

Summary of the effects of self-focused attention

1. It focuses attention onto yourself so you notice:
 - sensations like feeling hot;
 - behaviours, like fiddling with your hands;
 - emotions (or feelings), like feeling embarrassed;
 - thoughts, like 'They think I'm peculiar'.
2. You tend to see yourself as you suppose others see you — using guesswork based on what you assume to be true.
3. It makes you want to protect yourself': to keep yourself safe or escape from the situation. But this backfires because using safety behaviours makes you even more self-aware; even more self-conscious.
4. It is difficult to notice other things accurately, so you end up with less information than you need: e.g. about what someone was saying, their facial expressions or how they reacted to you.
5. You feel increasingly at risk, and all these effects get worse, the longer they go on.