5 Steps to Prevent an Unsuccessful Career Due to Social Anxiety

Has social anxiety ever limited you in your career no matter how much effort you have made? Social anxiety disorder can make a person feel overwhelmed with anxiety every day in social situations. This disorder creates limits because it is a constant reminder of feeling anxious, abnormal, and unsociable. If social anxiety is untreated, trying to expose yourself to the world can worsen your symptoms by creating panic attacks and feeling the need to hide from everyone. It is a constant battle between yourself and your mind. One may be able to function effectively and no longer endure limits in career success if the individual receives the appropriate treatment. All individuals should receive treatment that is best suitable for their needs (Leary 184). This article will master five ways to prevent an unsuccessful career due to social anxiety.

The first step is acknowledging your social anxiety. Being in denial will only prevent seeking help to treating social anxiety. We need to become aware that social anxiety does exist and that it takes control of career advancement. Denial creates limits because we build an invisible shield to protect our ego whenever the subject arises (Richards, Ph.D. web). Social anxiety is an intense uncontrollable fear that causes the individual to stay away from places or events because they are afraid of being judged by others or being embarrassed (Online NIH). Living in constant fear or anxious state for weeks before a problematic situation arises can get in the way of the individuals life and therefore affecting career success (Online NIH).

Secondly, one must understand the thought process of a person with social anxiety. How is my career affected by these thoughts that I created?

“A man hates to go to work because he knows that meetings always involve talking to co-workers. Just the thought of speaking in front of co-workers raises his anxiety. Sometimes he can’t sleep the night before. Finally, when the meeting is over he begins to feel relief. However, then the memory of the meeting takes place in his mind. He is convinced he made a fool of himself. He becomes more anxious when he realizes that at next week’s meeting, the boss is going to be there. Although the meeting is seven days away, his stomach turns raw with anxiety and the fear floods over him again. He knows that in front of the boss he’ll stammer, hesitate, his face will turn red, he won’t remember what to say, and everyone will witness his embarrassment and humiliation. He now has seven miserable days of anxiety ahead of him, to think about it, ruminate over it, worry about it, over exaggerate it in his mind...over and over again (Richards, Ph.D. web).”
Understanding irrational thoughts created by our mind can help us become aware that the thought itself is preventing career success. Irrational thoughts have psychologically set failures for career success. A socially anxious individual may stop themselves from encountering a situation because they fear that anxiety may be triggered (Richards Ph.D. web). Becoming aware of thoughts caused by social anxiety can help change our irrational thoughts and see outcomes in perspective (Csoti153).

Thirdly we must understand the physiological effects known as “panic attacks” that are in relation to the irrational thoughts. A panic attacks derive from a triggering symptom (Online Social Anxiety Fact Sheet). A triggering symptom involves any situation that can make an individual become anxious (Online Social Anxiety Fact Sheet). Trigger symptoms create panic attacks that include shortness of breath, faint, feeling a choking sensation, palpitations of the heart, restlessness, and an increase in muscular tension (Online Panic Attack Symptoms). Panic attacks are triggered high levels of anxiety (Online Panic Attack Symptoms). These physiological effects are harmless because they are created by our state of mind (Online Myth-Conception). For example, an individual that may feel like he/she is going to faint due to a panic attack, however, it is very unlikely that the individual will faint (Online Myth-Conception). Fainting requires low blood pressure and anxiety will elevate blood pressure due to hypertension (Online Myth-Conception). It is impossible to have both low and high blood pressure (Online Myth-Conception). Though this example shows that the panic attacks are harmless to the body, the individual will experience this scenario as something surreal (Online Myth-Conception).

The fourth step involves seeking a mental health specialist. Use of therapy and perhaps medication will help function effectively in your career and lifestyle. Diagnosis starts with a person having symptoms for at least 6 months (Online NIH). Social anxiety can last for many years or a lifetime but with proper treatment to the individual’s needs, one can learn to control their anxious state (Online NIH). Seeking a mental health specialist for individual therapy, group sessions, and medication will help with the individuals’ needs rather than seeking no help (Leary 184). For example, individual therapy gives the opportunity to talk about feelings, thoughts, and troubling behaviors (Online Group Therapy). Group sessions will help the individual find support and empathy (Online Group Therapy). Sometimes psychiatrists may prescribe some sort of psychoactive drugs to alter consciousness with the compounds found in medicine (Hart 5). Medication helps alter mood and can be very beneficial to treat disorders (Hart 5). It is recommended to seek a mental health specialist and not self-medicate because all drugs are toxic if misused or abused (Hart 5).

The fifth step to preventing an unsuccessful career is building social skills. Living with social anxiety for years can prevent an individual from social interaction. One of the ways to begin interacting with a co-worker can be as
simple as saying, “Hello” or “Good Morning” and smiling. Facial expressions and body language are just as important as verbal skills (Csoti 129). Smiling can make you more approachable and friendly. Walking straight rather than slouching demonstrates confidence. Learning to adjust to people will be hard at first but with practice you’ll learn to become more interactive and gain confidence. Social skills are vital to a successful career.

In conclusion, the purpose of this article is to have a successful career even with social anxiety. Acknowledging social anxiety will help us seek help. Thought awareness prevents an individual from forming irrational thoughts that will lead to an unsuccessful career. Seeking a mental health specialist will help function more effectively with the use of therapy and sometimes medication. Social skills are essential to a successful career and without social skills we prevent success. These five steps universally contain self-awareness, self-growth, and self-exploration.

Elizabeth Millan graduated in 2012 at Rio Hondo Community College with an Associate’s Degree in Drug Studies. I am currently attending Cal State Los Angeles to pursue a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration: Option in Human Resources. Future goal is to continue my education and pursue a Master’s Degree.
Works Cited


<http://www.goodtherapy.org/group-therapy.html#>.


