my biggest fear.”

“I can also become pretty anxious when I am a passenger in a car. I insist on driving wherever I go.”

“I am looking for a job. I recently lost my job. My skills are in demand and I am good at what I do. I am having anxiety about each interview. I dread interviews. I am a literally ill worrying about what will happen to my family if I do not get a job.”

“People think I am crazy to worry about a seven year olds college already. I worry about retirement as well. I just cannot allow myself to fail.”

“I don’t usually trust doctors either. I check out what I am told and research about prescriptions before I take them. There is a great deal no one tells you. I find things out for myself.”

“My wife and friends think I am a control freak or just paranoid. I am really just afraid.”

Jack had spent thirty-nine years practicing looking confident

Jack is a perfectionist and cannot rest until everything is right. He has always been extremely responsible. His word is gold. He does what he says he will do.

Jack had promised his wife Linda that he would attend a family reunion with her family in Hawaii. Linda was only half joking when she said Jack would fly if he could be the pilot.

He needed to be in charge. Jack, while afraid of many , somewhat of a risk taker. He was a cross country skier, a rock climber and a hiker. Linda thought his outdoor sports more dangerous than flying. He clearly worried about some things and not others.

Good Questions:

Can someone with several fears be helped?

Yes.

Is it really possible for a person to take risks and still be afraid in other areas?

Yes, it is not unusual for a person to perceive certain areas of their life as fearful, and others area of their life as safe.

Would counseling be endless dealing with every separate fear one at a time?

No Jack really had one fear that appeared as many fears.

What happened to Jack?

Jack's situation was complex but he did not require very much detective work. He gave many clues to his problem.

Clues:

Areas Jack fears:

- Flying
- Being a passenger in a car
- Job interviews
- The future
- Doctors
- Medicine

Areas that Jack is confident:

- His work
- His word
- Climbing
- Hiking
- Skiing cross country

Jacks fears trusting others

He had a great deal of trouble when it came to trust. Jacks parents were both alcoholics. He learned at an early age that his parents were unreliable. He could not count on them to protect him. Jack learned to take care of himself at a young age. His parents often drove under the influence of alcohol. Jack's dad could become mean and critical when drinking. Jack walked on eggshells trying to get things right in order not to set off his father's anger.

Jack had learned to trust himself but not others.

The events that required the most reliance on others were the most frightening. Flying is putting yourself totally in others hands. All of Jacks fears were related to his inability to trust others.

We utilized specialized intervention that allowed Jack to feel trust toward reliable people. His wife he knew to be trust worthy but could not feel the trust. Linda was first to earn his trust. Jack was able to generalize feelings of trust when it is rational to trust. He knew that alcohol was what made his parents unreliable. Now he is able to trust those who are reliable. He continues wisely

not trust anyone under the influence. Jack does shake the hand of the pilot when he flies. He can tell instantly that they are sober and he is fine.

Do you find it fearful to trust towards others?

It is a common factor in fear of flying. You might want to write down your fears and look for clues. You can get better. You do not have to feel bad forever.