

Life... Panicky on the 12th floor

Situation:

This afternoon I dropped my mother-in-law off at the courthouse downtown to take care of a probate matter. I parked on the top deck of the parking structure and went over to the city/county building and took the elevator up to the 12th floor. Just after I stepped out of the elevator, heard the doors close and the sound of it traveling back down is when I started to get panicky.

Symptoms:

My first thought was: "I have no way of getting out of here. I'm trapped." I started feeling light-headed and started to get shaky.

Solution:

I stood up against the wall to steady myself and repeated this is "distressing, but not dangerous," probably 100 times in a row. That one phrase is all I could remember to tell myself. I didn't want to allow the fear thoughts to take over. In a few minutes the panicky feeling subsided. I walked over to the reception area, they told me what room the probate matters were handled in and I went in to meet my mother-in-law.

In the past:

I've had problems with high anxiety and panic for more than 20 years. In the past I wouldn't have even thought about going into any building up to the 12th floor. Eight floors had always been the maximum before, and even that was tough. This is the first time I've used these verbal tranquilizers and I'm thrilled to have something to work with to keep panicky feelings minimal, instead of letting them scare the heck out of me.