



WHAT IS A FREAK OUT ANYWAY?

So, you already know that there are lots of different types of freak outs. Now it's time to figure out what it looks like when you flip your lid. I want you to think back to the last time you lost it. What do you remember?

Did you think of that time you were watching your favorite show and then your little brother stole the remote and changed the channel, so you called him a name, shoved him off the couch, and stole the remote back?

Or maybe you thought about a time you got so mad you hurled your stuffed animal across the room and knocked over a lamp? (Whoops!)

Maybe you remembered when your friend at school burst into tears in the middle of recess and ran off the field before you could ask what was wrong?

No matter what you thought of, specific examples are a great way to understand all the different types of freak outs. As you read this book, you might want to pause and think about examples from your own life. A great way to do this is to think like a fly. Imagine you were a fly on the wall, watching everything. What would the fly see right before you flipped out? What would it see or hear that would let it know you were freaking out? Jotting down some notes or ideas or sketches or scribbles is also a great way to think about what the fly might have seen.

One more thing to keep in mind: Sometimes it's hard to think about our freak outs because we end up feeling ashamed or upset. That's totally normal, and if that happens to you, just know that you can always take a break, take a breath, and keep reading when you're ready.

Oh, and if you can't think of any examples or you're not sure, that's OK, too! This Quick Quiz will help you figure it out. There are no right or wrong or better or worse answers in this quiz. The goal is to simply get you thinking about what happens when you freak out.



What's Your Flavor of Freak Out?

1 It's minutes before your big recital. You just realized you brought the wrong sheet music for the clarinet piece you've been practicing for months. Your whole family and your best friend have come to watch you play. But without your music, you've got nothing. Your music teacher is going to be so mad at you and you'll die of embarrassment. Do you:

- A.** Stand in the back of the room, unable to think, move, ask for help, or do anything at all.
- B.** Start screaming at your dad. He was the one who forgot to remind you to check everything. It's his fault you're in this mess.
- C.** Run to the bathroom, lock the door, and try not to cry.
- D.** Kick your music stand and stomp off the stage.
- E.** Race around the recital hall, checking every single music stand for your copy, even though you know there's no way it could possibly be on any of them.
- F.** Breathe in and out slowly and find a friend who also plays clarinet. Maybe they have the music?





2 You totally spaced out during social studies. When your teacher calls on you, the whole class turns and looks right at you. You don't have a clue what she's asking about or what you're supposed to say. Do you:

A. Stare at your teacher in silence because you literally can't form words.

B. Tell the teacher that you were distracted by the kid sitting next to you who wouldn't stop snapping his gum.

C. Leap out of your chair and grab the hall pass as you rush out the door.

D. Slam your textbook closed, knock it off your desk, and mutter about how you never liked this stupid class anyway.

E. Try to distract everyone with the first joke you can think of and hope the moment passes.

F. Take a deep breath, count to three, and ask your teacher if she can please repeat the question.

3 Your parents won't let you go to your best friend's sleepover because it's your grandmother's birthday brunch the next day and they're sure you're going to be too cranky after a late night out. All your friends will be there, and it's so unfair that you can't go! Do you:

A. Totally glitch out from frustration and anger and forget the entire speech you had composed in your head with all the reasons why you should be allowed to go.

B. Snarkily remind your parents that you don't get cranky because of the sleepovers, you get cranky because you have the meanest parents in the history of the universe.

C. Roll your eyes as you pick up your phone and start scrolling through social media.

D. Stand in the middle of the living room and scream about how it's not your fault if you don't make any friends and grow up to be the loneliest person who ever lived.

E. Apologize over and over again for every time you've ever been grumpy in the past and fall to your knees begging your parents to let you go *pleeeaaaasssseeeeeeeeeee*.

F. Go outside and get some fresh air to calm down. Come back inside and talk to your parents about how important this sleepover is and see if you can find a compromise.



4 Your best friend has been ignoring you all week. You know it's because the new kid in class has an enormous house with his own basketball court and a hot tub and your friend is trying to score an invite. Your feelings are hurt and you miss hanging out with your BFF. Do you:

A. Repeatedly walk up to your friend and stare awkwardly at him because the words just won't come to you.

B. Throw the basketball at his head as hard as you can during PE. That'll teach him.

C. Ignore him back. Ignore him so hard it's like he was never even born.

D. Wait until everyone leaves the gym, pick up a floor hockey stick, and whack it against the wall a bunch of times.

E. Say you're sorry, even if you're pretty sure you didn't do anything wrong.

F. Go for a quick walk around the block to chill out and then ask your friend if you can talk.



Answers:

If you got mostly A's: You're a **freezer**. Not the kind where you store ice cream (although that would be awesome), but the type where you tend to freeze up in stressful or emotional situations.

If you got mostly B's: You're a **fighter**. You tend to lash out at the people around you when you're stressed out or overwhelmed.

If you got mostly C's: You're a **flee-er**. You tend to check out, take off, or run away rather than deal with whatever's going on.

If you got mostly D's: You're a **flipper-outer**. You're likely to explode in tense or difficult moments.

If you got mostly E's: You're a **fixer**. You'll apologize (even if you didn't do anything wrong) and bend over backward to do whatever you can to make everyone else feel better, even if it makes things worse for you.

If you got mostly F's: You have some solid skills and strategies for not freaking out. That's great! And if you're not there yet, that's OK! That's what this book is for.

If you got a jumble of answers: That's OK, too. Lots of people freak out in different ways depending on what's happening, where they are, who's watching, and how likely they are to get in trouble.



TRUTH BOMB

You don't have to get an A+ in Not Freaking Out. You don't have to be perfect. Nobody is. If you get a solid B or B-, that means you're not freaking out 80 percent of the time, which is A+ AMAZING!

As you may have figured out from the quiz, even though there are about as many ways to lose your temper as there are people who have tempers, most freak outs can be grouped into five general categories: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flip Out, and Fix.

THE FIVE KINDS OF FREAK OUTS: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flip Out, Fix

1. FIGHT:

This is one of the most common types of freak out. Something happens, and you lash out and pick a fight with someone. Maybe it's the person who did the obnoxious thing that upset you in the first place, or maybe you lose it at whoever happens to be standing in front of you right at that moment, whether or not they did anything at all. Either way, you scream or shout, or say something rude that you know will make them mad. Or maybe you turn your ice cream cone upside down on some stranger's head. (I know someone—an *adult*—who did that once!)



2. FLIGHT:

Sometimes when things get hard or scary or confusing, you just take off. You stand up and stomp out of the room. You literally run away. Or maybe you physically stick around, but you disconnect and disappear into a screen, a show, or a book. You do whatever it takes to get away from whatever is going on—either with your body or your mind.



3. FREEZE:

This is when you can't move, can't think, and can't do anything at all. It feels like you've lost control of your body, like your feet are stuck in glue or your bones have turned into Jell-O. Sometimes it even feels hard to breathe. This is most likely to happen when something super surprising, unexpected, or scary happens. (Or anything involving a spider. Spiders are the worst.)



FUN FREAK OUT FACT

Lots of people are scared of spiders, but only 0.1 percent of all spiders are dangerous to humans. Scientists think that their creepy little legs and sudden, erratic movements freak us out because our brains can't predict where they're going to go next!

4. FLIP OUT:

This can look a whole lot like fighting, but the difference is that it's not directed at anyone in particular. Sometimes you just scream or slam the door or stab at your dinner as if you were trying to kill it. You mumble angry words under your breath, crumple up your homework sheet, or hurl your video game controller across the room.



5. FIX:

Sometimes when you're overwhelmed with fear or anxiety or you're super confused, you focus on fixing everything as quickly as you can. You rush in to apologize for or take back whatever you said or



did (even if you didn't say or do anything wrong!). Maybe you crack a joke or offer to share your favorite dessert that you really don't want to share or do whatever you can to just make everyone forget about whatever happened and feel better as fast as possible.

Fight. Flight. Freeze. Flip Out. Fix. Take a quick moment to think back to your answers to the quiz on pages 3–6, and what you know now about the five kinds of freak outs. Which style (or styles) of freak out seems the most like you? Maybe you're still not sure, or you can't pick out just one. That's totally normal—lots of people freak out in different ways at different times, and sometimes it feels like we're freaking out in more than one way at a time.

The Most Important Thing to Remember

Freak outs can look and feel very different for different people at different times, and even for the same person at different times. There's no right or wrong—the trick is just getting to know your style and tendencies!

Now that you know what a freak out looks like, the next step is learning how to figure out if and when you're freaking out.