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## Slow Talk

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Slow talk is helpful and practical because it slows our physiological responses down. Using slow talk calms our rapid heartbeat, our rising blood pressure, and fear of impending danger. We calm down the excess adrenaline and cortisol in our bodies when we use slow talk. It enables us to feel more relaxed and less anxious. We can use slow talk to accomplish all this.



By using slow talk, we keep the rhythm of our speaking at a regular pace, rather than speeding up and letting anxiety take control.

In the past, anxiety caused us to speed up, our thoughts went a hundred miles an hour, and we felt overwhelmed because of it. Too much was happening... too fast.

When we feel anxious, *adrenaline* has pushed us so far that the brain is overwhelmed with negative thoughts and emotions, and we are unable to slow things down and be rational. Some people freeze when the automatic negative thoughts are this racy. Others try to speak, and end up saying something forced, quick, and out of context.

Sometimes we make no sense because we mumble and stammer under our breath. In the race to say something and get it over with, we pressure ourselves to say anything, whether it makes sense or not.

**Responding to anxiety by speeding up is a recipe for disaster – not a solution to the problem.**

Slow talk is simply talking slowly and calmly. There is nothing magical about it. All that's involved is relaxing – to prevent yourself from speeding up. You use slow talk to keep yourself away from the rush of anxiety and the damage it causes.

By deliberately taking your time and slowing yourself down, you'll be slowing down the excessive rush of adrenaline and cortisol in your body. Keeping your speech at a regular steady rhythm, and not allowing anxiety to speed you up, will reduce the amount of anxiety you feel and allow you to be calmer.

Slow talk takes the pressure off yourself, and returns you to a calmer frame of mind. As you speak in slow talk, you begin to control the excessive release of adrenaline and cortisol in your body.

Slow talk or calm talk means just that. When we are talking, we are not going to speed up. Even when we feel anxious, we speak calmly, peacefully, and clearly, and we take our time.

If we speed up, as anxiety wants us to do, we start to think and talk very quickly. The faster we think, the more runaway our thoughts become, and our brain is filled with anxiety and fear.

We need to slow down and calm down instead. The quickest way to do that is by slowing our speaking down.

Slowing the speed of your talking when you feel anxious slows the excessive adrenaline being released. It relaxes you, calms you, and clears your mind – all at the same time. With practice, you will feel the difference, as you deliberately refuse to be pressured and rushed into things.

Relax, and give yourself enough time to respond to the situation. By refusing to rush yourself, your mind stays calm and organized.

When you speak in slow talk, you sound clear and understandable. You sound more organized and focused. In return, people hear what you're saying as being valuable – because slowing down – and not rushing things – sounds more professional and authoritative.

**Physiologically, by refusing to speed up, you are not allowing the adrenal glands to flood your body with excessive amounts of adrenaline and cortisol.**

Just like it sounds, slow talk is nothing more than slowing down your speech so that the adrenaline and cortisol in your body is slowed down, too. When you take your time, refuse to speed up, and use slow talk, your heart rate and blood pressure both go down.

We want to use slow talk to calm ourselves down – with our speech, and with all our other physical responses as well.

Eventually, our body slows down because we have practiced using slow talk until it's second nature to us. By slowing or calming down, you put yourself in *control* of your emotions.

When you want to control anxiety, the first thing you do is slow yourself down, and if you're in a social situation, you slow your speech down. By doing this, it puts you in control of your anxiety. As you use slow talk more often and in more situations, it becomes routine and becomes a habit. Then you have a strategy that can always keep anxiety away.

The greatest benefit of all is that you feel *less anxious*. You have some control over your anxiety.

As you talk to others or read something over to yourself in slow talk, you sound more relaxed and peaceful. You *feel* this calmness, and the clarity of thought you bring to the conversation is *heard* by other people.

As a result, other people feel comfortable in your presence. They feel relaxed around you. All of this happens as a result of slowing yourself down by using slow talk.

By using slow talk, you are calming down your social anxiety.

As you practice using slow talk this week, see if you can feel the calmness in it, and be aware that when you use slow talk with other people, they will be more prone to listen to you because you sound calm.

Using slow talk will calm you down and reduce your anxiety.

### **Get started using slow talk:**

- Practice slow talk by reading a handout over to yourself during your 30 minute a day study time. There are additional therapeutic handouts for you to read in the online session #2 materials.
- Each day, read over a handout to yourself, out loud, in slow talk. It may feel unusual at first, but that's because you're not used to reading clearly and precisely. Talk so that, if others were present, they could understand you. Don't rush your reading or speed up your speech.
- Practice using slow talk so that it becomes an automatic way of speaking, especially when you feel anxious. When you're anxious, deliberately refusing to speed up will control the level of adrenaline and cortisol in your system.
- Remember that slow talk is not a strange or mysterious process. All you're doing is *not* allowing anxiety to speed you up when you feel anxious.