

Name: _____

Overcoming Anxiety About Something You Want To Do

One cognitive behavioral therapy strategy for overcoming anxiety about a deeply feared activity is to create a “hierarchy” of steps that will help you gradually engage in the activity. Ideally, the steps will help you pickup skills you need to learn, and initial steps will generate less anxiety than later ones. You can also think of ways you might reward yourself as you work through the steps. See page 2 of this worksheet for an example of how someone applied this approach to learn how to speak comfortably in public.

Goal: _____

	Steps	Anxiety (1-10)	Deadline	Reward
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Example

Goal: Give a speech

	Component	Anxiety (1-10)	Deadline	Reward
1	<i>Read an article about effective public speaking</i>	1	<i>June 1st</i>	
2	<i>Watch five Ted Talks speeches on YouTube, and grade each one using criteria from the article on effective public speaking</i>	1	<i>June 12th</i>	
3	<i>Attend four Toastmasters meetings as an observer</i>	5	<i>July 30th</i>	<i>Spa day</i>
4	<i>Sign-up to give a talk at Toastmasters</i>	8	<i>Aug 7th</i>	<i>Skip work, binge watch Godfather I-III</i>
5	<i>Write speech</i>	3	<i>Aug 12th</i>	
6	<i>Learn and practice a relaxation exercise to use before giving speech</i>	1	<i>Aug 12th</i>	
7	<i>Record myself practicing speech 4 times, and grade myself each time</i>	6	<i>Aug 19th</i>	
8	<i>Practice giving speech to my two best friends, ask for their feedback</i>	6	<i>Aug 20th</i>	<i>Treat friends to dinner at Taste of the Himalayas</i>
9	<i>Give a speech at Toastmasters</i>	10	<i>Aug 27th</i>	<i>Buy new surfboard</i>
10	<i>Continue participating in Toastmasters as long as it seems useful</i>	7	<i>n/a</i>	
11	<i>Offer to give a talk at a work-related conference or event</i>	10	<i>Oct 15th</i>	<i>Plan weekend get-away to San Francisco with best friend</i>