

CONNECTIONS

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Have a Bad Case of the Worries?

by Cindy Parrish

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IT'S common to worry now and then about this or that. Perhaps you're a bit nervous about a social gathering in which you might be called to interact with others, or worried about flying to get to your spring break destination, worried about your family, your health, work... Most of us struggle with worry now and then. However, with the right (or wrong) ingredients, our worry can escalate and move from inconsequential impact-free worry to a constant cycle that wastes mental and emotional energy and affects our well being.



The trick is to keep your worries at bay, intervene when they are small and not let them dictate your actions. Otherwise worry can escalate, take on a life of its own and really put a damper on your emotional, mental and social well being.

When worry grows into anxiety it can become one of the most distressing emotions that people experience. You may find yourself having fears of specific things or situations, which may be accompanied with intense physical reactions. Some common physical symptoms of anxiety are jitteriness, tension, sweaty palms, light-headedness, difficulty breathing, increased heart rate and flushed cheeks. It often effects your body, your thoughts, your behaviors and your moods.

A common belief is that anxiety is encouraged by a fear-based thought that triggers our "fight or flight" response. Imagine yourself walking down the street and you see a large dog heading your way.

One scenario is you say to yourself "Oh look at that good looking dog, I just love large dogs" and you move slightly out of the dog's way, continuing in your planned direction. Your heart rate remains normal and you have little physical or emotional response. Next scenario is that

you see the dog coming your way and you say "Oh my! That dog is likely to attack me, I am in danger!" That message is passed to your physiological system (blood pressure, heart rate, etc...) and it gives you the needed energy to fight or flee. Often, but not always, when we are anxious about something we can trace it back to a fear and then that fear causes a flight or fight response which results in a physical reaction. Unfortunately with anxiety the fear is often based in a perceived danger but our body doesn't know if it is an imagined crisis or real, so it responds to help us.



"Have a Bad Case of the Worries?" continued on following page...

Library News

Be sure to check out several new and interesting books recently added to the Three Trails Library!

*Digging Out: Helping Your Loved Ones Manage Clutter
I'm Not Bad, I'm Just Mad: A Workbook to Help Kids Control Their Anger
Eating With a Fierce Kindness: A Mindful and Compassionate Guide to Losing Weight
After the Stork: The Couple's Guide to Preventing & Overcoming Post Partum Depression
The Buddah and the Boarderline*

We also have a wide selection of books to give away located in the front lobby case and on the middle and bottom shelves in the Library.

Have a Bad Case of the Worries?continued

WHAT TO DO

- **Anxiety** can be reduced either by decreasing your perception of danger or increasing your confidence in the ability to cope with the threat. Examine the evidence by asking yourself...

- 1) What am I afraid of?
- 2) How likely is it to happen?
- 3) And if it does happen?

Often when we examine the evidence, we find the danger is not as bad as we thought. If there is threat or risk present, it is helpful to make a plan. Develop strategies to help you cope or respond and then when that fear based thought comes around, respond by telling yourself "even if that does happen, I have a plan".

- **Learning** to relax and slow down can directly and indirectly lessen anxiety. If you walk around in a greater state of relaxation, you will have more room to respond when something threatening occurs. You are also practicing relaxation rather than rehearsing being uptight. And as they all say - if you want to get good at something - practice it.
- **It may be old**, boring news but controlled breathing really works. In a heightened state of anxiety our breathing tends to become shallow and quick. Stop, take deep breaths and focus on taking just as long to breathe in as to breathe out.
- **Imagery** is another helpful tool. Imagine yourself in the anxiety provoking situation but this time handling it well. See yourself responding the way you want to and rehearse that. Or see yourself in the dreaded situation but remaining relaxed. Sports trainers use this, often referred as Sports Psychology, where you rehearse the event and see yourself performing the way you wish. Often when that worry cycle or anxiety

hits, we go over and over in our minds how we don't want things to be (i.e. "I won't be able to handle this") and we train ourselves to be uptight and fail at the task. Fortunately you can also train yourself for the more desired outcomes.

- **Distraction**: Take your attention away from the thoughts or physical sensations that contribute to your anxiety and make yourself become absorbed in other activities or thoughts.
- **Be Active**: Moving and physically releasing your tension can help move it out of your body and increase a state of calmness. Put that excess energy to good use.
- **To overcome** anxiety we need to approach and cope with situations in which we feel anxious. Some people will develop a hierarchy of situations or people they fear and begin approaching the least anxiety provoking situation and slowly work toward the more threatening.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- **Avoidance** is the hallmark of anxiety. When we avoid a difficult situation, we initially experience a decrease in anxiety. Ironically, the more we avoid a situation, the more anxious we become about facing it in the future. Avoidance in the long run actually feeds anxiety, even though it seems to help anxiety in the short run.

Not all worry leads to anxiety, and a small amount of worry now and then can be painless and no problem. The goal is to respond in ways that keep it at bay.

Wisdom of Youth

Never blow in a cat's ear because if you do, usually after three or four times, they will bite your lips! And they don't let go for at least a minute. L C, age 9

The Fisherman.....

Taken from the Internet



An American Tourist was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican villiage when a small boat with only one fisherman docked. Inside the boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The Tourist asked

the fisherman how long it took to catch them.

“Not very long,” answered the Fisherman.

“But then, why didn’t you stay out longer and catch more?” asked the American.

The Fisherman explained that his small catch was sufficient to meet his needs and those of his family.

The American asked, “But what do you do with the rest of your time?”

“I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, and take a siesta with my wife. In the evenings, I go into the village to see my friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar, and sing a few songs...I have a full life.”

The American interrupted, “I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you! You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra rev-

enue, you can buy a bigger boat. With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have an entire fleet of trawlers.”

“Instead of selling your fish to a middleman, you can negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City, Los Angeles, or even New York City! From there you can direct your huge enterprise.”



“How long would that take?” asked the Fisherman.

“Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years,” replied the American.

“And after that?”

“Afterwards? That’s when it gets really interesting,” answered the American, laughing. “When your business gets really big, you

can start selling stocks and make millions!”

“Millions? Really? And after that?”

“After that you’ll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, catch a few fish, take a siesta, and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends!

THREE TRAILS EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Three Trails Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a counseling agency designed to respond to the needs of eligible active and retired employees, spouses, and dependent family members of participating businesses and organizations.

Our mission is to provide professional assistance early and in a timely manner so that problems do not worsen. Such concerns may include workplace stress, marriage and family tensions, alcohol and drug abuse, and other difficulties that may impact individuals. Counselors at Three Trails assess the scope and nature of the presenting concerns and will either provide counseling or refer the individual(s) to specialized services as necessary.

Three Trails EFAP is staffed by three counselors and an administrative assistant. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 237-5750 or stop by the office at 812 South David Street.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday	9:00 to 6:00 pm
Tuesday & Thursday	9:00 to 7:00 pm
Fridays	12:00 to 5:00 pm

We are closed through the noon hour except on Fridays.