

## Class 1 Releasing the Hold of Anxiety: How to Reclaim Peace Transcript

Transcript:

(00:01) Hi everybody and welcome to class number one about anxiety and we're going to be talking about anxiety for over these next few lessons. Something I like to do when I am doing teaching is I like to have kind of an object lesson uh some some sort of object as a metaphor for what we can connect into and build understanding.

(00:29) And so in the past I've used Whoops. I I've used a nest to describe um how we need to be living in a community of supportive friends uh when we're recovering or just in life in general. Uh at times when I'm talking to people and they're kind of all messy because of something that's recently happened, I grab this bottle and then I shake it all about because that's what happens in life at times.

(01:00) and then um over time it begins to settle and find a new place. So that's another object lesson I've used. Uh another one I have used is I grabbed a spade or it's a shovel in this case and um talked about how we need to dig. We need to do the work if we're going to get out of um some of the situations we are in. Um and recently when I did some teaching about providence, I actually used the um object lesson of a sailing boat and how we need to set our sails and life is much like a boat.

(01:36) We need to catch the wind etc etc etc. So I like object lessons cuz I I think they really speak to something in the brain and that people you can connect with it and work with it. Now, no object lesson is perfect. No metaphor is perfect. But I'm trying to find something that really um people can connect to. And so when I was thinking about this um uh doing this teaching around anxiety, I went to thinking about how uh particularly for me, I've noticed my anxiety goes out and I can hold it there and it can build up and get worse and

(02:13) then it gets really tired and it has to swing back and often swings back to a place of exhaustion and depression and then something will trigger it and go up. So, I got to thinking about how life um how I'm a bit like a swing. So, um Sharon, my wife, built um this amazing little wooden um swing out of uh ice cream sticks.

(02:41) Um and I'm going to use it as an illustration to describe how we um how to handle anxiety. And so, this is us. This is um the swing is us. All right. And um and what what we put our concentration on. This is what we put our concentration on the seat. And onto the seat we might have some particular thing that we are particularly anxious about.

(03:10) It may be something small in our mind or big. Um and I'm going to use a little stone to put it on there. Right. And so at the moment, um, the swing is moving around a bit because I'm not steady on my feet. But when we when we get anxious, we push our attention on that thing out into the future. All right? You can see it out there.

(03:39) Now, if you've ever pushed a child or an adult on a swing and you've held it out there for a long period of time, you know that it gets tiring to hold it out there. Oh man, it gets tiring. And um and it's a focus. It's a pressure because gravity is wanting to push it back to the center. and you're pushing against something um that's actually you you really probably shouldn't be pushing against, but you're pushing out into the future.

(04:13) And anxiety is always focused on the future. And when you've when you've got so tired with it and actually if you hold it there long enough, the brain is actually starting to say, "I'm always going to be looking out to the future." No matter if it's um in the next few minutes or in the next year or the next week, you're looking out to the future.

(04:30) What happens is you get tired and what happens? It swings back and guess what? You might well swing back into depression because depression is always has a focus on the past. Oh, this happened. This happened. I'm living in the past. And okay, and holding yourself back in the past. That also is exhausting and tiring.

(04:57) And then you start thinking about the future and it goes back up to here. Whereas um yeah swings are fun of course but not swings of the mind which take us to extremes where we really want to be is quite centered and grounded. Okay. Now as you notice um the swing is swinging slightly and that's normal isn't it? Like in the day during the day you have little little times when you swing out swing out that's kind of normal.

(05:29) It's the extremes that we are concerned about where we we take quite a big strong focus and we start forming patterns in our brain to being more out there or more back here. All right? And so and I've had times when I've wildly gone out into the into the future. I often do. Uh, and as I say, it exhausts me and I have to start thinking about, hold on, hold on, what am I what's on my swing? What am I focusing on? What is within my control? um which we'll we talk about in the next lesson and what is not and within my control what is my responsibility what is not my

(06:10) responsibility but always wanting to come back to the middle into the center and I I take comfort from uh a lot of scripture there's a lot in the Bible is just full of um stories about people like myself and you that had similar struggles that we do and I take comfort from what Jesus said and and Jesus said in Matthew 6.

(06:37) So do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today. So Jesus is saying yeah you will have worries in today. Um and you will have worries tomorrow but just focus on what is on today. And uh so what he's saying is don't go out that far. All right? Don't go to the extremities and stay there cuz um better just to stay within your own wheelhouse of today cuz there's enough for you to think about today.

(07:09) The brain can only take so much. Uh if you start thinking about way up there, you're going to be um getting really quite anxious and stressed out and God doesn't want that. Another thing that is um all throughout the Bible there's a familiar theme. you know, you you read read just about every page. Um, and it's this, do not be afraid. I am with you.

(07:33) Now, we can read that as a command of God to say, do not be afraid. No, it's not. It's more of an invite of presence. Because often it goes on and says something like, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I'll uphold you with my victorious right hand.

(07:57) So there is a comfort in staying grounded in the present right now. And if we know um if we look at a lot of anxiety research and depression research, there is um a familiar theme is to come back to being centered, to being grounded, to um learn about breath, um to mindfulness, meditation exercises, those sort of things, problem solving um depressive or um anxious issues into being something that we can do and uh we're going to be talking about that in this course.

(08:37) So, I would like you um to see yourself as a swing. Okay? And you may want to actually even draw a picture of a swing on a piece of paper and then ask yourself uh what is on the seat? Okay. What is grabbing your attention um and holding you out there? What's where's your attention, your focus going? What's the rock that you are focusing on? Write it down or write them down.

(09:06) Write them down. Um, imagine yourself and you are pushing that seat out and you're holding it out there. And it's actually a focus away from the here and now, the right now. And

you probably see that the the more you hold it out there, the bigger the problem becomes. And it sort of starts to spiral out there and get bigger and bigger and bigger.

(09:30) Um, but also you start to see actually there's a great a lot of energy within you that needs to keep it being held out there. And think about how much energy does it take to hold out that little weight. Feel it. Feel it in your body. Yeah. And you want to let it go. Um, but maybe there's something that says you can't let this go. You can't let this go.

(09:54) No, you've got to hold it because if you don't hold it, um, something worse might happen. But you know you want to let it go because you're getting tired. And so you let it go. Back it comes. And what happens? You go swinging back into the past to your depressive feelings. And then just let it slowly retract into the center right into now.

(10:18) And focus on something very tangible which is your breath. Just noticing your breath in and out in and out. And we're going to be talking about some habits that you can form, some exercises where um you can learn to be far more centered in who you are, what you're doing right in this day. Uh things like mindfulness, meditation, prayer, scripture memorization, recognizing what is in your control, what is outside of your control, what is within your responsibility, what is outside of responsibility.

(10:56) Okay. So, that's the lesson one.