

what's the worst that could happen? 13

for you to know

When you feel anxious, you can use the question, "What is the worst that could happen?" to help lower your anxiety.

Chris couldn't decide if he should try out for the basketball team or not. He really wanted to be on the team, but thinking about tryouts raised his anxiety level so high that he didn't know if he could go through with it.

His dad told Chris to ask himself what was the very worst thing that could happen if he tried out. Chris said the worst thing would be missing every shot during the tryouts. His dad said they should think about what the odds were that the worst thing would happen. They knew Chris was a very good basketball player and he was even better at shooting than passing or dribbling. In school and shooting hoops in his driveway, he usually made 90 percent of the lay-ups he tried. If he did 10 percent worse at tryouts because he was under pressure, he would still probably make 80 percent. That was nowhere near missing every shot!

Then Chris's dad asked what would happen if, against those very high odds, Chris actually did miss every shot he tried. How would he handle it? Chris said he would feel really embarrassed. Then, he guessed, he would probably go home and have dinner, do his homework, and watch TV as usual. He would probably feel disappointed or down for a while, but eventually he would forget about it and go on with his life. He'd try out again next year.

Thinking realistically about the worst thing that could happen helped lower Chris's anxiety level. He realized that first, the odds were very slim that the worst thing would happen, and second, if it did happen, he could handle it. He then felt peaceful enough to decide he would try out for the team.

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directions

In each of the spaces that follow, draw a picture or write about something that makes you feel very anxious when you think about doing it. Below that, write what you think is the worst thing that could happen if you do it. Next, circle the percentage that realistically describes the chances of this worst thing happening. Finally, describe what you would do if the worst thing did happen.



The worst thing that could happen if I do this is _____

The probability of that actually happening is:

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

If it did happen, I would _____

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The probability of that actually happening is:

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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more to do

Describe how high your anxiety level was when you first considered doing each of the things you drew or wrote about.

Describe where your anxiety level is now that you have thought realistically about the worst thing that could happen.

Do you think your fears about the worst thing happening are usually realistic or not? Why?

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Tell why you might or might not risk trying either one of these things now that you have thought about the worst that could happen.

If the worst thing actually did happen, what skills would help you handle each situation?
