STOP LETTING ANXIETY DECIDE.

A workbook for people who've had anxiety for years, know more about it than most, and are ready to stop letting it make the call.



LOUD

QUIETER

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Fill it in on screen
or print it out

BEFORE YOU START

If you've had anxiety for a while, you probably don't need more information. You've read the books, done the breathing, and maybe been to therapy. This workbook is about the part information can't do for you: doing one thing differently, again and again, while anxiety is still there.

You don't have to go in order, and you don't have to finish it for it to help. Pick the page you need. Write on it, type on it, cross things out.

This workbook belongs to

Date I started

THE ONLY DEFINITION WE'RE USING

LEARNING MEANS SAME SITUATION, NEW BEHAVIOR.

If anxiety shows up and you do one thing differently, even something tiny, even if you felt anxious the whole time, learning happened. That's the only measure in this workbook. Not how much you know. Not how calm you felt.

A definition I love, borrowed from Alex Hormozi.

THREE WAYS TO USE IT

1. **On screen.** Click any box and type. Save the file to keep your answers.
2. **On paper.** Print it. Every box has lines to write on.
3. **With AI.** Page 22 has a prompt that walks you through it one question at a time.

WHEN THIS ISN'T ENOUGH ON ITS OWN

This workbook is education and coaching, not therapy. If your anxiety involves panic attacks, OCD, trauma, health fears, or anything that feels tied to your safety, work through it with a therapist. If you're in crisis, contact emergency services or a local helpline. You don't have to go through it alone.

START HERE

Before anything else, name what this has been costing you. Be specific. Specific is what makes the rest of this work.

How many years have you had anxiety?

What's one thing it's been deciding for you?

Example: Twelve years, and I still won't drive on the highway.

WHICH OF THESE DO YOU WANT BACK?

- [ ] Taking the job I've already talked myself out of
- [ ] Getting on the plane for the trip I've been saving photos of for years
- [ ] Being in the room with the people I love, and actually being there
- [ ] Ending the day without replaying every conversation
- [ ] Sleeping through the night
- [ ] Having a bad day without it meaning I'm back where I started
- [ ] Trusting myself again
- [ ] Finding out who I'd be if anxiety weren't making the calls

Something else I want back

If anxiety stopped making that one decision, what's the first thing you'd do?

HOW IT GROWS

At first the fear sounds like: what if I feel anxious? Later it gets deeper: what if I can't handle feeling anxious? Without noticing, the questions you ask yourself change.

THE QUESTION I USED TO ASK	THE QUESTION ANXIETY ASKS NOW
Do I want to go?	*What if I panic?*

RELIEF TEACHES FAST

Your brain isn't asking whether something helps your life six months from now. It's responding to what made the feeling stop right now. Every time a protection brings relief, your brain files it away: that worked, do it again.

That makes complete sense when your brain has spent years trying to protect you. It's also why knowing better hasn't been enough.

Where do you notice relief teaching you the fastest?

What would you ask yourself if fear weren't part of the question?

YOUR PROTECTION INVENTORY

A protection is anything you do so you can feel safe enough to move. Not all preparation is anxiety. Medical concerns deserve a real medical answer, and asking for support isn't a problem. What we're looking for is the behavior that's become the price you pay before you let yourself act.

SITUATION	WHAT ANXIETY PREDICTS	WHAT I DO TO FEEL SAFE	WHAT I'M TRYING TO PREVENT
Sending an email to my boss	*I'll sound stupid*	*Reread it eight times*	*Embarrassment*

ANXIETY COLLECTS THE CREDIT

You leave, the anxiety drops, and your brain learns that leaving works. What it never gets to learn is what would have happened if you'd stayed. That's how you can show up for your life and still not trust yourself. Anxiety keeps taking the credit.

Think of something you got through recently.

Anxiety's version: I only made it because...	What actually made it possible

THE FIVE PROTECTIONS

There are five ways anxiety collects the credit. They're easy to miss, because on the outside every one of them looks like being careful. Check what's true for you.

1 AVOID

Avoiding rarely looks like never leaving the house. It looks like going everywhere except there.

- [ ] Saying I don't want to do something I actually want to do
- [ ] Turning down the promotion because the timing is bad
- [ ] Never being the first to speak in a meeting
- [ ] Keeping my camera off on every call

Mine looks like

2 ASK

Asking for reassurance, which is different from asking for support. More on that on page 8.

- [ ] Asking the same question more than once
- [ ] Needing someone to say it's definitely okay
- [ ] Getting a second opinion on a decision I've already made
- [ ] Asking someone to come so I'll feel safe

Mine looks like

3 CHECK

Checking feels like being thorough. It's really asking the same question over and over and never accepting the answer.

- [ ] Scanning my body or taking my pulse
- [ ] Rereading a text to see if they're annoyed with me
- [ ] Checking the lock, the stove, or the email again
- [ ] Checking whether the anxiety is gone yet

Mine looks like

4 PREPARE

This one hides well, because preparing gets rewarded. Sometimes it's smart. Sometimes it's quietly become the price you pay before you let yourself act.

- [ ] Rehearsing every sentence
- [ ] Planning every route
- [ ] A backup plan for the backup plan
- [ ] Researching until something settles me

Mine looks like

5 WAIT

This one costs people years.

- [ ] I'll do it when I feel more confident
- [ ] I'll go when my anxiety is better
- [ ] I'll date when I stop overthinking
- [ ] I'll decide when I feel sure

Mine looks like

THE DEAL WAITING OFFERS YOU

You get your life back after anxiety approves the conditions. That's a terrible contract. If being ready means you don't feel anxious anymore, anxiety gets permanent veto power.

WHICH ONE IS YOURS?

- [ ] **Avoid**
- [ ] **Ask**
- [ ] **Check**
- [ ] **Prepare**
- [ ] **Wait**

Most people recognize theirs right away, and a lot of people have more than one.

Which protection are you most tired of letting run the show?

SUPPORT OR REASSURANCE?

Humans need people. The goal isn't to stop needing anyone. It's to notice when support has turned into proof that you can't do anything without it.

SUPPORT SOUNDS LIKE

I'm scared, and I want you with me while I do this.

It helps you move while you're uncertain.

REASSURANCE SOUNDS LIKE

Tell me it's definitely okay, so I don't have to feel unsure.

It tries to remove the uncertainty before you move.

WHO I LEAN ON	WHAT I USUALLY ASK THEM FOR	WHAT IT DOES
		☐ Helps me move ☐ Removes the uncertainty first
		☐ Helps me move ☐ Removes the uncertainty first
		☐ Helps me move ☐ Removes the uncertainty first

Pick one person. What would "come with me while I practice" sound like with them?

If you've worried about wearing people out, what would you want them to know about why you're working on this?

WHAT IT'S COSTING

Protection costs you in three ways. The last one matters most.

1 TIME

An hour researching. Forty minutes rewriting. A whole Saturday you didn't enjoy because you were waiting to see if the feeling would come back.

This week it cost me

2 YOUR LIFE STARTS ORGANIZING AROUND IT

Your partner becomes the person who talks you down. Your friends learn which places you won't go. Your career gets shaped by which opportunities feel safest.

Where my life has started organizing around it

3 WHO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE

It starts as: I feel anxious doing this. After enough time it becomes: I'm not good at this. Then: I'm not the kind of person who does this. That's how a fear turns into a biography. The event gets smaller in memory, and the identity gets bigger.

It started as: I felt anxious when...

Now I say: I'm not someone who...

What's also true about me

RELIEF IS NOT LEARNING

RELIEF

What you feel when you get away from the anxiety.

LEARNING

What happens when you stay close enough to find out something new.

You've already made it through things you were sure you couldn't. Maybe not the same day. Maybe a week or a month later, you realized you'd come out the other side. Most of us miss it, because we're so focused on how bad it felt.

TIMES I MADE IT THROUGH

WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT I WAS SURE WOULD HAPPEN	HOW I ACTUALLY GOT THROUGH

What does this list tell you about what you can handle?

IF YOUR LIFE IS GOOD, WHY DO YOU FEEL LIKE THIS?

Anxiety doesn't wait for your life to be bad before it shows up. A good life isn't a receipt proving you should never feel fear.

THE NEW DEAL

THE OLD WAY

I need the anxiety to go away so I can live my life.

THE NEW WAY

Anxiety can come with me. It doesn't get to decide.

ANXIETY DOESN'T HAVE TO LEAVE. IT HAS TO LOSE ITS RIGHT TO MAKE THE DECISION.

Decisions anxiety has been making for me

The one decision I'm taking back first

When I take it back, anxiety will probably say

What I'll say back

Anxiety rarely sounds ridiculous. It sounds responsible: make sure, check one more time, wait until you feel better. That's why arguing with it turns into a debate you never win. You don't have to win it. You just have to decide anyway.

MOVE ONE

NOTICE THE PROTECTION

The first move isn't to stop being anxious. It isn't even to stop the behavior. It's noticing the moment anxiety starts negotiating with you.

That moment looks like this. You open the email draft for the fourth time. You reach for your phone to ask the same question again. You open another browser tab. You think, I just need to make sure.

SAY THIS, OUT LOUD OR IN YOUR HEAD

I'M LOOKING FOR PROTECTION RIGHT NOW.

Not: I'm being ridiculous. Not: why am I like this. This sentence respects what your brain is trying to do, and it gives you half a second between the urge and the routine. Half a second matters.

My negotiating moments look like

THEN ASK: WHAT AM I TRYING TO PREVENT?

- [ ] Embarrassment
- [ ] Rejection
- [ ] Failure
- [ ] Danger
- [ ] Regret
- [ ] Not being able to cope

Something else

Now the behavior makes sense. That doesn't mean you have to obey it.

URGE, FEAR, CHOICE

For one week, pick one protection to study. Not to get rid of. Just to study. When the urge shows up, write three words, or a line for each.

The protection I'm studying this week

DAY	URGE: WHAT I WANTED TO DO	FEAR: WHAT I WAS TRYING TO PREVENT	CHOICE: WHAT I DID
Mon	*Ask my partner again*	*Rejection*	*Waited ten minutes, then asked once*
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

MOVE TWO

SHRINK THE STEP

Face your fears is a slogan, not a plan. The goal isn't to shock yourself into being brave. It's a repeatable experience where anxiety predicts one thing and you do something different.

A small step isn't weak. A small step is repeatable, and repeatable matters more than dramatic. Someone who has avoided the highway for two years doesn't need to drive three hours alone tomorrow. The first step might be sitting in the car. Then starting it. Then the block, the gas station, one exit on the road you avoid.

MY LADDER

Write the thing anxiety has been deciding at the top. Fill in the rungs down to a first step small enough that you'd do it this week. Track how many times you've done each one.

	THE STEP	TIMES DONE
THE GOAL		
RUNG 6		
RUNG 5		
RUNG 4		
RUNG 3		
RUNG 2		
START HERE		

BEFORE YOU TRY: THE SETUP CHECK

If you've pushed yourself before and it made everything worse, you didn't fail. The setup did. Run these three questions before your next step.

Is the step so big that my whole goal will become escaping?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Am I measuring success by whether I feel calm?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Am I treating one try as the final answer?	☐ Yes	☐ No

If I said yes to any of those, here's how I'll change the setup

ABOUT YOUR SUPPORTS

You don't have to drop every support at once, and I wouldn't recommend it. The question is whether a support helps you face the moment, or whether it's the only reason you believe you were safe. For everyday patterns, the direction is simple: a little less protection over time, a little more real experience over time. Not reckless. Just practice.

A support I'll keep for now

A support I'll use a little less

FIRST STEPS PEOPLE USE

If you overprepare for meetings: leave one sentence unrehearsed.
If you check the lock five times: check it once on purpose, say out loud, I checked it, and wait a couple of minutes before the next check.
If you avoid plans: go for twenty minutes in your own car, so the ending is planned and on your terms instead of an emergency escape.

My first step, small enough to repeat

MOVE THREE

COUNT THE LEARNING

If your progress has felt fake, this part is for you. You did the thing and still felt anxious. You went to dinner and wanted to leave the whole time. You drove, and your hands shook.

How anxious you felt was never the question. Feelings move around. You might have a three out of ten one day and a nine the next. The question is what anxiety got to decide. If the only thing you track is how calm you felt, your progress disappears every time anxiety shows up. You need a better score.

THE NEW SCOREBOARD

- [ ] I stayed longer than anxiety wanted me to
- [ ] I leaned a little less on the person I usually lean on
- [ ] I sent it after fewer reads
- [ ] I left because I chose to, not because anxiety told me I had to
- [ ] I did the step even though I felt anxious

WHAT COUNTS AS LEARNING

Not: nothing bad happened. Sometimes something awkward happens. Sometimes the meeting does go badly. That's life, not failure. Learning sounds like: I handled more than anxiety predicted. I didn't need as much protection as I thought. That step was too big, and I know how to shrink it next time. All of that counts.

Something I did this month that I didn't give myself credit for

What I'll count as progress this week

SEVEN-DAY LEARNING LOG

One line a night. If it feels silly to count something this small, count it anyway. You're not throwing yourself a party, though you can if you want to. You're collecting evidence.

DAY	WHAT ANXIETY PREDICTED	WHAT I DID	WHAT I LEARNED	0 TO 10
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				
Day 7				

The anxiety number is there so you can see it isn't the score. Plenty of your best days will be a seven.

WHEN IT COMES BACK

A HARD WEEK IS DATA, NOT DELETION.

You have two good weeks. You're driving more and checking less. Then you have a horrible day, and the thought shows up: I'm back at square one. Fear coming back after progress is well known in anxiety research. New learning doesn't erase the old fear, and stress, time, and old reminders can all bring it back.

So when it comes back, don't ask why all your progress disappeared. Ask which response you're practicing now. You might ask for reassurance once instead of twelve times. You might cancel today and try again Friday, instead of disappearing from it for six months. That's not square one.

Signs it's getting louder for me

What I'll practice when it does

My restart step, smaller than my last one

Who I'll tell

WHEN LIFE GETS QUIET

Anxiety often gets louder when the house finally does. All day you're working and taking care of people, then you sit down or take a day off, and your brain goes, great, now we have time. That's not proof that rest is dangerous. It's a pattern worth noticing.

My quiet times, and what I'll do with them

YOUR WEEK

Not your hardest fear. The one you're most tired of letting run the show.

The protection I'm working on

My one small step in the direction anxiety has been blocking

When I'll do it

How many times this week

ONE LINE IN THE LOG EVERY NIGHT

☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

If I miss a day, I'll start again on

Missing a day doesn't cancel the days you did. If the streak breaks, the work still counts. Pick a day and start again there.

PICTURE IT

Close your eyes for one minute. Picture yourself doing the thing that's been holding you back. Feel the excitement, the relief, the joy of finally doing something you've struggled with for so long. Picture trusting yourself again. Then write what you saw.

What I saw, and how it felt

YOUR NEXT THIRTY DAYS

Learning happens through repetition, not one big push. Here's a month that stays small on purpose.

WEEK ONE **NOTICE** ☐ Done

Study one protection with urge, fear, choice. Change nothing yet.

WEEK TWO **SHRINK** ☐ Done

Pick your first rung and repeat it at least three times.

WEEK THREE **CLIMB** ☐ Done

Move up one rung, and keep repeating the one below it.

WEEK FOUR **LOOK BACK** ☐ Done

Read your logs. What did anxiety predict that didn't happen?

Day thirty: what has anxiety stopped deciding for me?

WANT SOMEONE IN YOUR CORNER?

Some of you will take this and run with it on your own, which is amazing. Everything you need is here.

Some of you know yourselves a little too well. You'll nod along, you'll mean every word, and a week from now you'll still be sitting in the same place. That's not a character flaw. Knowing was never the problem. Doing it again and again while anxiety is loud is the hardest part.

Sometimes we need help figuring out what to work on first, and with the accountability side of actually following through. That's why I'm starting a founding group for a new accountability program. It's for people who keep setting goals and keep starting over because anxiety or overthinking gets in the way.

THREE MONTHS

of small steps, built to fit a busy life

WEEKLY CHECK-INS

with audio and text support from me

TEN PEOPLE

in the founding group, starting in January

COACHING

a paid coaching program, not therapy

HOW TO APPLY

The application is linked in the masterclass description. You'll tell me what you want and what's been in the way. I read every application myself, and if it's a good fit, I'll reach out. If the ten spots are full, the same link puts you on the list for the next group.

Jessica Davis is a licensed therapist and mindset coach who has worked with people with anxiety for more than a decade.

DO THIS WORKBOOK WITH AI

If you'd rather talk it through, copy the prompt below into ChatGPT, Claude, or another AI assistant. It asks you the questions one at a time and turns your answers into a one-page plan.

Leave out names and details that could identify you or anyone else. An AI assistant isn't a therapist, and it can get things wrong.

You are going to walk me through the Stop Letting Anxiety Decide workbook from Jessica Davis, a licensed therapist, and her channel Block Out the Noise. Be warm, plain, and direct, like a good coach. Keep each of your messages short.

How to run it: ask me one question at a time and wait for my answer before moving on. Never list several questions at once. If my answer is vague, ask one short follow-up to make it specific. Don't lecture, diagnose, or give me a long list of tips.

The ideas behind it: learning means same situation, new behavior. Anxiety keeps itself alive through five protections: avoid, ask (for reassurance), check, prepare, and wait. Relief teaches fast, but relief is not learning. Anxiety doesn't have to leave. It has to lose its right to make the decision. The three moves are: notice the protection, shrink the step, and count the learning. A hard week is data, not deletion.

Go in this order. One: how long I've had anxiety, and one thing it's been deciding for me. Two: what I want back. Three: one recent situation, what anxiety predicted, what I did to feel safe, and what I was trying to prevent. Four: which of the five protections show up most for me, and which one I'm most tired of. Five: what it's costing me in time, in how my life is organized, and in who I believe I am. Six: a time I made it through something I was sure I couldn't. Seven: the one decision I want to take back first. Eight: my early warning moments, when anxiety starts negotiating with me. Nine: help me build a ladder of six or seven steps toward that decision, starting with a first step small enough to repeat this week. Ten: check the setup with me. Is the step so big I'll just want to escape? Am I measuring success by feeling calm? Am I treating one try as the final answer? Eleven: one support to keep for now, and one to use a little less. Twelve: what counts as progress for me, measured by what I did, not how calm I felt. Thirteen: my plan for when it comes back.

When we finish, write me a one-page plan with these headings: The protection I'm working on. My first step and when I'll do it. My ladder. What counts as learning. When it comes back. Then remind me to log one line each night: what anxiety predicted, what I did, and what I learned.

Safety: this is coaching, not therapy. If I mention panic attacks, OCD, trauma, health fears, or anything tied to my safety, gently suggest I work on it with a therapist and don't push me toward any step. If I say anything that sounds like a crisis or thoughts of harming myself, stop the workbook and encourage me to contact emergency services or a local crisis line right away.

Start by saying hi in one sentence, then ask me the first question.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Same situation, new behavior. A definition of learning from Alex Hormozi, used throughout this workbook.

Avoidance and safety behaviors. In a study of adults treated for generalized anxiety disorder, the people still leaning on avoidance and safety behaviors at the end of treatment did worse in the long run. Beesdo-Baum, K., and colleagues (2012). Avoidance, safety behavior, and reassurance seeking in generalized anxiety disorder. *Depression and Anxiety*, 29(11), 948 to 957. doi.org/10.1002/da.21955

Learning, not waiting for the fear to go away. Research on exposure has moved away from staying until the fear disappears, toward what you learn while the fear is there. The same research explains why fear can come back after progress: new learning sits on top of the old fear rather than erasing it. Craske, M. G., and colleagues (2014). Maximizing exposure therapy: An inhibitory learning approach. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 58, 10 to 23. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4114726

ABOUT BLOCK OUT THE NOISE

Block Out the Noise is a podcast and YouTube channel from licensed therapist Jessica Davis, made to quiet the noise of anxiety, self-doubt, and overthinking. Anxiety doesn't get to define you.

You have what it takes to block out the noise.

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