

I began having panic attacks in 1978, after I went through an extremely emotionally stressful period. The doctor put me on Valium at the time, and I took the medication for five years. Then I went to another doctor, who took me off the Valium and prescribed a different kind of medication, to be taken only as needed. I never went out much then, because whenever I'd go to a crowded public place, my chest would start pounding and I'd start trembling.

I bought the Neurocalm Method because my son was going to be married and I was literally walking around in a nightmare: I worried, how was I ever going to go to the wedding? What would I do when I panicked? I had been desperately looking for a program that would help me get through that day in one piece! I didn't want to be knocked out by pills. Of course, my ultimate goal was to be able to go anywhere by myself, with confidence and in control of myself, without panicking or becoming frightened.

Soon after I started the Neurocalm Method, I began to make the necessary changes in my lifestyle. I had been on a liquid diet, eating only one little meal a day, in order to lose ten pounds before the wedding. I stopped this diet and started to eat in the way recommended by the Neurocalm Method. A couple of months later, I started my program of regular exercise. I was very careful about my diet now and also about the relaxation exercises. There were a lot of people in my exercise class, and I was pleasantly surprised that I didn't feel any of the panic I used to feel in crowds.

I was also using one of the clearing techniques explained in the Neurocalm Method and practising a completely different way of thinking. I was already feeling much better. Even my husband noticed the difference and remarked how much calmer I had become. By Christmas, I was beginning to feel a lot more optimistic about the turnaround in my life. I had some stress, some family problems at that time, but I found I really changed my outlook on things. My attitude was different now. I let things ride and I wasn't as "all strung out" as I used to be. So the stress didn't affect me that much and I was able to cope. I also became more involved socially with a women's group at my local church.

In January, we began getting ready for the wedding in March. There were a number of strategies and exercises recommended in the Neurocalm Method that I practised and completed. I also did my relaxation session faithfully every day.

I had another goal before the wedding: to be able to go shopping in Harrods. So one day, I went there with my future daughter-in-law. Once in the store, I was really surprised that I didn't feel closed in, the way I used to feel. I only had a little mild fluttering in my stomach,

but after a few moments it went away. I remembered one of the most important parts of the Neurocalm Method, and I knew how to handle it.

On the day, the weather was lovely, the bride was lovely. I wore a beige gown that really looked great on me. I also had my makeup put on by a professional; I felt like a movie star! I was so excited, but it was a happy excitement. About 300 people attended the wedding. The main event for me was when we all walked into the ballroom and they introduced us. I had a wonderful time. The evening went by so fast, I couldn't believe it. It was the early hours of the morning when it was all over.

I feel the Neurocalm Method helped me a lot. It made me realise so many things. I'm more aware now. I know what can bring on a panic attack and I see that doing the right things helps me avoid the panic attack. I go to a lot of places by myself now. There's a big shopping hall near me and I now go there all the time. (It's really within walking distance, so I often walk there.) Before, when I had to go there, I'd hurry up with everything just to get it over with. But now I go there leisurely. I take my time, look around, and I really enjoy it.

Now, whenever I go somewhere, I tend not to think "what if this, what if that." I just go where I have to go.

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