

The “Fact vs. Fear” Check

Write down the worry in one sentence (“If I fail this quiz, my future is ruined”). Then make two columns: Facts (what you know for sure) and Fear Stories (what your mind is adding). End by writing one balanced statement (“This quiz matters, but one quiz won’t define my semester, and I have options if I struggle”). This helps bring fears back into proportion.

The “Worst–Most Likely–Best” Exercise

For a feared situation, list the worst possible outcome, the most likely outcome, and the best possible outcome. Most students realize their mind jumps straight to worst-case and skips the realistic middle. Use the “most likely” column to decide your next action.

The “Do It Anyway” Micro-Action

When fear leads to avoidance, choose one tiny action you’ll take despite the discomfort (open the assignment, email the professor, attend the class even if unprepared). The goal isn’t to feel calm first; it’s to act, then notice that the feared outcome usually doesn’t happen or is manageable.

The Fact vs. Fear Exercise
(5 Minutes)

Name the worry:

“If I fail this quiz, my future is ruined.”

Sort it out:

Facts (What I Know for Sure):	Fear Stories (What My Mind is Adding):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ The quiz is worth 10% of the course grade✓ I studied some, even if it wasn't perfect✓ There are other quizzes and exams✓ I can talk to the professor or get tutoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ One quiz failure means I'm bad at this✓ Everyone else is doing fine except me✓ I won't recover academically✓ This will ruin my major or career

Write a balanced statement:

“This quiz matters, but one quiz won't define my semester. If I struggle, I have options and support.”

Separating facts from fear brings things back into perspective.