

Answer for Worry and Anxiety

by iPriority

About worry, Vance Havner said, "Like a rocking chair, it will give you something to do, but won't get you anywhere." Another person rightly commented: "Worry is the advance interest you pay on troubles that seldom come."

In spite of today's profound scientific advancement, many still haven't found peace of mind. It seems like worry and its bedfellow, anxiety, are a plague of modern society. Both are killers.

According to Ken Anderson. "Modern medical research has proved that worry breaks down resistance to disease. More than that, it actually diseases the nervous system--particularly that of the digestive organs and of the heart. Add to this the toll in unhappiness of sleepless nights and days void of internal sunshine, and you have a glimpse of the work this monster does in destroying the effectiveness of the human body."

An examination of 500 patients in a British survey showed that more than one-third of these patients' visual problems were caused by emotional tension. Interesting, too another survey of 5,000 university students showed that worriers get the lowest grades.

The news that worry and anxiety are trouble is nothing new. Three thousand years ago one writer in the Bible said, "An anxious heart weighs a man down...and a heart (or mind) at peace gives life to the body," or as another version says, "A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life."

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Norman Vincent Peale points out that "the word 'worry' is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning to strangle or to choke." Peale then suggests that "a certain well-controlled care-freeness may be an asset. Normal sensible concern is an important attribute of the mature person. But worry frustrates one's best functioning." In other words worry and anxiety choke out the joy of living.

As Peale indicates, there is a difference between concern or healthy worry and anxious worry. It is normal to worry and be concerned if we lose our job, when our children aren't home late at night and haven't called to tell us where they are, or when we are having marital or other relational conflicts. The problem is when the worry is out of proportion to what has happened, or when the worry causes us to live in a constant state of anxiety. Usually, this is when the present situation we are worrying about has triggered unresolved issues from the past. The worry and anxiety are symptoms that can go back to problems or fears which the conscious mind may have long since forgotten. We worry about making decisions for fear of making wrong ones. We worry about the future for fear of what it might or might not bring. We fear not being good enough, or of not measuring up to our own or others' expectations. We fear being rejected or left alone, or being over-controlled or out of control, or a score or more of other things that cause us to be anxious--all of which have to do with unresolved issues from the past--often childhood. For others, considerable anxiety is caused by false guilt--such as when you take time off to relax, you feel guilty--or by being a perfectionist. These, too have their roots in the past.



On the other hand, there are some things that ought to cause us to worry. For example, when we take on too many responsibilities, when we push ourselves too hard to get ahead or to get more money than we need. The issue is why we do these things? The anxiety is a symptom. It is nature's warning signal--a blessing in disguise if we heed it.

Unfortunately, there is no simple cure or quick fix. Causes can be complex. There are, however, a number of practical steps we can take that will help.

Eat right. Get rid of junk food. Do aerobic type exercise at least three times a week. Get adequate rest. Sing. Laugh a lot. Remember, "He who laughs, lasts!" and "A merry heart is good medicine."² Relax--take five every day to do deep breathing exercises. Make time for family and social life. All are basic to healthy living and relieving anxiety--and a relatively easy way to start.

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Many of us have supercharged repressed negative emotions (some have been bottle up for years) that get triggered by present circumstances and are at the root of many, if not most, anxieties. It is essential to express (not just talk about them) and release these feelings with a trusted friend or counselor.

Any unresolved conflicts from the past or present also need to be resolved. These, too, are at the root of considerable anxiety, as is unresolved true guilt.

Next, list all your responsibilities and place them in order of priority. Be realistic about what you can handle and let the rest go.

As considerable worry and anxiety are caused over finances, budget your income and expenses carefully. If you tend to buy on impulse or too much on credit, it will help greatly if you destroy some--if not most or all--of your credit cards. Also, evaluate your legitimate personal and family needs and make sure these are being met in healthy ways. And, if your anxiety has been a long-term problem, it would be advisable to get professional counseling to resolve the causes.

Some will find relief by participating regularly in a twelve-step recovery program.

Also, regularly pray the serenity prayer: "Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.