

**Fuel Your Brain, Not Your Anxiety:**

Stop the Cycle of Worry, Fatigue, and Sugar Cravings with Simple Protein-Rich Foods

## Publisher's Note

*The material in this book is for educational purposes only, and is intended to supplement, not replace, the advice of a trained health professional. As with all new diet and nutritional regimens, the program described in this book should be followed only after first consulting with your health professional, to make sure it is appropriate for your individual circumstances. If you know or suspect that you have a health problem, you should consult with a health professional. The authors and the publisher expressly disclaim responsibility for any adverse effects that may result from the use or application of the information contained in this book.*

Distributed in Canada by Raincoast Books

Copyright © 2021 by Kristen Allott and Natasha Duarte  
New Harbinger Publications, Inc.  
5674 Shattuck Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94609  
www.newharbinger.com

The brain image used in the “What Is Your Power Supply?” figure and others is made by Smashicons from <http://www.flaticon.com>.

Cover design by Amy Shoup

Acquired by Jess O'Brien

Edited by Gretel Hakanson

All Rights Reserved

---

## Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Allott, Kristen, author. | Duarte, Natasha, author.

Title: Fuel your brain, not your anxiety : stop the cycle of worry, fatigue, and sugar cravings with simple protein-rich foods / Kristen Allott, Natasha Duarte.

Description: Oakland, CA : New Harbinger Publications, [2021] | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020033222 (print) | LCCN 2020033223 (ebook) | ISBN 9781684036233 (trade paperback) | ISBN 9781684036240 (pdf) | ISBN 9781684036257 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Brain. | Nutrition. | Diet. | Self-care, Health.

Classification: LCC QP376 .A4235 2021 (print) | LCC QP376 (ebook) | DDC 612.8/2--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020033222>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020033223>

Printed in the United States of America

23    22    21

10   9   8   7   6   5   4   3   2   1

First Printing

# Contents

Foreword	v
Introduction	1
<b>Part I</b>	
The Fundamentals of Glucose Regulation as a Solution for Anxiety and Fatigue	
Chapter 1 Snapshot of Anxiety	11
Chapter 2 What Impacts Anxiety	19
Chapter 3 A Fueled Brain Is a Less Anxious Brain	29
<b>Part II</b>	
Protein Experiments for You to Try	
Chapter 4 A Three-Day Protein Experiment	57
Chapter 5 Understanding Food Labels: Eating for Increased Energy and Mental Clarity	75
Chapter 6 Eating Well for Your Brain in Today's World	89
<b>Part III</b>	
More Experiments to Improve Energy and Reduce Anxiety	
Chapter 7 Fueling Your Brain for Better Sleep	103
Chapter 8 Moving Your Body for More Energy and Mental Clarity	125
Chapter 9 Talking to Your Health Care Provider	157
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Worksheets and Additional Resources</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>185</b>

# Foreword

I remember my first big public talk at a professional conference during graduate school. My anxiety was almost overwhelming as I waited to present my research in an auditorium full of graduate students, professors, and professional practitioners. As I waited my turn to present, I began to question my goals. The anxiety was taking over as I began to sweat and feel my heart beating faster. My mind was racing and I was suddenly unsure of what I was going to say during my talk.

During graduate school, one of my goals included becoming a professor at a major research university. In order to accomplish this, I would have to actively publish research in scientific journals and speak publicly at professional conferences. It would be a normal part of this life. Ultimately, I progressed through graduate education and became a full professor with tenure at a major research institution. This journey required me to speak publicly at countless conferences. To this day, the very idea of public speaking creates moments of anxiety, stress, and worry. Do we have the ability to control this anxiety through diet and exercise?

My research is focused on hope as a coping resource for those experiencing stress and adversity associated with trauma. Hope is based upon our future expectation of achieving desirable goals. In order to be hopeful, you must be able to identify pathways (mental road maps) to those goals, conceiving and overcoming the potential barriers you might experience. This is referred to as pathways thinking. We must also possess the willpower (mental energy) necessary to pursue these pathways. Willpower is the motivational driver of our ability to hope.

In this powerful workbook, Kristen and Natasha have done a wonderful job providing tools to maintain willpower. This workbook will give you step-by-step strategies to change your life through healthy diet, sleep, and simple exercise.

Among all the positive outcomes associated with having hope, at least two findings are specific to the wonderful workbook you hold in your hands. First, this workbook uses the science of hope by offering pathways to reduce your anxiety and improve your mental clarity and energy. The second is that your willpower—the motivational force behind hope—is connected to your power supply, which is determined in part by what and when you eat. Nutrition matters in the science of hope! Hope is one of the best predictors of your capacity to thrive; your well-being depends on your ability to hope.

This workbook walks you through strategies to stabilize your glucose levels with protein-rich foods, effectively understand food labels, feel the impact of movement and sleep, and connect with your

health care provider, all in an effort to improve your well-being. Kristen and Natasha have taken the extraordinary step of making an interactive workbook that gives you the tools to take control of reducing your anxiety and make hope rise.

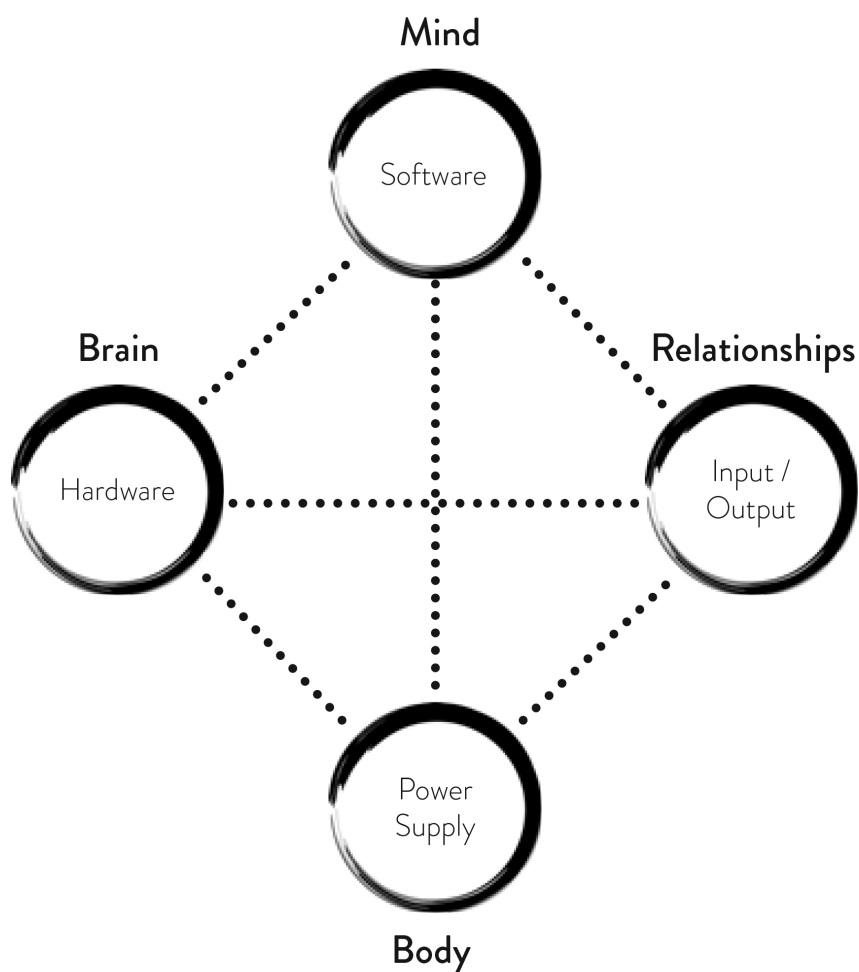
—Chan M. Hellman, PhD  
Professor and director, Hope Research Center at the  
University of Oklahoma, Tulsa  
Coauthor of *HOPE Rising: How The Science of HOPE  
Can Change Your Life*

# Introduction

If you picked up this book, you've probably experienced anxiety, worry, or fatigue that has limited your life and you're wondering if you have all the tools you need. Anxiety is complex; it's that felt sense of nervousness when our hearts and thoughts race, our energy and mental clarity recede, and we're more reactive than responsive to what's occurring. We need some anxiety to keep us alive, and it can motivate us; however, in too large of a dose, anxiety can paralyze us and limit our world. Part of the complexity of anxiety is that it's embedded in everyone's personal story, so why and how it shows up is different for each person. For every story of anxiety, there is an emotional component and a physical or physiological component.

Scientific studies are changing our thinking about emotions, about why certain emotional patterns emerge for each of us, and about how we regulate or perhaps struggle with regulating them. Anxiety is an important emotion. It's accompanied by specific thought patterns and can also be accompanied by physical symptoms. However, "anxiety" is also an umbrella term. In other words, not everyone's anxiety is the same. Anxiety can exist in our minds, in our brains, in our bodies, and also within our relationships. This means that in order to manage anxiety, it's essential to define the details that are unique to you.

In this workbook, we approach understanding our own and other people's anxiety by looking at four quadrants of a person: the body, the brain, relationships, and the mind. We consider these four quadrants because they are usually the most affected by anxiety and fatigue and they play an important role in supporting our overall well-being.



The Four Quadrants of Self

First, there's the *body*. When we provide our body with what it needs, ensuring that it has a sufficient power supply, we are not just supporting our physical health. We are also supporting our brain health, which is necessary for decision making, creativity, and our ability to use emotions to understand who we are. Additionally, when we have a well-fueled and cared-for body, we have the energy to enjoy our lives, engage in meaningful work, and seek new adventures.

Then there's the *brain*. The brain is a very complex organ that works to filter the information from our senses to keep us alive. Different parts of the brain determine how we experience the world. The power supply from the body influences which part of the brain is filtering the information coming to us about our world. For simplicity, we are going to talk about the brain in two modes: the "responsive-cortex brain" and the "reactive-limbic brain."

When we feel safe, relaxed, and well fed, the input derived from sensing our world travels to higher-functioning parts of the brain: the *cerebral cortex* and the *hippocampus*. These parts of the brain enable us to make clear and sound decisions, even amid complex situations and problems. When you're in your responsive-cortex brain, you're conscious, able to learn, and able to make appropriate and creative decisions based on both past experiences and present information.

By contrast, when we feel unsafe, stressed, or underfed, the body releases adrenaline. When the brain is exposed to adrenaline, sensory input stops traveling primarily to the responsive-cortex brain and is instead routed to the reactive-limbic brain. Once the reactive-limbic part of the brain becomes the primary recipient of sensory input, it's forced to choose from the four instinctual reactions: *fight, flight, freeze or disappear, and default to a habit or the past*.

Historically, say, ten thousand years ago, we might have eaten only once a day and could operate from our habitual, reactive-limbic brain most of the day because it served us well. We would get up and seek food or shelter and interact with our family and community in predictable patterns. There was a lot of routine to the day. The demands of our lives today are significantly different. We're almost always responding to new information, relating to community through text, email, or social media, and especially for those whose work involves processing and analyzing information, we're asked to be creative all the time.

Our bodies' power supplies are challenged daily by the timing and types of food we eat and our lack of routines, which in turn limit the amount of fuel reaching our brains. The instability of the power supply for our bodies and brains increases the frequency at which we're thinking through our reactive-limbic brain, which increases anxiety, worry, and fatigue. The focus of this workbook is to improve your power supply from your body to your brain—most prominently, by introducing protein more frequently into your diet—so your responsive-cortex brain is engaged more consistently and you spend less time in your reactive-limbic brain. This means that you'll be less anxious and have more energy to engage in your life.

*Relationships* can also influence the amount and frequency of your anxiety. By “relationships,” we mean the input to and output from the brain. The term encompasses the relationships we have with people around us as well as the environments in which we live and our connection to nature. Some relationships are stable, caring, and safe. These relationships lower anxiety because they support us through whatever is happening. Other relationships can be challenging, unstable, or unsafe. These are harder to manage, causing heightened anxiety, worry, and fatigue. The brain demands more fuel just to be in these relationships, which means that the body is more likely to crave foods high in carbohydrates. The sense of anxiety in these relationships is often a roller coaster, which drains our power supply, decreasing our energy, mental clarity, and sense of resiliency.



The fourth area is *the mind*. Dr. Dan Siegel (2010) explains that the mind is an emergent property that arises from the brain, the body, and the relationships we're in. You may be asking yourself, *What is an emergent property?* Clouds are emergent properties. If you have ever been caught in a rainstorm, you believe in clouds. However, they exist only when there is the right combination of water, wind, and air pressure. If you go up into the sky in a plane and stick a box out the window, you can't put clouds into the box. Our minds are the same way: when our bodies, brains, and relationships are working together, our minds will form. Another way to think about this is to consider when a coworker is super-sick with the flu. Part of why they get sent home is because they are too fatigued, and in that moment, their particular combination of brain-body-relationships cannot support "a mind" that's functional at work.

When the mind is clear, we have curiosity about ourselves and others versus judgment. A clear mind leads to a compassionate observational self. This is the curious responsive-cortex brain part that if we make a mistake, we might ask, "Why did I just do that?" In contrast, a reactive-limbic brain would say something like, "Why are you so dumb that you did that?" You might call the mean voice in your head the Inner Critic. Of course, it's just your brain trying to keep you safe, but because the Inner Critic is always pushing you, the reactive-limbic brain can make you very anxious. The Inner Critic can also put you in what some call the "prison of perfection." Personally, we prefer the calmness of the responsive-cortex brain and the curious mind.

Ultimately, understanding the cause of your anxiety (often, factors like having overwhelming events happen to you as a child, having a history of trauma or abuse, doing something new or unknown and therefore stressful, or experiencing events that will change the course of your life, to name a few) and understanding where your anxiety is coming from—the body, brain, relationships, or mind—is helpful in determining how to treat it. And because everything that happens in any of the quadrants affects the others, treating the cause of anxiety in one area will have a ripple effect.

Often, the circumstances that commonly provoke anxiety—those big life changes or pivotal past events—will make you emotionally anxious, and your inner dialogue can make the situation or your life in general so much more challenging. One approach for treating these causes of anxiety is to work with a therapist. Most therapies (and most books about anxiety) focus on the connection between the mind and brain, the internal dialogue, and healing the past so it doesn't impact our lives so heavily. Some therapies, such as CBT (cognitive behavioral therapy) and DBT (dialectical behavioral therapy), provide additional emotional skills, such as mindfulness, that you may have heard of or tried before. Another approach to treating anxiety is through pharmaceutical intervention, where a prescriber, such as a medical doctor or psychiatric nurse practitioner, prescribes a medication to lower

your anxiety. Medications can help stabilize the brain while you try to address the historic or inner dialogue that's driving anxiety.

What is not addressed through therapy or medication is your physiology, which is why this book focuses on a third option—the protein solution to anxiety. Anxiety can be created or accelerated by what is happening to the power supply for the body. By assuring that the brain has fuel, nutrients, and resources to function optimally, the symptoms of anxiety can be reduced anywhere from 10 to 50 percent. Additionally, it's exhausting to be anxious, so implementing the protein solution can also improve fatigue by anywhere from 10 to 50 percent.

In this book, we'll review the science of protein consumption and glucose regulation—the process by which glucose levels are maintained in your bloodstream, which is vastly improved when you incorporate more protein into your diet. We'll also introduce you to a woman named Luca who's struggling with some of the same things you're probably struggling with, as she navigates family and work life. You may be able to identify with the patterns Luca experiences and see how the physiology plays out in her life. Understanding the physiology will help you understand the *why* behind your symptoms. And when you understand that, it will be easier to know *when* and *how* to use the tools we'll teach you to slow down or stop anxiety, worry, and fatigue.

## WHO THIS WORKBOOK IS FOR

This book is for you if you have any of the following:

- General anxiety or panic attacks
- Specific anxiety: phobias, performance anxiety, social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or anxiety around high-stakes decision making
- Early-morning waking, waking with anxiety or irritation, or not being able to wake up in the morning
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including nightmares and night terrors
- Sugar cravings
- Fatigue in general, and afternoon fatigue specifically

Even though everyone experiences anxiety differently, the basic physiological process of how your brain is fueled is common to every human. If you have a brain and a body, the tools presented in this workbook will help. Kristen, in her capacity as a naturopathic physician, teaches these tools to a wide

range of individuals—all wanting to have less anxiety and worry and more energy and mental clarity. In her clinical practice, she routinely sees a drop in anxiety of at least 20 percent. What that means on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no anxiety at all and 10 is a full-blown panic attack, is that a person regularly hitting a 9 can drop their anxiety level to a 7 simply by making achievable changes to diet. Granted, a 7 is still pretty anxious, but it's a low enough level of anxiety that people can then access and use other emotion-based tools. Some people who started using protein solutions have found their symptoms reduced by as much as 50 percent. Fundamentally, the amount of relief you might get depends on how much of your anxiety is due to physical causes and how much is from emotional causes. This workbook will help you better understand the physical causes. After trying the strategies outlined, you may decide they help so much that you will use them almost every day, or you may decide to use them as tools for specific occasions.

Our goal in this book is to give you a new way to think about what is driving your anxiety and new tools to reduce your anxiety as well as increase your energy and mental clarity. With each tool we introduce, we'll provide experiments you can try—an activity, a specific amount of time to dedicate to it (from 30 seconds to 45 days), and a sense of what the possible outcomes might be—so you can practice using the tools and see if and how they impact your symptoms. These experiments are opportunities to learn about yourself and your body. They're a way of trying something new with the intention of noticing whether the new behavior makes you feel better or not. We think experiments are the best way to know how something will affect your experience in your body and mind. All in all, as you work through the workbook, you'll develop a better picture of what's happening for you, and this will help you have a new framework to explain why and when it's happening and what to do about it.

## WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS WORKBOOK

In this workbook, you'll learn that what you eat determines whether your brain is in a responsive mode or a reactionary mode. Having protein along with carbohydrates in your meals and snacks optimizes your brain for energy and mental clarity, allowing anxiety, worry, and fatigue to drop away.

In chapter 1, the Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment helps identify the symptomatic details of your anxiety.

Chapter 2 guides you through a tool to help you learn the patterns of your anxiety. When does it show up? When is it better? Having these pieces in place will help you recognize the physiological patterns as they show up in your life.

Chapter 3 covers the physiology and addresses *why* protein is the solution.

In chapter 4, we give you the basic tools to reduce your anxiety within twenty minutes, lower your overall anxiety, and improve your energy over a three-day period. Although we do this with food, please understand that this is not a food program that you do now and forever. We provide a set of tools to be used as you move through your life. Some days you might use the tools throughout the day because you did the experiment and it helped so much that it's worth the effort, and some days you might not use the tools at all. But once you understand what helps in different situations, you can return to them when you're particularly challenged or are just tired of the chaos that life sometimes brings.

Chapter 5 teaches you how to read labels so you can predict how you'll feel after eating.

Chapter 6 explains how to plan your food so you feel like you can consistently manage your anxiety and reduce your fatigue.

Chapter 7 is about sleep, how it helps lower anxiety and fatigue, and techniques to reduce the anxiety symptoms that are associated with sleep.

Chapter 8 is about moving your body to protect your body's power supply. Even a small movement program supports the brain and body. We provide tools that improve energy and reduce anxiety in the moment, in as little as thirty seconds!

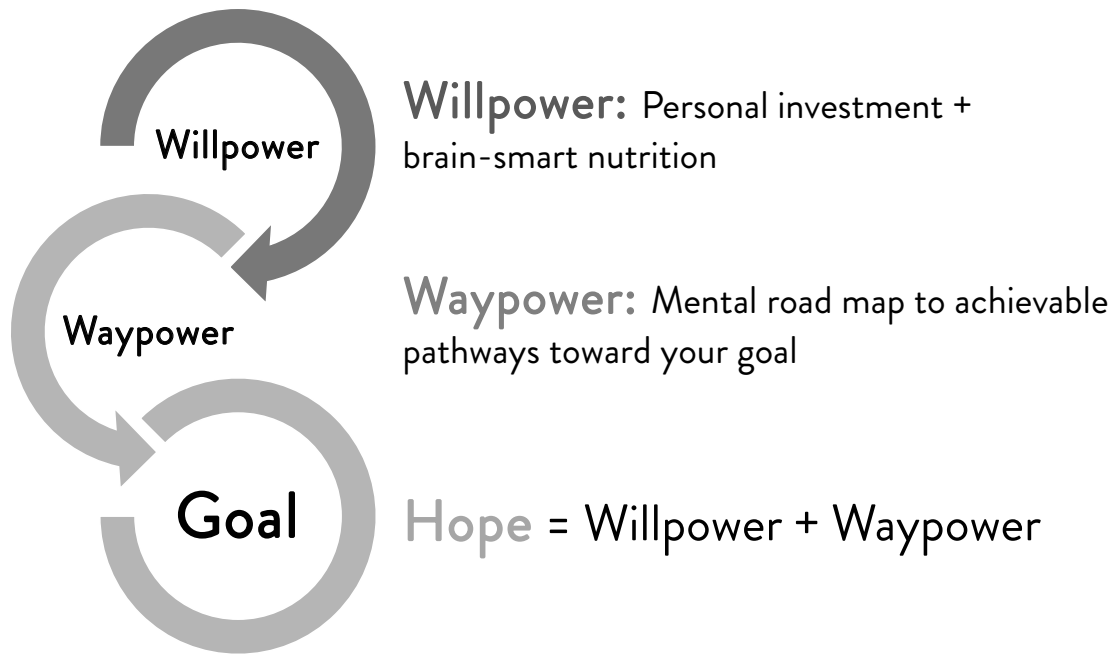
Chapter 9 is about how to work with your primary care provider if these solutions aren't enough.

In the appendix, you will find instructions and worksheets for the tools presented in each chapter. If you want, you can jump ahead and follow the instructions; if you need to know why the tools work, explanations are provided in the associated chapters.

A few more things to keep in mind: This book is educational; it should not be used as a replacement for professional health care providers. If you're working with a prescriber or therapist, please share with them what you're learning. If you're on medications for mental health or physical health, be sure to share any changes you make or are thinking of making with your physicians. If your conditions are complex, perhaps working through this book with a provider will be useful. Also note that this book is directed at individuals who are responsible for their own lives (likely sixteen years old and up). The information can be applied to younger individuals, but they would need to work with a caring, curious, and supportive adult.

Our ultimate goal is for you to have more energy and mental clarity, and more hope for what is possible in your life. More than a decade ago Dr. Chan Hellman set out to understand how hope impacts individuals in what appear to be hopeless situations. He discovered that people who have hope can successfully emerge out of enormous personal challenges. In the book *HOPE Rising*, Hellman and his colleague Casey Gwinn (2019) define hope as "the belief that a thriving future is possible, and you have the power to make it so" (31). Gwinn and Hellman build on researcher Rick

Snyder's work by identifying two key components of hope: willpower, what excites you and is unique to you and your motivations along with the power supply to follow through on changes you resolve to make, and "waypower," the ability to overcome challenges and the emotions that come with challenges.



Hope is the belief that a thriving future is possible and you have the power to make it so.

We think this work is significant because many people have lost hope for achieving their dreams because their anxiety, worry, and fatigue have sapped them of the energy and mental clarity needed to stay in their responsive-cortex brains. And we have found that when people don't have the knowledge and tools to consistently maintain their bodies' power supply, which is the basis of willpower, it's difficult if not impossible to actually achieve their goals. This workbook provides tools for increasing both willpower and waypower; we want you to have the hope that a thriving future is possible and the tools needed to achieve it.

Let's start with the Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment in chapter 1 to understand all the symptoms of your anxiety, worry, and fatigue. The first step to reducing your symptoms is to assess which are specific to you.

## Part I



# The Fundamentals of Glucose Regulation as a Solution for Anxiety and Fatigue

## CHAPTER 1

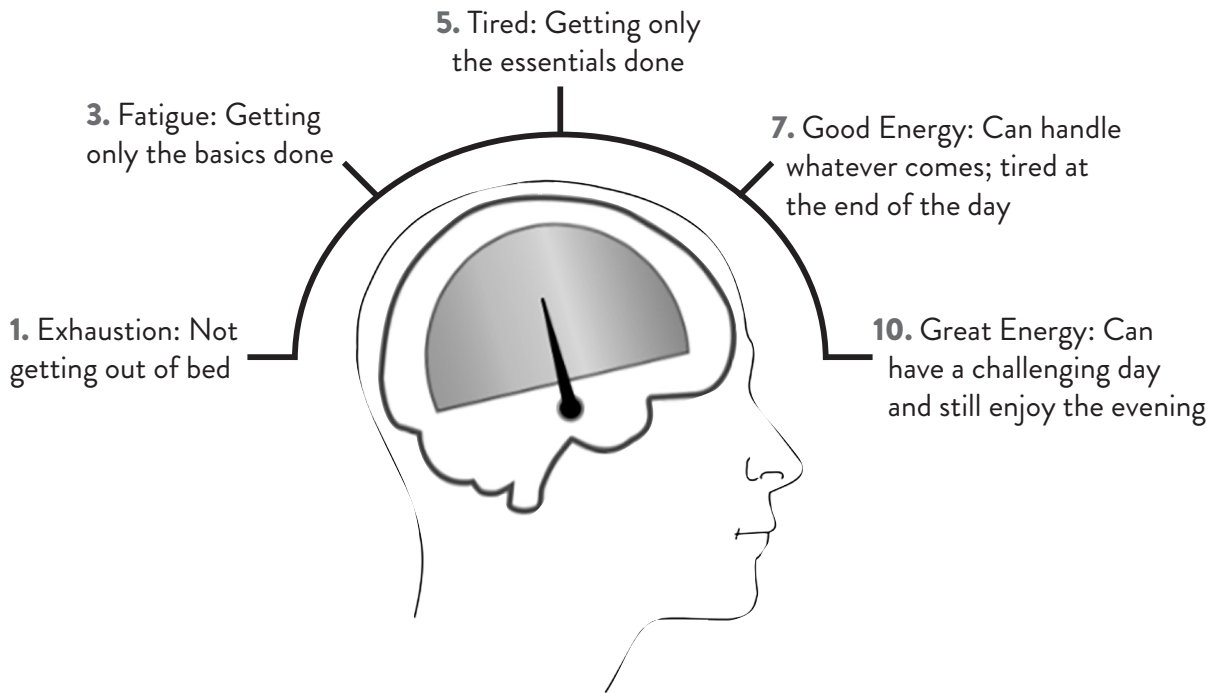
# Snapshot of Anxiety

*The Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment helps provide a clear picture of both the physical symptoms of anxiety and the other associated problems that accompany it. Not everyone experiences anxiety in the same way. Understanding what your anxiety looks like and the other symptoms that coexist with it, such as worry and fatigue, is the first step in improving your symptoms so you can more fully engage in your life.*

The Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment is a questionnaire that helps you accurately characterize your anxiety. It has three sections that identify categories of the most common symptoms that coexist with anxiety. The purpose of doing the assessment is to better observe what your anxiety looks like and to begin to get a sense of what symptoms may be originating from physiological causes. In future chapters, we'll offer experiments to lower some of the symptoms of anxiety; getting this baseline up front will help you track your symptoms and identify which experiments will have the most positive impact.

## **PART 1: YOUR FATIGUE SCORE**

The power supply from your body can determine your energy, mental clarity, and level of anxiety. Take a moment to rate your power supply—or how much energy you feel you have—on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being minimal energy and 10 being solid energy throughout the day. This isn't uncontrolled manic energy; a rating of 10 means that you have the resources to respond to whatever opportunities arise, good or challenging.



What is your power supply right now? \_\_\_\_\_

In general, what was your power supply like over the last two weeks? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your high? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your low? \_\_\_\_\_

If your energy is routinely dropping below a 5, that's not good. You may not have the energy to engage in novelty, you're possibly withdrawing from relationships, and the fatigue creates a physical reason to be anxious. When you're living at a 5 or below, it's hard to move your life forward, and it's hard to have hope for your future. The experiments in this book will help, both in the short and in the long term. And if they don't help enough, the last chapter provides some information about talking to your primary care provider about fatigue.



If your power supply drops below 5 during the active part of your day, give yourself a fatigue score of 10 points. If your power supply stays above 5, your fatigue score is 0.

**Fatigue score:** \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 2: BRAIN–BODY SYMPTOMS

Below are the different brain and body symptoms of anxiety. If *any part* of a particular symptom description fits you, check the box and circle the part you relate to. Feel free to add other symptoms that are consistent with your anxiety but aren't listed or add qualifiers to the symptoms that are listed. There are 22 brain–body symptoms listed below; after going through the symptoms, add up the number of boxes that you checked, giving yourself one point per box to determine your total.

### Brain Symptoms

- Flight emotions: agitation, nervousness, worry, anxiety, fear, panic
- Fight emotions: hyperfocused, defensive, negative, irritable, controlling, enraged
- Disappear emotions: withdrawn, depressed, crying, shut down
- Racing thoughts
- Negative thought patterns toward self, self-critical
- Emotional outbursts that are larger than necessary
- Doing old behaviors that you don't want to do again, such as eating sugar, drinking alcohol or using other addictive substances, or calling people who are not helpful
- Fear of dying, suicidal thoughts, confusion, abnormal behavior—*If you check this box, please ask for help, call a friend, call 911 or the crisis line in your area, or seek out a therapist.*

### Common “Disappear” Behaviors

- Spending hours on the internet or social media (not work-related)
- Overeating/undereating
- Drinking alone or to excess
- Using drugs alone or to excess
- Watching TV for many hours

*To identify a disappear behavior, ask yourself if you think an activity is a form of withdrawing or shutting down.*

### Body Symptoms

- Shaky or trembling hands
- Heart palpitations, racing heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Pale skin, cold hands or feet
- Shakiness, vibrating body, physically agitated, or fidgety
- Hungry, craving sugar, sweets, or carbohydrates (breads, pasta, candy)
- Nausea
- Not hungry for meals or not able to eat
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Vertigo
- Visual disturbance
- Extreme fatigue
- Seizures or loss of consciousness

Brain and body symptoms score: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 3: GLOBAL SYMPTOMS

Global symptoms develop as the body copes with stress hormones over the long term. These symptoms both cause anxiety and are caused by anxiety. Use the rating scale provided to answer the global symptoms questions; skip questions that don't apply to you. Then, add the totals from each column to get your score.

Please rate these symptoms	Not at all	1–3 days/ week	4–5 days/ week	Nearly every day
Fatigue	0	1	2	3
Afternoon fatigue	0	1	2	3
Moodiness, including emotions of anxiety, irritation, agitation, and sadness	0	1	2	3
Lack of mental clarity	0	1	2	3
Morning insomnia/waking too early	0	1	2	3
Inability to wake up in morning	0	1	2	3
PTSD nightmares	0	1	2	3
Brain fog/harder to think	0	1	2	3
Physical pain for any cause	0	1	2	3
Distraction and/or ADHD symptoms	0	1	2	3
Dysregulated bowel symptoms (constipation, diarrhea, bloating)	0	1	2	3
Sugar/carbohydrate cravings	0	1	2	3
The use of alcohol or other substances to regulate your emotions and symptoms	0	1	2	3
Subtotals:				
<b>Global symptoms score</b> (add the scores from the four columns above):				

## PART 4: SNAPSHOT OF ANXIETY SCORE

Write in the totals from parts 1, 2, and 3 to get your Snapshot of Anxiety score:

	Points
<b>From Part 1: Fatigue score</b>	
<b>From Part 2: Brain and body symptoms score</b>	
<b>From Part 3: Global symptoms score</b>	
<b>Snapshot of Anxiety score (total from parts 1, 2, and 3):</b>	

You might be curious about how to interpret your final score. However, when it comes to the Snapshot of Anxiety, there isn't a standard total. Instead, you'll be using the score to see if your ratings for each category and your total improve when you do experiments.

Once you've completed your snapshot, take a moment to reflect on any insights that you have gained.

You might have written about how many symptoms of anxiety and fatigue you're currently experiencing and the things in your life that are hard to do because of these symptoms. Considering the problems anxiety, worry, and fatigue cause can be helpful in motivating you to change. What can also be motivating—and is often even more motivating than fixing a problem—is pursuing the

benefits that lower levels of anxiety, worry, and fatigue might give you. Let's consider some of these benefits now.

## THE BENEFITS OF LOWER ANXIETY

Below are some benefits you may experience from reducing anxiety and having more time and energy to engage in your life. Use the table to rate their importance and add any other benefits that you're willing to actively work toward.

Benefits	Not important	Somewhat important	Mostly important	Very important
Feel better				
Better sleep				
More confident				
More at ease with yourself				
Willing to try new things				
Better connections and/or boundaries with friends and family				
Better able to take care of important projects				
Other:				

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

By using the Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment, you can see that your anxiety has both symptoms that reside in your brain and symptoms that reside in your body. Every person's anxiety is somewhat different. Identifying what yours looks like is helpful for a number of reasons. First, the experiments in the coming chapters will help you reduce symptoms of fatigue, brain–body symptoms, and global symptoms. If you have less fatigue, racing thoughts, and sugar cravings, you'll find it easier to feel less anxious. This chapter also helped you identify the benefits of reducing anxiety. As you go through the workbook and learn new tools, we'll encourage you to return to the Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment to see which tool reduced which symptoms. Lastly, sometimes it's helpful to have a specific list of symptoms to describe what is happening if you're working with a therapist or primary care provider. The Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment worksheet is available in the appendix and for download at <http://www.newharbinger.com/46233>.

In the next chapter, you'll work on discovering *when* you're feeling anxious, what might be making you feel worse, and what might help you feel better.

## CHAPTER 2

# What Impacts Anxiety

*Understanding what impacts anxiety and recognizing patterns of how the symptoms of anxiety show up in your life gives you a starting place for using food, sleep, exercise, and other tools to improve anxiety, worry, and fatigue.*

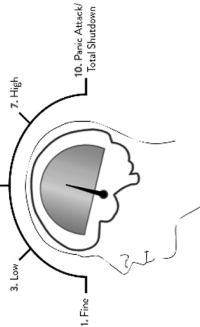
Food, sleep, and exercise determine your body's power supply. This means they can be significant drivers in your anxiety and fatigue; it also means they can be significant factors to reduce that anxiety and fatigue. The What Impacts Anxiety worksheet provides you with:

- A tool to increase awareness of the patterns of your anxiety. By identifying our patterns, we can often take action on our own behalf to address them before our anxiety accelerates and feels out of control.
- A reference point against which to measure the effect of experiments suggested in this workbook or other interventions, such as mindfulness, exposure therapy, medications, and observing anxiety levels in different environments or around different people.
- Documentation to share with medical care providers, if you're seeing any, to help you get better care in the limited time you have with them.

You don't have to use this tool as it's presented; you can use the information outlined to ask yourself what is responsible for accelerating or calming your anxiety on any given day.

## THE WHAT IMPACTS ANXIETY WORKSHEET

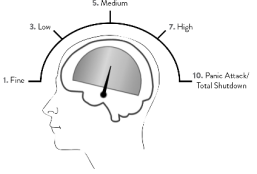
Do you know what impacts your anxiety? The What Impacts Anxiety worksheet (also provided in the appendix and online at <http://www.newharbinger.com/46233>) will help you get more clear about this. We'll go through each component and explain how it may be affecting your anxiety, worry, and fatigue.

What Impacts Anxiety	Day 1	Date:	Day 2	Date:	Day 3	Date:
What's going on?	What's going on?	What's going on?	What's going on?	What's going on?	What's going on?	What's going on?
						
Time of day						
Power Supply (1-10)						
<b>ANXIETY LEVEL</b>	HIGH					
	MED					
	LOW					
	10					
	9					
8						
7						
6						
5						
4						
3						
2						
1						
<b>Anxiety Accelerators</b> (Caffeine, Alcohol, Sugary Foods, Screen Time, Stressful Day)						
<b>Daily Practices:</b> <b>What did you eat (meal or snack)?</b> (Protein, Carb, Veggie/Fiber, Fat)						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Movement/Physical Activity						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe, Supportive Connections						
<b>Resiliency Factors</b> (Mindfulness, Quiet Time, Time Outside, Spiritual Practice, Journaling)						
<b># of hours of sleep the night before</b>						
<b>Other Notes</b>						



## What’s Going On?

Track what’s going on as often as makes sense for you; you don’t have to use all five columns provided. Examples might include meeting with your boss or client, transitioning from work to home, a phone call with a friend, or a tough conversation with a family member. The notes can be fairly basic; you can also use the back of the page if you need more space. The idea is to increase your awareness of what’s going on throughout the day—both the highs and the lows—so you can begin to see your patterns and how these may be influenced by both accelerators and resilience factors.

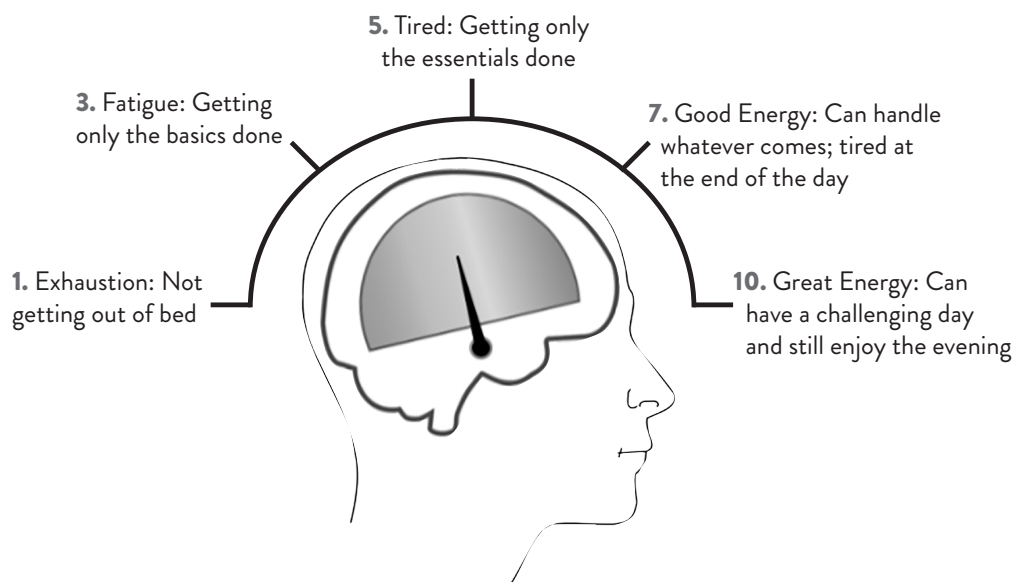
What Impacts Anxiety	Day 1	Date:				Day 2	Date:				Day 3	Date:			
	What’s going on?					What’s going on?					What’s going on?				
															
	<b>Time of day</b>														
<b>Power Supply (1-10)</b>															

### Time of Day

Note the time of day that corresponds to what you entered for “What’s going on?”

### Power Supply

It’s important to check in regularly on your power supply, as this is what’s helping your brain and mind stay calm and focused. Use the same scale from the power supply exercise in chapter 1: a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being minimal energy and 10 being solid energy. Remember, a rating of 10 isn’t uncontrolled manic energy; rather, it means that you have the resources to respond to whatever opportunity arises, good or challenging.

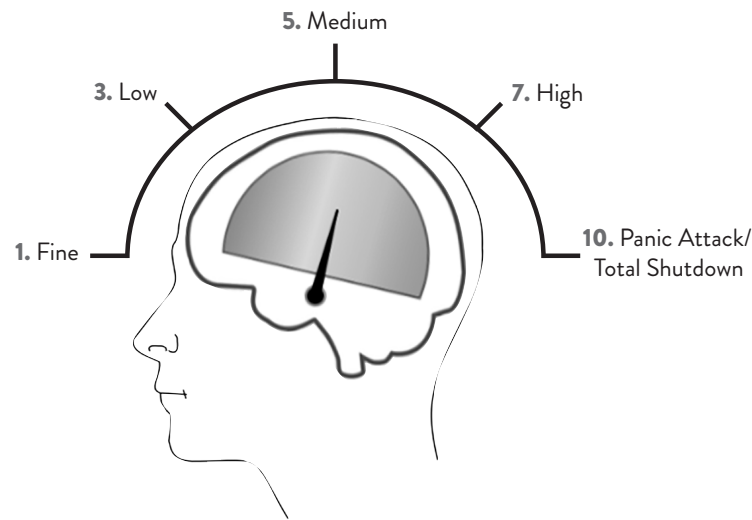


## Anxiety Level

In this section, note the level of anxiety you felt, using the scale provided. Is it low, medium, high? Identifying what is low, medium, and high anxiety is unique to each individual. Remember the symptoms you identified in the Snapshot of Anxiety Assessment: What symptoms show up first? What symptoms show up only when anxiety is really high? These may change over time or in different situations.

One challenge with anxiety is that generally, we observe it when it's high and bothering us and we are uncomfortable; when it's not high, we may not think about anxiety at all. Another challenge is anxiety's lasting or residual effects. If we felt anxious at several points throughout the day, the different experiences aggregate in our memory, so the whole day gets labeled as anxious. This is why it's important to note when you're feeling anxious—so you can say, "I was anxious at lunchtime," and the whole day doesn't get colored as anxious. Fundamentally, the point of the exercise is to recognize that anxiety levels change throughout the day and week and to stay curious about what makes you feel better or worse.

For some people it can take some practice to learn to observe anxiety and to be able to determine its level. If the 1-to-10 scale is too difficult to identify with, you can just use the labels low (managing anxiety with little effort), medium (needing to start using tools to manage anxiety), and high (feeling really uncomfortable). As Dan Siegel (2010) says, you have to "name it to tame it."



What is your anxiety level?

- *Low anxiety (levels 1–3)* is when you're mostly comfortable and are managing your anxiety with little effort. As you move from level 1 up to 3, you may be increasingly aware of it, but are still in control of how you're managing yourself.
- *Medium anxiety (levels 4–6)* is when you feel more uncomfortable and the symptoms of anxiety are drawing your attention and may begin impacting the decisions and actions you take. This is when you need to start pulling out your tools to manage the anxiety. This worksheet helps you identify your triggers and when you need to be thinking about using those tools. It's normal to have medium levels of anxiety off and on through life, such as when doing something new, before a presentation, or when returning to something that was really hard.
- *High anxiety (levels 7–10)* is when you start feeling really uncomfortable. This is where decision making and behavior are starting to be heavily influenced by the anxiety. The anxiety may no longer feel manageable, or you may feel like you're just holding on. Left unchecked, you may experience a panic attack or total shutdown.

Although you may be curious as to how your anxiety level compares with others', this worksheet is intended to help *you* characterize *your* sense of it. Any comparison is to yourself, over time, and with experiments that you do to manage your anxiety better.

ANXIETY LEVEL	HIGH	10																			
		9																			
		8																			
		7																			
	MED	6																			
		5																			
		4																			
	LOW	3																			
		2																			
		1																			
Anxiety Accelerators (Caffeine, Alcohol, Sugary Foods, Screen Time, Stressful Day)																					

## Anxiety Accelerators

Some things accelerate anxiety. Keeping track of your accelerators, especially alongside your anxiety levels across different times of day, can help you identify what is driving your patterns of anxiety. Accelerators include:

- *Caffeine.* You may have fatigue and need caffeine to function, but caffeine makes it easier for your brain to be anxious and harder to sleep. Caffeine helps you feel awake by increasing the hypervigilance of your brain. Hypervigilance is a key symptom of some forms of anxiety. If you're prone to panic attacks, increasing the amount of information your brain is taking in might not be helpful. Stopping caffeine can keep anxiety from accelerating.

**Caffeine**

In general we try not to take beloved foods away from people, so if you're consuming more than two servings of caffeine a day and you really don't want to give it up altogether, first do the experiments in this book and see if your fatigue and anxiety get better through other interventions.

- *Alcohol.* Some people notice that, in the short term, a glass of alcohol helps reduce their anxiety. However, because alcohol disrupts your brain's fuel supply, you can start to experience symptoms of anxiety four to six hours later. The use of alcohol to calm anxiety in the evening can cause early-morning insomnia, nightmares, higher anxiety levels in the mornings, and may also contribute to anxiety throughout the day (Lydon et al. 2016).

- *Sugary foods.* Your brain begins to think that everything will be okay 20 to 60 minutes after consuming sugar, thanks to the quick hit of glucose. However, if the sugar isn't paired with protein, good fat, and healthy fiber, your blood glucose rapidly drops, and your anxiety starts to climb again within one and a half to three hours. We will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in chapter 3.
- *Screen time.* Spending more than two hours a day in front of a screen outside of work or school will increase anxiety, depression, and fatigue (Hoare et al. 2017; Madhav et al. 2017).
- *Stressful day.* We all understand how stress increases anxiety: as the things that trigger your anxiety pile up—long work hours, meetings, appointments, childcare—the symptoms you feel become worse and worse. During these busy days, your brain will need more fuel to manage the stress, your anxiety, and sugar cravings.

## Daily Practices

Daily Practices:																	
What did you eat (meal or snack)? (Protein, Carb, Veggie/Fiber, Fat)																	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Movement/Physical Activity																	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe, Supportive Connections																	
Resiliency Factors (Mindfulness, Quiet Time, Time Outside, Spiritual Practice, Journaling)																	
# of hours of sleep the night before																	
Other Notes																	

What and when you eat, movement and exercise, sleep, and supportive relationships are all important for maintaining your power supply and reducing anxiety. Conversely, not eating or eating foods without protein, not moving or exercising, not getting at least seven hours of sleep, and having to deal with unsupportive relationships can make managing anxiety more challenging. For your daily practices, just note what you're currently doing or not doing, without judgment. Do you notice any patterns that relate to your anxiety levels? We'll go into more detail about what might be driving these patterns in later chapters and will suggest achievable experiments for you to try, which may improve your anxiety, worry, and fatigue.

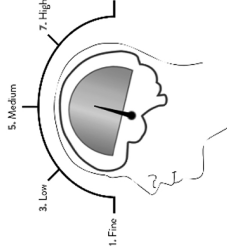
“Resilience factors” are additional things that help reduce anxiety. Keeping track of your resilience factors, especially alongside your anxiety levels across different times of day, can help you identify what may reduce your anxiety. In the worksheet, we’ve listed some common resilience factors. Maybe you have tried these or others. There are entire books written on each of these if you want to learn more.

Now that you know how the What Impacts Anxiety worksheet works, it’s time to begin using it. When is a good day for you to start tracking the accelerators and resilience factors of your anxiety? Start on a day that might cause moderate anxiety, instead of a day that you anticipate will be extra challenging. This way, you won’t be adding an additional task on an overwhelming day. We suggest using the worksheet to track your anxiety for three days.

### *A Visit with Extended Family*

A few weeks ago Taylor spent a long weekend with family. Having worked with Kristen for some time now, she loaded up on protein snacks and protein-based ingredients for meals. Anticipating that this would likely be a stressful weekend, she decided to bring along the What Impacts Anxiety worksheet and give it a try.

Taylor started off thinking she would check in five times throughout the day, at regular intervals, but it quickly became clear that wasn’t realistic given the setting. Still, she found that having started with this intention kept her checking in with herself much more regularly than she would have otherwise. Taylor generally jotted notes on the worksheet at the beginning and end of each day, noting the ups and downs as she remembered them.

What Impacts Anxiety	Day 1 Date: Sat 6/24				Day 2 Date: Sun 6/25				Day 3 Date: Mon 6/26											
	What's going on?				What's going on? Write below and note the time.				What's going on? Write below and note the time.											
 <p><b>Time of day</b></p> <p><b>Power Supply (1-10)</b></p> <p><b>ANXIETY LEVEL</b></p> <p>HIGH</p> <p>MED</p> <p>LOW</p>	Woke up	6:30a	8		Woke up	6a	8		Prepared to leave	7:30a	5		Arrived home	2p	6		~2 hours after dinner	8:30p	8	
	Family outing	10a	7	X	Family meeting	4p	7	X	Family conversation	8a	6	X	Preparing lunch	12p	7		Late night conversation	11p	5	
	Errands on my own	12p	7	X																
<b>Anxiety Accelerators</b> (Caffeine, Alcohol, Sugary Foods, Screen Time, Stressful Day)	C	C	SF	A SD	C	C	C	C	C	A SD	SF	P, C, F	P	P						
<b>Daily Practices throughout the day:</b>																				
<b>What did you eat (meal or snack)?</b> (Protein, Carb, Veggie/Fiber, Fat)	P, V, F	P, C	P	P	P, C, F				P, C, V, F											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Movement/Physical Activity																				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe, Supportive Connections																				
<b>Resiliency Factors</b> (Mindfulness, Quiet Time, Time Outside, Spiritual Practice, Journaling)																				
<b># of hours of sleep the night before</b>																				
<b>Other Notes</b>	P w/meals/snacks throughout day				~8				~9, but interrupted P throughout day				~7, interrupted 1 <sup>st</sup> time no panic attack at in-laws							

Being more aware helped her to know when to pull out her “tools,” like taking a quick time-out or grabbing some beef jerky or a hard-boiled egg. She also made a point of going to bed at her normal time (ten to eleven o’clock), even though everyone else was staying up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. Taylor realized on the first morning that this had an added benefit of some quiet time, as she also woke up a bit earlier than everyone else.

Although there were a few acute stress points throughout the weekend, Taylor’s anxiety over the weekend was lower than during previous visits. As she drove home, she realized that she didn’t need a day off from work to recover the way she did after previous family gatherings.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

Hopefully, after you’ve used the What Impacts Anxiety worksheet for a brief period of time, you now have a better sense of what’s influencing your anxiety. The What Impacts Anxiety worksheet is available in the appendix and for download at <http://www.newharbinger.com/46233>.

Next we’ll explain why the food you eat is such an important factor in your experience of anxiety, as an accelerator *and* a resilience factor. Armed with this knowledge, you’ll be able to begin using food as a tool to manage anxiety.