

3 Ways to Support Your Anxious Partner



By Sherianna Boyle

Having a partner who tends to worry about the past and future can be both physically and mentally exhausting. Some of the symptoms of anxiety include fear, self doubt, dread, and negative thinking. Over time, this can take its toll on both partners. Relationships that start close and caring may become tense and hurtful.

When this occurs, the relationship itself is a trigger for old fears and wounds. Science shows what you think and believe about stress and anxiety matters. If you want to support your partner, yet you secretly believe their stress is the source of your problems, this is likely to exacerbate rather than diminish the symptoms. Supporting your partner is not as much about what you *will* do but how you **are** being. Below are three basic guidelines to support you through this process:

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1. Watch your language: Notice if you hear yourself say (either silently or out loud) statements such as, *He is so anxious or She is so reactive*. When thoughts are repeated they can turn into beliefs. Unconsciously, your partner is likely to pick up more on what you believe rather than what you think. If what you believe is judgmental in nature know that nothing changes from a state of judgment. It is a growth barrier. People grow and learn from being heard, appreciated, and loved. When negative thoughts come your way, visualize wiping the words from your mind. The key is to do this from a place of playfulness, meaning keep it light and non-

aggressive.

2. Practice neutral observations: Now that you have erased the words from your mind, take a deep inhale and exhale. On inhale, puff out your lower abdomen. On exhale, pull in your navel. Watch how the breath lands on your skin. Notice any sensations and tingly feeling as you continue to breathe three to four more times (slowly). As you practice observing yourself through a more neutral state, you can then practice this with your partner. Next time your partner complains or worries about something, return to neutral observations. This allows you to break free from feeding anxious behaviors. Often, couples unconsciously get into the habit of being stressed around each other. Neutral observations allow you to break this neurological pattern.

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3. Exercise gratitude: Anxiety and gratitude cannot live together. You cannot be grateful and fearful at the same time. One of the best ways to support your partner is to express your appreciation and gratitude. It could be as simple as saying thankful or acknowledging something you appreciate.

Sherianna Boyle is the author of [The Four Gifts of Anxiety](#). She is also the co-host of the television show, 'Thriving from Anxiety.' Her background includes working as a school psychologist, adjunct psychology professor, parent educator, seasoned yoga/mediation teacher, professional speaker, and mother of three children. Additional resources, such as her video download on Yoga for Anxiety, visit www.sheriannaboyle.com.