What Is My Anxiety Trying to Protect Me From?

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Think of one recent moment when you felt a little anxious.

Pick something you can look back on without getting swept up in it. You don't need to figure out where it started. Start with what made sense about it in that moment.

FOR EXAMPLE

I had an idea at a work meeting but stayed quiet. My mind said, "What if I sound stupid?"
If I'm honest, the part of me that wanted to stay quiet was trying to spare me embarrassment.
I might tell myself, "I get why you're worried. I'd like to give my idea a fair chance, too."

1 What was happening?

What did you notice first: a thought, a feeling in your body, or an urge to do something?

2 What did anxiety want me to do?

Maybe it wanted you to stay quiet, check again, get busy, or steer clear of something.

3 What was it afraid would happen?

If you didn't do what anxiety wanted, what did it think you might have to face?

4 What could I say back?

Try "It makes sense that you're worried about ___. What might help me right now is ___."

If no answer comes to mind, you can stop there. You can be curious without knowing yet.

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