

Psychology Articles

Original articles on psychology, therapy & human behavior

by Alina Abu Sheiba

M.Sc. Clinical Psychology · Content Writer · Otto Kernberg Certified

This portfolio contains 3 original articles.

Psychic Reality: Why Your Inner World Is Just as Real

Psychology Article

When we talk about "reality," we usually mean something measurable and shared. A table is real. Rain is real. But what about the pain from an old wound? The anxiety that makes your heart race even when you're completely safe?

What is psychic reality?

Psychic reality is the totality of a person's inner experience: thoughts, memories, fantasies, fears, desires. It exists inside the psyche, not in external space.

In the psychoanalytic tradition, Sigmund Freud developed this concept, noting that what matters to the psyche is not whether an event "actually" happened, but how it was experienced. Subjective experience carries its own weight and its own consequences — regardless of whether it aligns with objective facts.

Levels of reality

Objective reality — the world of things and phenomena independent of our perception: physical laws, space, time, bodily processes. Social reality — money, roles, institutions, norms. It exists through collective agreement and regulates behavior no less effectively than the laws of physics. Psychic reality — a personal inner universe. Unique to each person, and absolutely real to them from within.

Why does psychic experience feel as sharp as objective reality?

The nervous system doesn't always clearly distinguish between an external threat and an internal representation of one. When a person experiences anxiety about an imagined or anticipated situation, physiological responses — racing heart, muscle tension, changes in breathing — can be just as pronounced as in actual danger.

Trauma is a clear example: certain stimuli — a sound, a smell, a situation — can activate a state resembling the original threat, even in a safe environment. The past is experienced as if it's happening now. Early relational experiences also shape an internal "map" that colors how we perceive future relationships — even when the real circumstances have changed.

Why does this matter?

Recognizing psychic reality as fully real leads to a more accurate understanding of people. If someone's inner experience doesn't match what others observe, that doesn't make it less

real to them. This is precisely why psychological work begins with understanding the logic of a person's inner world.

Tolerance for Uncertainty: The Therapy Skill Nobody Talks About

Psychology Article

Uncertainty doesn't hurt directly — but it unsettles. Like an unanswered message. Like a meeting that's "sometime later." Like the feeling that something is building, but you don't know when or which way it'll go.

The psyche handles "unclear" poorly. It wants either "yes" or "no" — and everything in between is where anxiety tends to surface first. The psyche hates uncertainty so much it would sometimes prefer a spoiler for its own life.

What is tolerance for uncertainty?

It's the capacity to remain present in situations where there's no clear answer, no guarantee, no predictable scenario, no control over what comes next.

This isn't optimism. It isn't "letting go." It's inner support: I can hold the pause without knowing the ending.

Why does it matter?

A significant portion of adult life is uncertainty. Small, regular "I don't know's": when a reply doesn't come, when relationships shift, when feelings haven't formed yet, when a decision is ripening slower than you'd like.

Tolerance isn't patience. It's the ability to hold inner space empty — without filling it with rushed conclusions, fear, or self-destructive scenarios.

What therapy gives us through this

Less impulsive decisions — staying in the pause leads to better choices. Clearer relationships — uncertainty stops being catastrophic, and the need to pressure others for answers fades. More manageable anxiety — without the rush to "understand everything right now," the nervous system calms. More freedom — we stop reacting automatically and start choosing consciously. Resilience — the kind of inner stability that doesn't depend on external circumstances.

And most importantly: space for life itself. When we stop slamming every pause shut with answers, we make room for reality — rather than catastrophic fantasies.

Feeling More Isn't Getting Worse — It's Getting Better

Psychology Article

A psychologically mature person isn't someone who is constantly calm, joyful, and inspired. It's someone who can hold their feelings — even the ones that were once too dangerous to touch.

At a certain point in therapy, a deeply uncomfortable paradox emerges: the more stable the nervous system becomes, the more we begin to feel.

As regulation improves, the psyche stops shutting the door on emotions that once felt threatening. Anger that used to transform into anxiety. Grief that once disguised itself as exhaustion. Restlessness we escaped into busyness, food, TV shows, work. Anxiety that was too large to even name.

Stabilization means no longer needing to block emotions.

And suddenly it becomes possible to feel what the psyche used to "mute": real anger, not just irritability. Real grief, not just emptiness. Real anxiety, not a mix of impulsivity and avoidance.

This is often the moment someone says: "Why do I feel worse? I'm doing everything right." Because for the first time, you're feeling what was previously forbidden by the nervous system. Not because of weakness — but because it was a survival risk when the emotion was too large or too lonely to bear.

This is a normal part of therapy. Uncomfortable, but necessary. Feeling more means living more. And that's always a little frightening.

When emotions stop running your life from the shadows, they can finally be lived — not hidden.