



Syracuse Integrative Psychiatry

Comprehensive care. Transformative outcomes.

ANXIETY DEEP DIVE SERIES • PART 11

The Compass of Values

FINDING NORTH

Anxiety vs. Values

Anxiety screams "Safety!" Values whisper "Meaning."

When we are ruled by anxiety, our only goal is to reduce distress. We make choices based on what feels safe, not what feels right. To break free, we need a new compass. We need to orient our lives toward our **Values**—our heart's deepest desires for how we want to behave as human beings.

Values are Verbs

Values are not goals (like "get married" or "be happy"). Values are directions (like "being loving" or "acting with curiosity"). You can never "achieve" a value; you can only embody it, moment by moment.

When you act on your values while feeling anxious, you are building **psychological flexibility**.

Calibrating Your Compass

1. Choose a Domain: Pick an area of life where anxiety holds you back (Relationships, Work, Creativity).

2. Identify the Value: How do you want to show up in this area? (e.g., "I want to be courageous," "I want to be connected.")

3. One Small Step: What is one small action you can take today that aligns with this value, even if anxiety is present?

The Turning Point: Practice This Week

The "Even Though" Action

We often wait for anxiety to leave before we start living. The turning point is realizing we can take our values and our anxiety with us.

The "Even Though" Formula

Fill in this sentence and then **do the action immediately** (or schedule it for a specific time today):

"Even though I feel [describe physical sensation of anxiety], I will [specific value-based action] because I value [value]."

Example: "Even though I feel a knot in my stomach, I will send that text to my friend because I value connection."

Your Turn: Write it down. Do it. Notice that you survived.

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