

## Helpless

I know how anxiety feels. I know it can be the worst feeling in the world. I know that sometimes I feel like I am trapped in this spinning cycle. I usually get anxiety towards the nighttime, probably because everything is shutting down and sometimes I don't know what can happen during the night. Sometimes I feel this weird feeling in my stomach even hours before I start to worry and spin into this mindset of irrationality. Usually what I do to help myself in the middle of the night, or even when I am just going to sleep, is to just try and calm myself down. I know that sometimes this is very hard for people who struggle with anxiety, including myself. But as much as it stinks to admit it, I AM in control of my my brain.

Let's start off with a scenario that actually happened to me a couple of nights ago that could really happen to anyone. Picture this, you are sleeping over at a friend's house, when you find yourself tossing and turning in bed because you just can't seem to get comfortable. You try to go back to sleep, but you can't because your normal sound drowning fan isn't on, so you hear every single noise that occurs inside and outside of the house. You try to text your mom; she doesn't answer. What do you do? What I did was spiral into a fit of non-realistic, dark, and scary thoughts. It wasn't good for me and my mind. I tried to remember what my mom said other times: I was safe and in control. Close my eyes. Wiggle my fingers and toes. Relax every part of my body. Count my breaths. If you are in this situation, you could try sleep meditation by just googling "Sleep Meditations for Kids" on YouTube. Much like the Sleep Meditation, you could also try some form of focusing that takes your mind off of all of the thoughts that are

occurring within your brain. For example, if there is any fan or sound maker that produces light, white noise around you, try turning that on. Close your eyes and see if you can hear if there is a slight change in pitch within it. Usually you will eventually drift off to sleep. One thing that helps me the most is to pop in my earbuds, and listen to my favorite songs at the moment. Again, this helps to get your mind off of everything and refocuses your brain

I went to California for ten days during the summer with my grandmother after I was in NYC with my sister and parents. I was nervous a lot of the time, but I was too distracted to really feel the anxiety sneaking up on me. Now the reality starts to kick in. I have never been away from my parents for this long. My breathing starts staggering, and my heart starts racing. My vision gets blurry, and my head starts pounding. I slowly sit down on the couch and feel the wet tears slowly fall down my face onto

my nose and drip off onto the ground. My mom notices me and asks me what's wrong. I tell her that I don't want to go anymore and that I'm feeling very anxious. The thing about anxiety is that it is the thing that makes you study for a test and be hesitant about going down a huge water-slide; but it can also be the reason you miss out on things that could be life changing opportunities. I knew that California would be amazing, but my brain was also telling me that I wasn't strong enough to go all the way across the country and leave my parents in New Hampshire. My mom, being the amazing mom that she is pretty much, said that it was my choice but left an undertone of "but you will really disappoint your cousins." So I decided to go because I knew that it would be an amazing experience that I didn't want to miss out on, despite what my anxious brain was telling me..

During my adventures in California, I wrote some things in my journal so that I could get all of my emotions out onto pieces of paper. This is what I came up with. “...The goodbye at the airport was hard because I’ve never been this far away for this long...” (from my house and my parents.) “I feel like crawling into a closet and crying until the ten days are over. It’s 7:40 a.m. here right now, which means it is 10:40 a.m. in Nashua. No one is up... I didn’t get much sleep last night and ended up sleeping with Nani which I’ll probably do again. I want my mom. I want her to hold my hand and tell me everything will all be fine. I want her here. I want her. I need her. She told me writing is a good escape. I agree...Being here without my mom is the scariest thing ever. My anxiety gets worse and worse as my mind starts to wander off the pages of the book. I’m shaking. I’m scared. I’m nauseous. I’m afraid. I am helpless.”

I am not helpless though. YOU are not helpless. I am learning how to deal with my anxiety. I now know I can take back control by using some of my coping strategies. I now know I can get help. I now know if I talk to someone, it helps. You can too and you can help others as well by sharing your personal stories. All you have to remember is that IT WILL END. YOU CAN DO THIS.