

# How to Use This Book

TRY, EXPERIMENT, take baby steps or put your seat belt on!

It's okay if it feels a little scary.

RISK, get muddy, have fun and try again. Be playful! *Gambaru!* (Japanese for "Don't give up!")

Remember that your life is a journey that is uniquely yours. In this book, you can decide what you want to read first. Consider this book as an offering of ideas. Put together the resources that are best for you.

The chapters have strategies and exercises that are useful suggestions for managing anxiety. The poetry is a small collection of artistic expression. The Chikara warrior stories have much strength and show how awareness, determination, practice, and giving to others matters. The Senjutsu (tactics) at the end of the book gives a list by story of the resources these Chikara warriors used ("senjutsu" is another Japanese word, meaning "tactic").

## ***What to expect while using the book***

Sometimes, learning a new skill is a struggle. The process of learning can be awkward. The awkwardness and unfamiliarity may bring on anxiety. This anxiety could be fear of the unfamiliar or familiar, the unknown, a perceived known, failure, and/or success. Consider where your awkwardness is coming from. Always honour yourself and listen to yourself. Be gentle and take your time. If you feel discouraged, try something else. With familiarity and experience comes confidence.

Build a list of the ideas that work for you. Copy the list a few times and put it in safe places. You will know where to find them.

Consider the support of a fellow reader and/or friend to check in with, and to exchange ideas and insight with.

You may find that some tools are already part of your foundation. My hope is that you continue building your resources. Others may come easily to you. The unfamiliar tools just take more practice, like

any new skill. From experience I have found that as we combine the tools, their effectiveness increases exponentially.

Know that we are all unique, with unique strengths and weaknesses. Consider your strengths and weaknesses and support them with curiosity and compassion.

### ***A useful check-in scale***

I would like to introduce a useful check-in scale. I find it is helpful for both myself and my clients to have a scale for measuring anxiety: 0 to 10. By giving your anxiety a number, sometimes it is easier to identify. Zero is no disturbance, so at 0 you are calm, settled, and relaxed. As the anxiety level grows, the numbers get higher.

For example, I might feel a little jittery or nervous, maybe even excited, and that might be a 2 or 3, and is very manageable. However, I know when I reach a 4, I want to begin applying my strategies. I do not want to go higher, because then the numbers escalate quickly for me.

I know that my 10 means heart pain, laboured breathing, nausea, and so on. It is hard to come down from a 10: my thoughts do not go together, as though my circuitry was misfiring. So when I notice that I am at a 4, I begin my strategies.

Some people are fine at a 5 or 6. It is important to know your limits.

It does not matter if your 2 is different from my 2. What is important is that the scale works for you and you understand what the numbers and levels mean for you.

At the beginning of this book, perhaps even after reading the definitions, you may want to check in and give yourself a number from 0 to 10.

Also check when you wake in the mornings: What number would you give yourself?

Try a creative practice from *Anxiety Warrior Volume One* or pick a strategy from the contributors and then check in again. Using the scale will help you create your supports and resources. It will be a barometer for your anxiety and will give you clues as to what exercises are most useful for you.

Children who understand numbers from 0 to 10 quickly grasp this scale and can give their parents feedback on how they are feeling.