

## The Negative Feedback Loop

In the stress syndrome, a “negative feedback loop” is created between mind and body. Each influences and reacts to the other in an escalating pattern of arousal. Here is how it works: Your body tenses and you think, “I must be getting anxious.” Your body then reacts to the belief that you are anxious by getting more aroused (i.e.: more symptoms). You notice that your heart rate is increasing and think, “I’m going to freak out.” This results in more psychological arousal, plus increasingly dire assessments and predictions about your experience (i.e.: “I’m having a heart attack”; “I’m going to die”). As this dialogue between your mind and body unfolds, you begin, in fact, to feel afraid.

To break a negative feedback loop, you first can come to be aware of what it is you are doing (meaning how you are filling the loop). You can change both your thoughts and your physical responses (with this new awareness). You can learn to not be afraid of various physical symptoms.

Gaining an understanding of the way the body reacts to stress and fear is key. Learning different ways of being unafraid of bodily reactions is also the goal. It all starts with understanding the nature of the condition and understanding and accepting how the condition developed. Understanding the negative feedback allows you to identify it throughout your day/week. Being aware of your own negative feedback loops is the beginning of using your head to out-think the stress and take back the power!

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