

## **Are you living with a phobia and feel that it will be with you forever?**

It is surprising how many people are living with phobias and feel that they will never overcome them. The question is, where do those phobias come from and isn't there an effective way to let go of them?

According to Wikipedia "a **phobia** is a type of anxiety disorder, usually defined as a persistent fear of an object or situation in which the sufferer commits to great lengths in avoiding, typically disproportional to the actual danger posed, often being recognized as irrational".

There are a number of common phobias such as closed-in places, heights, driving, flying, insects, snakes, and needles. Having said that, there is a long list of phobias that show us that we can be afraid of almost anything. Often phobias develop in childhood, but they can also develop later in life.

Generally, people with phobias realize that the phobia is irrational but can't control that feeling of being afraid. Just thinking about the feared object or situation may make the person feel anxious, the heart beat goes up, they feel dizzy, uncomfortable, want to cry or feel faint. When being exposed to the stimulus that causes the phobia, people feel overwhelmed and have a sense of terror.

The feeling is so terrible that one can go to great lengths to avoid it, often inconvenience one self or change a lifestyle. Craig, who suffered from claustrophobia, for example, didn't want to fly in an airplane and couldn't visit his daughter who lived in England. He hadn't seen her for a number of years and now she was getting married. His phobia was so strong that he couldn't get himself to book a ticket to go and see her. "I used to be able to fly. My wife had to stand outside the toilet door in the plane, as I felt so anxious in this confined space that I couldn't close the door. This feeling of not wanting to fly got worse and worse and I decided not to fly any more. I realized I had to do something about this when my daughter wanted to get married. I decided that this phobia wouldn't ruin my daughter's wedding day."

Understanding the phobia is the first step to overcoming it and getting help.

There is a difference between having fear in a situation that is dangerous and having fear without actually being in danger. Fear is a normal response that can either protect or hinder us in life. If we are in a dangerous situation it serves as a protective purpose, activating the automatic "fight-or-flight" response. With our bodies and minds alert and ready for action, we are able to respond quickly, in a more narrowly focused way and have a chance to protect ourselves.

However, in case of phobias the threat is greatly exaggerated or even non-existent. For example, it is only natural to be afraid of a big, aggressive looking dog in front of you, but it is not so rational to be terrified of a friendly poodle on a leash, as you might be if you have a phobia of dogs.

There are different signs to look out for when determining if you have a phobia:

### **Physical signs and symptoms**

- Difficulty breathing
- Fast heart

- Chest pain or tightness
- Trembling or shaking
- Sweating or feeling cold
- Tingling sensation
- Feeling dizzy

### **Emotional signs and symptoms of a phobia**

- Feeling overwhelmed, anxious or panicky
- Needing to escape
- Know that the feeling is not logic
- Feeling as if you are dying
- Feeling out of control and powerless
- Feeling “unreal” or detached from yourself

It's important to know that phobias are common and that many people suffer from different phobias.

Having a phobia doesn't mean that you have to live with it for the rest of your life! It is nice to know that phobias are highly treatable and often clients only have to come for three to four sessions to overcome the phobia.

Lynn who had a phobia of holes (tryphobia) explained that she has had a phobia of insects as a child and developed this “new” phobia in the last years. She wasn't able to look at honeycombs, dried flowers with holes, anthills or any other objects that have holes. Often she wasn't able to go out into nature or even go on Facebook as she was scared to come across an “unsightly looking object”.

“I thought I would never overcome my phobias. It just seemed too hard. My heart started racing, I felt faint and just wanted to run away when seeing something with holes. I felt ashamed and debilitated of my reactions as others couldn't understand it.”

Lynn and Craig decided to give hypnotherapy a try. After explaining their feelings and reactions in detail, they were hypnotized and shown that they were able to overcome their fears in a gentle way. Hypnotherapy, together with slow desensitization techniques helped them to overcome their fears quickly and effectively. Each one only needed four sessions at EQ-Advantage and they were “phobia free”.

“ I was able to fly and see my daughter in the UK. It was amazing to be able to use the toilet in the plane on my own. My wife didn't have to stand in front of the door once. When we were overseas we even went on an over-night boat trip where we had to sleep in a small room on the ship. I managed everything perfectly fine. I cannot believe that I lived with this phobia for so long and never did anything about it”  
Craig said in one of his follow up sessions.

Lynn is overjoyed that she is not scared to go out into nature or visit other people as she does not have to fear coming across unsightly objects any more. “I feel free, I stay in control in any given situation and don't have to worry about going out or surfing net. I learned that one can overcome anxiety or fear, no matter how out of control it feels.”

Remember, it is fairly easy to treat phobias. There are a number of different therapies that you can choose from- so don't let your phobia rule your life! Make the first step and join many of my clients who are now leading a happy, in control and calm life.