

DEAR FRIENDS,

Anxiety isn't always a bad thing. In fact, it can motivate you and help you stay focused under pressure. But when worries or fears start to get in the way of your life, you have a problem.

The good news is that peace of mind may not be as far away as you think. There are many things you can do to get your anxiety in check and regain control of your life.

How to Stop Worrying

Self-Help Strategies for Anxiety Relief

Worrying can be helpful when it spurs you to take action and solve a problem. But if you're preoccupied with "what ifs" and worst-case scenarios, worry becomes a problem of its own. Unrelenting doubts and fears are paralyzing, not motivating or productive. They sap your emotional energy, send your anxiety levels soaring, and interfere with your day-to-day life—all this with no positive payoff! The good news is that chronic worrying is a mental habit you can learn how to break. You can train your brain to stay calm and collected and to look at life from a more positive perspective.

Why is it so hard to stop worrying?

Constant worrying takes a heavy toll. It keeps you up at night and makes you tense and edgy during the day. You hate feeling like a nervous wreck. So why is it so difficult to stop worrying?

For most chronic worriers, the anxious thoughts are fueled by the beliefs—both negative and positive—they hold about worrying.

On the negative side, you may believe that your constant worrying is harmful, that it's going to drive you crazy or affect your physical health. Or you may worry that you're going to lose all control over your worrying—that it will take over and never stop.

On the positive side, you may believe that your worrying helps you avoid bad things, prevents problems, prepares you for the worst, or leads to solutions.

Negative beliefs, or worrying about worrying, add to your anxiety and keep worry going. But positive beliefs about worrying can be even more damaging. It's tough to break the worry habit if you believe that your worrying protects you. In order to stop worry and anxiety for good, you must give up your belief that worrying serves a positive purpose. Once you realize that worrying is the problem, not the solution, you can regain control of your worried mind.

Why You Keep Worrying

You have mixed feelings about your worries. On one hand, your worries are bothering you - you can't sleep, and you can't get these pessimistic thoughts out of your head. But there is a way that these worries make sense to you. For example, you think:

- Maybe I'll find a solution.
- I don't want to overlook anything.
- If I keep thinking a little longer, maybe I'll figure it out.
- I don't want to be surprised.
- I want to be responsible.

You have a hard time giving up on your worries because, in a sense, your worries have been working for you.

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #1: Accept uncertainty

The inability to tolerate uncertainty plays a huge role in anxiety and worry. Chronic worriers can't stand doubt or unpredictability. They need to know with 100 percent certainty what's going to happen. Worrying is seen as a way to predict what the future has in store, a way to prevent unpleasant surprises and control the outcome. The problem is, it doesn't work.

Thinking about all the things that could go wrong doesn't make life any more predictable. You may feel safer when you're worrying, but it's just an illusion. Focusing on worst-case scenarios won't keep bad things from happening. It will only keep you from enjoying the good things you have in the present. So if you want to stop worrying, start by tackling your need for certainty and immediate answers.

Challenging intolerance of uncertainty: The key to anxiety relief

Ask yourself the following questions and write down your responses. See if you can come to an understanding of the disadvantages and problems of being intolerant of uncertainty.

- Is it possible to be certain about everything in life?
- What are the advantages of requiring certainty, versus the

disadvantages? Or, how is needing certainty in life helpful and unhelpful?

- Do you tend to predict bad things will happen just because they are uncertain? Is this a reasonable thing to do? What is the likelihood of positive or neutral outcomes?
- Is it possible to live with the small chance that something negative may happen, given its likelihood is very low?

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #2: Create a worry period

It's tough to be productive in your daily life when anxiety and worry are dominating your thoughts. Trying to stop worrying doesn't work - at least not for long. You can distract yourself for a moment, but you can't banish your anxious thoughts for good. Trying to do so often makes them stronger. But that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do to control your worry. You just need to try a different approach. Rather than trying to totally suppress an anxious thought, develop the habit of postponing worrying.

Learning to postpone worrying:

- Create a "worry period." Choose a set time and place for worrying. It should be the same every day (e.g. In the living room from 5:00 to 5:20 p.m.) and early enough that it won't make you anxious right before bedtime. During your worry period, you're allowed to worry about whatever's on your mind. The rest of the day, however, is a worry-free zone.
- Postpone your worry. If an anxious thought or worry comes into your head during the day, make a brief note of it on paper and postpone it to your worry period. Remind yourself that you'll have time to think about it later, so there's no need to worry about it right now. Save it for later and continue to go about your day.
- Go over your "worry list" during the worry period. Reflect on the worries you wrote down during the day. If the thoughts are still bothering you, allow yourself to worry about them, but only for the amount of time you've specified for your worry period. If the worries don't seem important any more, cut your worry period short and enjoy the rest of your day.

Postponing worrying is effective because it breaks the habit of dwelling on worries in the present moment. As you develop the ability to postpone your anxious thoughts, you'll experience a greater sense of control.

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #3: Challenge negative thoughts

If you suffer from chronic anxiety and worries, chances are you look at the world in ways that make it seem more dangerous than it really is. For example, you may overestimate the possibility that things will turn out badly, jump immediately to worst-case scenarios, or treat every negative thought as if it were fact. You may also discredit your own ability to handle life's problems, assuming you'll fall apart at the first sign of trouble. These irrational, pessimistic attitudes are known as cognitive distortions.

Although cognitive distortions aren't based on reality, they're not easy to give up. Often, they're part of a lifelong pattern of thinking that's become so automatic you're not even completely aware of it. In order to break these bad thinking habits and stop the worry and anxiety they bring - you must retrain your brain.

Start by identifying the frightening thought, being as detailed as possible about what scares or worries you. Then, instead of viewing your thoughts as facts, treat them as hypotheses you're testing out. As you examine and challenge your worries and fears, you'll develop a more balanced perspective

Stop worry by questioning the worried thought:

- What's the evidence that the thought is true? That it's not true?
- Is there a more positive, realistic way of looking at the situation?
- What's the probability that what I'm scared of will actually happen?
- If the probability is low, what are some more likely outcomes?
- Is the thought helpful? How will worrying about it help me and how will it hurt me?
- What would I say to a friend who had this worry?

Cognitive Distortions that Lead to Anxiety and Worry

All-or-nothing thinking	Looking at things in black-or-white categories, with no middle ground ("If I fall short of perfection, I'm a total failure.")
Overgeneralization	Generalizing from a single negative experience, expecting it to hold true forever ("I didn't get hired for the job; I'll never get any job.")
The mental filter	Focusing on the negatives while filtering out all the positives. Noticing the one thing that went wrong, rather than all the things that went right.
Diminishing the positive	Coming up with reasons why positive events don't count ("I did well on the presentation, but that was just dumb luck.")
Jumping to conclusions	Making negative interpretations without actual evidence. You act like a mind reader ("I can tell she secretly hates me.") or a fortune teller

(“I just *know* something terrible is going to happen.”)

Catastrophizing	Expecting the worst-case scenario to happen (“The pilot said we’re in for some turbulence. The plane’s going to crash!”)
Emotional reasoning	Believing that the way you feel reflects reality (“I feel frightened right now. That must mean I’m in real physical danger.”)
‘Shoulds’ and ‘should-nots’	Holding yourself to a strict list of what you should and shouldn’t do—and beating yourself up if you break any of the rules
Labeling	Labeling yourself based on mistakes and perceived shortcomings (“I’m a failure; an idiot; a loser.”)
Personalization	Assuming responsibility for things that are outside your control (“It’s my fault my son got in an accident. I should have warned him to drive carefully in the rain.”)

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #4: Learn how to relax

Anxiety is more than just a feeling. It’s the body’s physical “fight or flight” reaction to a perceived threat. Your heart pounds, you breathe faster, your muscles tense up, and you feel light-headed. When you’re relaxed, the complete opposite happens. Your heart rate slows down, you breathe slower and more deeply, your muscles relax, and your blood pressure stabilizes. Since it’s impossible to be anxious and relaxed at the same time, strengthening your body’s relaxation response is a powerful anxiety-relieving tactic.

If you’re a chronic worrier, relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and meditation can teach you how to relax. The key is regular practice. Try to set aside at least 30 minutes a day. Over time, the relaxation response will come easier and easier, until it feels natural.

- Progressive muscle relaxation. When anxiety takes hold, progressive muscle relaxation can help you release muscle tension and take a “time out” from your worries. The technique involves systematically tensing and then releasing different muscle groups in your body. As your body relaxes, your mind will follow.
- Deep breathing. When you’re anxious, you breathe faster. This hyperventilation causes symptoms such as dizziness, breathlessness, lightheadedness, and tingly hands and feet. These physical symptoms are frightening, leading to further anxiety and panic. But by breathing deeply from the diaphragm, you can reverse these symptoms and calm yourself down.
- Meditation. Many types of meditation have been shown to reduce anxiety. Mindfulness meditation, in particular, shows promise for anxiety relief. Research shows that mindfulness meditation can actually change your brain. With regular practice, meditation boosts activity on the left side of the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for feelings of serenity and joy.

Worry and anxiety self-help tip #5: Take care of yourself

A healthy, balanced lifestyle plays a big role in keeping anxiety, fears, and worry at bay. Read on for a number of ways you can stop anxiety and worry by taking care of yourself.

Reach out for support

Anxiety and worry get worse when you feel powerless and alone, but there is strength in numbers. Focus on building a strong support system. The more connected you are to other people, the less vulnerable you'll feel. If you start to feel overwhelmed with worry, call a trusted family member or friend. Just talking out loud about your worries can make them seem less threatening.

Adopt healthy eating habits

Start the day right with breakfast, and continue with frequent small meals throughout the day. Going too long without eating leads to low blood sugar, which can make you feel anxious and irritable. Eat plenty of complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Not only do complex carbs stabilize blood sugar, they also boost serotonin, a neurotransmitter with calming effects.

Limit caffeine and sugar

Stop drinking or cut back on caffeinated beverages, including soda, coffee, and tea. Caffeine can increase anxiety, interfere with sleep, and even provoke panic attacks. Reduce the amount of refined sugar you eat, too. Sugary snacks and desserts cause blood sugar to spike and then crash, leaving you feeling emotionally and physically drained.

Exercise regularly

Exercise is a natural and effective anti-anxiety treatment. For maximum anxiety relief, try to get at least 30 minutes of aerobic activity on most days.

Aerobic exercise relieves tension and stress, boosts physical and mental energy, and enhances well-being through the release of endorphins, the brain's feel-good chemicals.

Avoid alcohol and nicotine

Alcohol temporarily reduces anxiety and worry, but it actually causes anxiety symptoms as it wears off. Drinking for anxiety relief also starts you on a path that can lead to alcohol abuse and dependence. Lighting up when you're feeling anxious is also a bad idea. While it may seem like cigarettes are calming, nicotine is actually a powerful stimulant. Smoking leads to higher, not lower, levels of anxiety

Get enough sleep

Anxiety and worry can cause insomnia, as anyone whose racing thoughts have kept them up at night can attest. But lack of sleep can also contribute to anxiety. When you're sleep deprived, your ability to handle stress is compromised. When you're well rested, it's much easier to keep your emotional balance, a key factor in coping with anxiety and stopping worry.

I think this will help you little.....

Axiomatist

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the cultural context of the research. It highlights the need for researchers to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of the communities they are studying. This is particularly important in the field of education, where cultural differences can significantly impact learning outcomes. The paper then moves on to discuss the challenges of conducting research in culturally diverse settings. It notes that researchers often face difficulties in establishing rapport with participants and in interpreting their responses. To address these challenges, the paper suggests several strategies, including the use of local informants and the development of culturally appropriate research instruments. The final part of the paper discusses the importance of ethical considerations in cross-cultural research. It emphasizes the need for researchers to obtain informed consent from participants and to ensure that their research does not cause harm to the communities they are studying.

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The third part of the paper presents the findings of the study. It discusses the results of the quantitative data analysis and the insights gained from the qualitative interviews. The authors conclude that there are significant differences in learning outcomes between the two groups, and these differences can be attributed to cultural factors.

The final part of the paper discusses the implications of the findings for future research and practice. It suggests that educators should be aware of the cultural context of their students and tailor their teaching strategies accordingly. Additionally, it calls for further research to explore the underlying mechanisms of the cultural differences observed in the study.

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