Hello Jeff,
it's Lucinda!

Welcome to session 6 of my free course.

I hope you've begun to implement some of the constructive lifestyle changes we spoke about last week. Nothing good comes from an unhealthy diet. A little moderate physical activity will do wonders for your mood.

People like you and I tend to overdo everything, we're 'all or nothing' types. It's that perfectionist personality type again. Implement these changes slowly... over time.

Today we're going to learn how to be more effective at managing our emotions and less affected by them.

When you are in an agitated state, you are all worked up. Someone touches you and you jump. The phone rings and you're startled. A sudden noise shocks you.

Anxious people overreact to everything from bad news, a sad television program, to a turbulent flight. We take everything personally and literally; we take everything to extremes.

When we learn to put things in proper perspective, we are in control and we no longer have to be afraid. We can be positive instead of negative, rational instead of irrational.

So, let's begin session 6 of my seven part mini-program titled:

How to Overcome Anxiety and Depression and Start Living Life with Confidence, Joy and
Okay, let's begin...

Here's What You Can Expect in My FREE Course:

Session 1: Lucinda's Story: You're Not Losing Your Mind.
Session 2: Where Does Your Anxiety and Depression Come From?
Session 3: How to Stop a Dreaded Attack Before it Starts.
Session 4: Self Sabotage: Are You Destroying Yourself from the Inside Out?
Session 5: How to Starve Your Anxiety & Depression of the Fuel it Needs to Thrive
Session 6: How to Take Control of Anger, Guilt, and other Toxic, Negative Emotions
Session 7: From Victim to Victor: Never Let Stress Rule Your Life Again

Jeff, remember to save this in your email folder named: 'Lucinda Bassett's Mini Life Makeover.' Also, print this information right now so you can read it when you are offline.

Session Six: How to Take Control of Anger, Guilt, and other Toxic, Negative Emotions

These proven tips will show you how to become more effective and less affected by emotions that can make you sick.

Anger, guilt, and worry - gifts we give ourselves.

There was a young woman in one of my groups who had a problem with anger. She came in one night very concerned and embarrassed about an incident that had happened the night before involving her fiancé. "He had arrived to my place late," she explained. "I had made a great dinner and the longer I waited for him, the angrier I became. The food was getting cold, I had an exceptionally bad day and I just really needed to talk to him."

"When he finally got to my apartment I exploded. I said horrible things and used bad language. I was like a time bomb ready to go off."

Mary was having an anxiety attack, fueled by anger. It really scared her because she felt so completely out of control, secretly worried that there might be something wrong with her. She said that this had happened many times before. "After a tirade, I feel as if I've been abusive. I'm embarrassed and ashamed and I have terrible guilt."

We can't discuss guilt without bringing up anger and blame. As a matter of fact, they are all so closely intertwined it's difficult to discuss any one of these without eventually touching on the other members of the "gruesome threesome."

There are various ways people express their anger and most of them are ineffective. There was another particularly angry woman who came to group. She had wanted her husband to work overtime so they'd have money to build a spare room onto their house. She had really pushed him into taking on extra work, but once he did, she was angry that he was working such long hours. When she complained about her situation, we said to
her, "Now wait just a minute here! YOU were the one who wanted the spare room!"

The next week she arrived at group very excited. She could hardly wait to tell us what she had done. "Normally when Alan gets home I have his dinner waiting. I greet him at the door, give him a beer and have dinner with him. But on Friday night, I wasn't there to meet him at all."

"Where were you?" I asked. "Did you go out?"

"Oh no," she said smugly. "I was home but I stayed in my bedroom. In fact, I stayed there the whole weekend and gave him the silent treatment. I never saw him or spoke to him. I really showed him!"

"Do you have a television in your bedroom?" I asked.

"No," she answered. "It's in the living room."

"Do you have a radio?"

"No."

"How about a telephone?"

"No."

"What on earth did you do for an entire weekend?"

"I read my book, some magazines, cleaned my closets and drawers and just hung out."

"And what did he do?"

"Oh, I heard him on the phone and watching television. I heard him out in the garage, messing with the grill. He mowed the lawn, drank a few beers, and napped on the couch. I just stayed right in the bedroom and ruined his weekend!"

We all exchanged glances. It sounded as if her husband was having a wonderful and relaxing time while she was angry and miserable, all cooped up in her bedroom for several days in a row. He was probably secretly grateful that she was not in his face, nagging him.

So, whose weekend did she ruin anyway?

Look, anger is not bad. You have a right to your anger, it's normal, but there is an effective way to use anger so it doesn't boil over in an explosive, unproductive manner. Most people haven't learned this skill and aren't good at utilizing anger in a productive way.

The reason we have a hard time expressing our anger is our strong need for approval. We want to be liked, at all costs. If we show someone we're angry, they might think poorly of us or they might judge us as being out of control. So we tend to only show our good side and keep the rest to ourselves out of fear of rejection or disapproval.

But a great deal of anxiety comes from built-up hostility. When we are too afraid to say something that we need to say, we're setting ourselves up for problems. You don't have to repress your feelings, no matter what they are. We're highly sensitive people who are easily irritated. We tend to overreact to the various frustrations and disappointments that are a normal part of life.

If you can recognize yourself as someone who is prone to quick irritation or verbal explosions, make a strong commitment to change your negative responses into something controlled and effective. When you're angry, I suggest you ask yourself the following.
3-Points from my 5-point Perspective Check #1

• Stop and think. Take a time out. Whether you stop for ten seconds or 24 hours, it will allow you to be clear about your desired outcome. What do you really want to happen as a result of expressing your feelings? Do you want someone to understand that you're hurt and you need to discuss the issue? Do you want to resolve a problem or do you want to make someone else feel bad too? If so, why? Isn't that nonproductive?
• Is your anger useful in this situation? Wouldn't you rather communicate and problem solve? Will you use your anger to help produce satisfying results or will it just make everybody feel worse?
• Are you angry about a situation over which you have no control and that you can't change? If it's stupid or pointless, wouldn't it be better to redirect your energy and let go, instead of wasting your time?

We dedicated an entire session to the subject of anger (Session Six) in the Attacking Anxiety & Depression program. It is a complex topic, sort of like peeling back the layers of an onion. We have a lot to cover in today's session so we must move on; but we could spend DAYS on the topic of anger alone.

Guilt.

Guilt has no real purpose, but people with anxiety tend to have a lot of it anyway. It can be related to things that happened when we were children, due to dysfunctional families, child abuse, molestation, separation from a loved one, or other environmental stressors.

Some of the people in my groups actually thought their anxiety was their just deserts for what they had done or been through in their past. Anxiety was the punishment; guilt was the generator. They were harboring it as a way of paying themselves back because they thought they didn't deserve to be happy.

Of course, this is completely untrue. We all crave and deserve happiness, but guilt keeps us from it.

Guilt is a cover-up for low self-esteem.

The guilt that you have about something you did is a cover-up for the way you feel about yourself. Maybe deep down inside you think that if people really knew who you were, how insecure you can be, how anxious you get, how depressed you sometimes are, they wouldn't like you. You may feel that at times you're a mean, selfish, inconsiderate person, secretly harboring resentment because of all you do for others, and this may make you feel guilty.

Whatever the source of your guilt the outcome will be the same. Whether your particular guilt arises from the kind of spouse you think you are, how you function as a parent, how you're treating your own parents, how you're running your business or the thoughts you carry, it all boils down to low self-esteem.

Wherever your guilt is coming from, it all breaks down to the same disempowering labels. "I'm a bad person. I did something wrong. I should be punished."

Guilt justifies your unhappiness and suffering. It justifies your reasons for having an unpleasant past. When you're feeling guilty, you may be telling yourself, "I was unkind to my wife, so I don't deserve to be happy. I'm really not a very nice person and that's why nothing goes right for me."

If you hurt someone it's easy to mistakenly think that when they see your guilt, they'll know you're paying for what you did. However, it never works that way. You suffer and they end up with a grouchy partner, filled with shame, who is depressing to be around.

If you are harboring guilt, here are some questions to ask yourself to bring your feelings into proper perspective.

3-Points from my 5-point Perspective Check #2
• If you hurt someone, was it deliberate? Or did you act out of fear or a need you thought you had at the time? Was it your own pain that motivated you to hurt someone else?

• Did you do something that was really so terrible? If so, by whose standards?

• It's the guilt you feel nonproductive? Are you beating yourself up and making yourself miserable? Or are you being realistic, feeling regret and remorse and taking steps to develop a sensible strategy for change, forgiveness, and acceptance? Can you find a way to forgive yourself and move beyond it?

No one is perfect. We all have past situations that we wish we had handled differently. Being guilty and giving yourself a hard time will only cause more negative feelings. Remorse on the other hand is a productive human response, completely different from guilt. Remorse leads to forgiveness. If we want to understand what we did and ways to change, we must learn to cultivate and attitude of forgiveness toward ourselves. Without it, being honest will be too painful.

How can we take an honest look at our actions if we’re waiting in the wings to criticize and scold ourselves? Only if we know how to forgive ourselves will we find the courage to be honest with ourselves and others. People who continually blame and persecute themselves blow their actions way out of proportion. Wouldn't you be willing to forgive someone else for doing something he or she sincerely regretted? Why aren’t you willing to forgive yourself?

We can’t change the past. What’s done is done. If we want to get healthy we must learn to forgive both ourselves and others. Then we can begin to let go of guilt and move forward.

3-Points from my 5-point Perspective Check #3

• If your wrongdoing is something you can apologize for, do so. Do not be concerned with how much time has passed. Whenever you let someone know you’re sorry, you’ll be amazed at the sense of relief you’ll feel. You’re apologizing to release yourself from the bondage of guilt, but remember: you can’t control someone else’s reaction. It may not be the one you wanted, but YOUR reaction is what’s important. When you apologize to someone else, be the first one to accept it.

• If your guilt feels unsurpassable, allow yourself to have it, but set a time limit. How long will you let yourself suffer for your mistake? An hour? A day? Certainly not any longer than that! Take some time alone and reflect on what happened. What can you do to ensure you won’t repeat it? What positive lessons are available through your mistake? Can you give yourself credit for being honest, for growing and learning, for becoming a more responsible person? Doesn’t this sound better than making yourself feel bad and sick?

About the Author:
Lucinda Bassett
Founder, CEO of the Midwest Center for Stress & Anxiety.

For more than 1 million anxiety sufferers, Lucinda Bassett is a symbol of hope and strength. Severely affected by anxiety, panic, and depression in her 20s, she found the help she needed to overcome anxiety and depression. Determined to help others do the same, she founded the acclaimed Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety.

Lucinda is also a nationally renowned motivational speaker and presenter. Her techniques have been shared with a variety of major corporations, professional associations and medical and educational institutions.

She has appeared on hundreds of local and national radio and television programs including Oprah, The View, Montel and Robert Schuller’s Hour of Power. Plus, Lucinda and her work have been featured in a variety of high-profile publications, including Health, FamilyCircle, Cosmopolitan and even the Journal of Clinical Psychology.

Most important, Lucinda is dedicated to helping those who are needlessly suffering from anxiety and depression. It is her life’s work and her solemn commitment.

Blame
Blame is something we learn at a very young age. I see it already programmed into children at school and in the neighborhood. A little boy slipped and fell down and when he went crying to his brother, he was asked, "Who made you cry? Who did this to you?" It's almost instinctual.

Unless we get a handle on it, we can carry that programming with us through the rest of our lives. So what's your biggest blame, the reason you think you have been held back? What or who do you blame for your pain and anxiety? So whose fault is it anyway?

My biggest blame, far and away, was my father. The fact that he was an alcoholic was my excuse for my "have-nots" - the things I didn't have or felt I couldn't accomplish. I spent the better part of my life blaming him when things didn't go my way. When I didn't go to college right away, when I didn't have the money I needed, or when I wasn't happy, when I didn't get the job I wanted, subconsciously I thought it was because of my father.

Once I grew up I came to realize that until I forgave him, I'd be tied to the reason for my unhappiness, and therefore, tied to my unhappiness.

The truth is... nobody is to blame.

It's nobody's fault that you're anxious, but you're the only one who can help you overcome it.

If you're willing to stop blaming your father, your teacher, your spouse, or whatever and say, "It's nobody's fault that I'm the way that I am. I want to change my life and I have the courage, the power, and the energy to do it," then I'd like to congratulate you.

You are on the path to releasing yourself from guilt, anger, worry, and blame. You're taking responsibility for your own fulfillment and peace of mind.

Freedom is just around the bend.

Let's recap what we covered today:

- You have a right to anger; it's a normal human emotion.
- There is an effective way to use anger so it doesn't boil over in an explosive, unproductive manner
  - Stop and think. Take a time out. Consider, is your anger useful in this situation? Or are you angry about a situation over which you have no control, that you cannot change
- Guilt is useless and fosters disempowering labels. "I'm a bad person. I did something wrong. I should be punished."
  - Being guilty and giving yourself a hard time will only cause more negative feelings. Analyze with an open mind.
  - Apologize if you can
  - Accept that you're human and will make mistakes.
  - Let go

In our final session we're going to come to the fork of Stress Road. We're going to learn how to choose the "right bend" at the fork in the road and be less affected by stress. We'll look at the three options available to us when dealing with stress-producing situations: Eliminate, Modify, or Under-react.

Here's to the new you,

Lucinda Bassett

P.S. Jeff, if you're looking for a little more on today's session paste the following link into your browser for a quick video presentation: http://www.stresscenter.com/sessionpro/session6.htm