

HOW TO CONQUER OUR WORRIES

By Barbara Bronson Gray, RN, MN

We all worry on a regular basis. We're quick to focus on the many 'what ifs' in life. But being concerned can be exhausting, discouraging and depressing.

What is being worried? It's allowing your mind to focus on difficulties and problems, which cause tension and restlessness.

Martin Rossman, author of 'The Worry Solution', made clear that learning to stop worrying, won't ban the tragedy or hardships from your life. 'But it can eliminate a big part from the tragedy and hardships that never happen,' he remarked. 'It's fundamental to separate things into those you can do something about and those you can't do anything about, and to learn how to deal better with both,' he completed.

'That doesn't mean life is easy. But it can help us avoid making it even more difficult for ourselves than necessary,' Rossman said. Rossman and other experts claim that there are various things we can do to minimize the time and energy we put into worrying, and to give ourselves more time for more pleasant and productive activities.

- Accept uncertainty. Worrying sometimes happens when we're frustrated due to the insecurity of the situation. We automatically fill in this emptiness with the worst possible options. Remember that insecurity is actually neutral. The situation can go any which way. And to enfold this insecurity, you need to accept your limitations. Try to let go of your natural reflex to be in control of things.

- Determine what bothers you most. Write it down. Treat it in a logical way. For example if you're worrying about something to do with health, can you call a doctor? Do you need more information in order to make a decision? Write down how you'll solve this and do this for every problem on your list.

- Call in your family's and friends' help for your 'anti worrying' campaign. Tell them you're trying to stop the tedious habit of worrying and ask them to regularly help draw your attention away from the unending possibilities and towards the realistic ones. They'll probably find out they also need to deal with the tendency to worry, if they want to support you efficiently.

- Catch yourself when you're worrying. At first you'll notice you're concerned about many different things, going from ALS related stuff to economic problems to all kinds of things. You might not even realize yet that worrying has become a habit or even an attitude. Check if you're tendency to worry might not be suppressing your enthusiasm as well as exhaust you.

- Don't allow yourself to focus on things that may not even happen. Remind yourself that only if and when the problem occurs, you'll make a plan or action.

- Actively and consciously avert concerns. Recognize your most urgent problems, and create an 'action plan' for each problem. Think the following: 'I've already dealt with this' or 'I have a plan for this'. Don't dwell on your worries. Focus your attention on interesting or intriguing things.

- Understand that breaking the habit of worrying can take some time. Like with each habit, it's very probable it'll take a while to conquer. Remind yourself that when you can't plan an approach to process something, you'll have to get rid of the thought.

- Focus on the moment itself. Practice dealing with each day as it goes, enjoying everything you can and appreciating the simple things.

Related sources:

- *The Worry Solution* by Martin Rossman, M.D.
- *The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worry from Stopping You*

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