Why Worry? Stop Coping and Start Living

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We All Worry:

That the birds of worry and care fly over your head,
this you cannot change,
but that they build nests in your hair,
this you can prevent.

-- Chinese proverb

“To experience peace does not mean that your life is always blissful. It means that you are capable of tapping into a blissful state of mind amidst the normal chaos of a hectic life.”

-- Jill Bolte Taylor
Worry: A Global Epidemic

Worldwide: 450 million mental health problem
(World Health Organization, 2001)

United Kingdom:
Anxiety & depression: 1 in 5

Australia:
~Half population experience mental health issue at sometime in life

Europe: 38% mental illness/impairment
USA #1

• Wealthiest and most anxious nation in the world

• One-third billion psychiatric Rx per year

• Study of 200,000 incoming college freshmen: All time lows in mental well-being

• 1 in 2 people will suffer from anxiety, depression, or addiction
My Story: From Fear to Freedom
Worry is a Choice!

Psychological Immune System:

- Protect from threats
- Rapid & Powerful
- Which thoughts to heed?
Can Worry Help Us?

Helpful worry:

• Proactive and solution oriented
• Improve your situation
• Handle a physical or emotional challenge
• Intuitive guidance
Can Worry Harm Us?

**Harmful worry:**

- Chronic negative thoughts
- Focus on what is wrong
- Depression, anxiety, panic attacks
Myths about Worry:

• If I worry about it, “it” won’t happen!
• Worrying shows I care!
• I’ve always worried, I can’t help it!
Scientific Studies

- 85% of what we worry about never happens
- 80% handled it better than they thought they would
- Reduced chance coronary heart disease
- Reduced Alzheimer’s Disease
- Increased life span
Three Ways We Worry:

1. Ignoring or Denying:
   - Sleeplessness
   - Crabby
   - Over/Under Eating & Drinking
2. Terribilizing

- Envision worst possible outcome
- Focus on what may go wrong
- Feeling hopeless and doomed to fail
3. Possibilizing

See many possibilities
Proactive & empowered
Envision success
Focus on solutions

• 85% of worries never happen!

• 80% better than predicted outcome
I’ll handle it!
This, too, shall pass!

Not to spoil the ending for you, but everything is going to be okay.

~ Unknown
Thoughts Have Power
What You Think About EXPANDS!
What You Think About You Can Bring About

Watch your thoughts, for thoughts become words.

Watch your words, for words become attitudes.

Watch your attitudes, for attitudes become action.

Watch your actions, for actions become habits.

Watch your habits, for habits become character.

Watch your character, for character becomes destiny.
What You Think About You Can Bring About

Watch your **thoughts**, for thoughts become words.

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How do we turn around nonproductive worrying?
Overcoming Harmful Worry: The CORE Concepts

Choice
Outlook
Risk - Embrace Spirit
CORE Concept 1: I Always Have Choices!

“The ancestor to every action in the physical world is a thought.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Two Types of Choices:

External World = Little Control

Internal World = Attitude, Reactions (Controllable)
How Much Can We Control?

“True control lies in releasing the need to control your outside world and instead taking charge of your inside world.”
How Can We Begin Making Better Choices?

Point to Yourself
The Heart!

Heavy heart
Heartache
Heart-to-heart talk
Heartfelt joy

Heart of gold
Heart of stone
Introducing: EARL and PEARL!

E = Exaggerating
A = Angry
R = Rigid
L = Limiting

EARL: Protector
PEARL (Inner Strength)

P = Peaceful
E = Enthusiastic
A = Adventurous
R = Resilient
L = Loving
**EARL**
*Protector:*
“Be careful!”
“Don’t do it!”
“That might hurt!”
“Uh oh, no go!”
“What if…”

**PEARL**
*Inner Strength:*
“Try it.”
“You’ll be okay.”
“You can handle it.”
“Relax and release.”
“So what, if…”

**Choices**

Fear-Full / Fear-Less
Analysis / Intuition
Stuck / Flow
CORE Concept 2:
I Choose to Change My **Outlook**!
Resistance to Changing:

• This is who I am, I can’t change

• I’ve always been like this

• My whole family is like this

New Scientific Discoveries: Epigenetics & Neuroplasticity
New Frontiers: Epigenetics & Neuroplasticity

BRAIN initiative: Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN)
Emotions Change DNA

Epigenetics: Factors that switch genes “OFF” or “ON” (heritable)

• Nutrients
• Chemicals (environment)
• Thoughts, emotions!

Paradox: Turn on Your Happiness Genes by being Happy!
Rewiring Your Brain:

**Neuroplasticity:**
Neurons that fire together, wire together!

- Awareness & focused intention
- Add emotions and visualize
- Repetition
  (21 days to break a habit)
Rewiring Inner Negative Dialogues: What to Say to Support Yourself

Challenge negative thoughts with the FOUR P’s:

• Powerful
• Positive
• Present Tense
• Possibilizing
Affirm…Accept… Alternatives

**Terribilizing**

I feel helpless

I am stupid

I can’t stop worrying

I feel overwhelmed

**Possibilizing**

I am strong and capable

I am intelligent and have a great personality

I now am changing negative thinking /reacting

I’ll handle it, always have, always will!
Powerful Worry Triggers

- Perfectionism
- Blaming
- Anger
Outlook Makeovers: Perfectionism

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.” --John Lennon

“People Plan; God Laughs.”

Our Perfectly Imperfect World
Life is all about how you handle... Plan B!

Peace begins when expectations end.

—Sri Chinmoy
Wabi-Sabi

Japanese philosophy:

Beauty = imperfect, impermanent, incomplete

Early Buddhist teachings focusing on transient nature of life

Look beyond the imperfection & honor all life experience

Peacefulness despite ‘cracks’
Outlook Makeovers: The Blame Game

Whose fault is it?

- Over Analytical
- Over React
- Over Critical

Strategy: Observe NOT Absorb

Antidote to Blame is Gratitude!
What “Color” is Your Anger?

- Fiery Red: fly off the handle
- Smoldering orange: coldly silent

The Antidote to Anger: Cultivating Clarity
Express Yourself Effectively

90 Second Pause
Jill Bolte Taylor “My Stroke of Insight”

“When you...I felt...”

“I’m sorry that......”
CORE Concept 3:
Risking Helps Me Recover!
Risking Expands Comfort Zone

Mind, Body & Spirit
Top Three Stress Busters:

1. Breathe, breathe, breathe.
2. Live in the present moment.
3. Keep a positive perspective.

What you think about you will bring about!
Stop, Look, & Listen Technique

**STOP**

Stop the runaway train of negativity, worry or scary thoughts!

**LOOK**

Look around you.
What else is happening?
What do you hear?
Get grounded!

**LISTEN**

You’re okay!
Slow down!
I can handle this!
What can I learn; who will I meet?
Five Minute Mental Marinade

• CROSS hands over heart.

• CLOSE eyes & take 5 deep breaths.

• RECALL 5 things right about your life.

• FOCUS on someone or something you LOVE!

• TAKE 5 more deep, slow breaths.

• RELAX, open eyes and marinate in the feeling!
CORE Concept 4: I Embrace My Spirit
Embracing Your Spirit

“I am a spiritual being having a physical experience.”
--Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

• Connectedness & Neurotheology
• The Magic of Coincidence
• ASKing for Help
• Higher Perspective
• Pay it Forward
Go Forward!

John Tyler Dossett and family: Lesch-Nyham Syndrome
Train yourself to enjoy more and worry less!

Turn on your happy genes!

Our Thoughts Create Our Lives – Choose Wisely!
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Thank You!