

It can be really hard not to focus on how we are feeling. When our emotions are so loud, they can easily control our thoughts and perspective. However, I honestly believe that I have found a solution. It works in the short term and, with practice, works in the long term.

The Boat on the Water

Diving into our anxiety

Imagine your mind is a boat. It is floating on the sea and the water is calm. You are therefore calm. Suddenly, far off on the horizon, you notice a wave forming. This wave is the anxiety. You know, inevitably, that this wave will pass through you as it makes its journey to the shore. You've experienced anxiety before and you know you don't like it. You start to worry and the boat starts to rock. The wave is getting closer now and the anticipation is too much. The boat is rocking very aggressively. Just a few metres and the wave of anxiety will you. Panicking, the boat rocking, the wave hits the side of the boat and water gushes into the hull. Now the water is filling up the inside of the boat. It encompasses the physical being of the boat. It encompasses the whole mind and body.

Accepting our anxiety.

Imagine your mind is a boat. It is floating on the sea and the water is calm. You are therefore calm. Suddenly, far off on the horizon, you notice a wave forming. This wave is the anxiety. You know, inevitably, that this wave will pass through you as it makes its journey to the shore. You've experienced anxiety before and you know you don't like it. But you remember that last time you let the emotion wash over your whole being that it could not pass through the other side of the boat. This time you notice the wave and accept it. 'Look, there is anxiety in the distance. It is coming closer and will soon pass through me.' The boat waits patiently for the wave to travel closer. The boat accepts that the anxiety is there. Nobody can get rid of it. But because the boat is so accepting, the boat ceases to rock. The wave hits the side of the boat gently and the whole boat lifts up and bobs calmly over the wave. The anxiety has gone. It lasted shorter than before. This is because if we give our emotion the space to pass through our mind and body as it naturally should then the experience will be far more bearable. If we put up a defense and try to prevent the emotion, it ends causing a big mess and hangs around for a lot longer.