

Practicing Opposites

This is a more advanced skill. Begin practicing this exercise whenever you find your mind telling you not to do something or think about something. This is a way of using fearful emotions and thoughts as guides to good exposure experiences.

If I'm working with someone on exposure to being at the mall, for this exercise I'll ask "*Where does your mind say we cannot go?*" If the person answers "*up the escalator,*" then it's up the escalator we go.

It's always a choice – there's never a need to force it. You could choose an alternative, such as taking the stairs if that's less difficult, leaving the escalator on an action plan list of behaviors to commit to later on.

But don't underestimate this exercise, especially if it has a playful mood. I've seen clients grab back territory they've abandoned for many years. It's a bit like deciding to ride a zip line or bungee jump for the first time – often once you begin, within seconds your fear is overtaken by a joyful sense of life expansion. Who knows? Maybe a parachute jump is next!