

Classical Exposure – Technique of Using Gradual Exposure **Fear Hierarchy**

Describe your fear:

List the least frightening activity as Level 1 and the most frightening as Level 10. Try to make the anxiety as bad as you can for as long as you can at each step on your Fear Hierarchy. In most cases, the anxiety will eventually diminish and disappear.

1.	<i>Least Frightening</i>
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6.	
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8.	
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9.	
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10.	<i>Most Frightening</i>

Legend from the Tibetan Book of the Dead

You die but you wake up in a dark place. Out of the darkness a terrifying monster appears. This monster represents all the worst fears you've ever had. Your monster is different from others because you have different fears and vulnerabilities.

With this monster, you have two choices. You can try to get away or you can surrender. If you try to get away, you will escape – but just barely - and soon you'll be lost in the dark again.

Then, once again, out of the darkness, a second monster emerges. This one is almost as terrifying as the first, but not quite. You have the same choice: surrender or flee. If you try to escape, you'll succeed, but you'll find yourself in the dark again.

Every time you escape, another terrifying monster appears. Each monster will be slightly less terrifying than the one before, and if you run, you'll always just barely manage to get away.

The number of monsters you'll have to confront depends on the number of days in the month when you die. If you die in January, there will be a total of thirty-one monsters because there are thirty-one days in January. If you run away from all the monsters, you'll be reincarnated as something very lowly, like a worm. If you surrender to one of the monsters, you'll be reincarnated at a higher level. The scarier the monster you surrender to, the greater your status will be in your next life. (The first monsters are always scarier than the ones that follow.)

In the event you surrender to the first and most terrifying monster, two things happen. First, you discover that the monster is not real. You will realize that it was just an illusion and that you never had anything to fear in the first place. You will see that the monster had no teeth. This is an incredible triumph. The discovery may seem incredibly funny and you may start laughing because you realize that your fears have been the result of a gigantic cosmic joke. Second you would not have to go through the life-death cycle any longer. Instead of being reincarnated you are transported to a higher place of existence.

In conclusion, if you want to gain complete liberation from your fears, you'll have to confront the monster you fear the most. This is the essence of Exposure Therapy. Avoidance keeps your anxiety alive, and exposure will lead to the cure. There are no exceptions to this rule, if you want to stop your anxiety, you will have to face the thing you fear the most.

THIS IS ONLY A LEGEND BUT THE LESSON IS TRUE.