



Case of Joseph

Joseph (pseudonym) is a thirty-eight-year-old male who presented for counseling due to significant anxiety and what he described as “severe panic attacks”. He was feeling overwhelmed and hopeless. He recently was recruited by a new company where he would oversee a larger sales team as well as sell the product himself. The salary is much higher, and he and his wife purchased a more expensive home that has a significant monthly mortgage. Although he was recruited by the new company because of his skills and reputation in the profession, he feels panicked that he cannot succeed at the new role; that he is a fraud and that they soon will realize this. Then he will lose the job and the new house and let down his family. He said he always has been very good at sales but has never enjoyed this type of work.

Joseph reported that he is extremely anxious at the new job and will sometimes need to leave a meeting and go to the restroom to put water on his face and try calming himself down; and that the only time he is without anxiety is on the weekend until Sunday night when he thinks about work. When asked about the expectations of his new position, he discussed both supervising a sales force and also selling product himself. As this is a new product and territory for him, his boss told him that he need not worry about his sales numbers for the first several months, but he responded that he wanted to be held to the sales expectations of the position. When asked if he shared about the anxiety and panic with his wife he stated that he could never do that as she would divorce him; that he is not functioning like the man she married.

His history includes a history of success as a student athlete until an injury ended his ability to play sports. Although his college coach was very cruel and unsupportive about the injury, he called him a few years ago, to apologize for having let the team down and been unable to play. The coach did not seem to want to hear from him and the conversation was very brief. When asked how he hoped the coach would have reacted, he said he wanted him to understand that he would have done his best if he could have.