

Knowing But Not Feeling



One very common way of describing anxiety/dp is like being a state of “knowing but not feeling”. I said it myself in my own initial description of the condition. For example, people with anxiety/dp might say:

“I know I’m real, and I’m still here – but I can’t *feel* it.”

Or, “I know I’m not going to go crazy or anything – but I can’t *feel* it.”

Well, that’s pretty much a perfect analogy of what is physically happening in the brain of the anxiety/dp sufferer; the neocortex (the seat of rational thought) is in overdrive, while the limbic system (the seat of emotion) is very quiet. Remember that! The way you are feeling is not because of some deep, philosophical journey or some horrible disease.

It’s just a habit that your brain has established, and that you can get back out of. You know that none of those silly existential thoughts are true - - now all you have to do is train yourself back to feeling it!

And remember: I have never come across, anyone who has harmed themselves or anyone else because of anxiety/dp. You might have unwanted thoughts like that, but it’s perfectly ok. I know that when I had anxiety/dp, I had long, seemingly unconnected trains of thought; these sometimes included hurting myself or others. But if you have thoughts like this, all you have to do is put them into perspective:

They are part of a huge train of thought that can include anything and everything. Just because you happen to have one particularly nasty thought, or even recurring

thoughts like that, doesn't give them any more credence or importance than anything else.

In fact, if anything, this type of thinking just reaffirms that anxiety/dp is a true member of the anxiety spectrum (phobias, obsessive thoughts etc), since obsessive thoughts of hurting yourself or others are *extremely* common with these conditions. These types of thoughts, just like depersonalization itself, are just a symptom of anxiety.

Because there's no black and white here; the fact is people with anxiety can experience a whole range of symptoms - depression, phobias, depersonalization, racing heart, thoughts of self-harm or harming others, etc etc. Though your primary symptom is dp, that doesn't mean that you won't experience others from time to time.

What *does* mean is that, like I've already said, dp is not a stand-alone condition. It's just a symptom, and like other symptoms, it will dissipate once you get rid of the cause: the anxiety.

And just because your thoughts seem out of control does not mean that your actions will be - because there is a big, big difference between the two! Though the anxiety/dp might make you feel that you will physically 'lose control', the simple fact is that that will never, ever happen.