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Eight-weeks to being worry-free - Reviewing your first week: Setting Aside Your Worries

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Your Last [Self-Help](#) Assignment



You may have been following my last two blogs-- [Eight Weeks to End Your Worries](#) and [First Week: Ending Your Worries](#). I hope you have been using some of these techniques to help yourself. Let's look at where we are.

In my [last blog](#) I recommended that you do the following:

1. Identify the same worries---over and over
2. Set aside worry time
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of worrying
4. Ask if this is a productive or unproductive worry

Let's see what you may have found.

Same Worries-Over and Over

Did you find that you have a lot of the same worries occurring over and over? For example, are you repeating the same worries about your [relationship](#), health, work, finances, or another topic? If you are repeating your worries, then it's useful to just list them and check them off-rather than dwell on them. "Been there, done that". What has your list shown you? Same stuff? Spinning your wheels?

Worries can be delayed

I asked you to take notes on your worries. Write them down, put them off until later. Set

aside worry time.

If you are like a lot of people, worry-time has helped you learn that you can "hear" a worry ("I'm not going to get my work done") and then be able to set it aside for later. You might have used some of my recommendations for setting aside a worry--- "I have an appointment with that later" or "I will write it down and go over it during worry time". Worry time takes some practice---to hear a worry, notice it, and put it off. If you have been able to do this, then you now recognize that you do have a choice. You don't have to obey a worry and respond to it right now. You may have also learned that when worry time comes around, the worry no longer bothers you.



This teaches you that worry can be delayed, thoughts don't have to be obeyed, you can do something rather than worry, worries are not urgent and worries end up to be pointless. That is progress. Keep doing your worry time.

There are few real advantages to worrying



If you listed your advantages and disadvantages, you may have come up with the following advantages:

- Worry will keep me from being surprised.
- Maybe I can solve the problem.
- Maybe there is something I overlooked, so worry will help me find it.
- Maybe worry will motivate me to work hard.

But has worry really been helping you?

For example, can worry really guarantee that you won't be surprised? Aren't there some things that happen that no one can foresee? And, so what if you are surprised? What is so terrible about being surprised? And how long will you be surprised? Some worriers think that a surprise will be traumatic-or last indefinitely. But it is in the nature of surprise that it is processed and handled. If you have been trying to avoid surprise by worrying in advance, you have been wasting a lot of your effort. The research shows that 85% of the things that worriers worry about have a positive outcome.

And you probably think that you aren't any good at handling problems that actually occur. What is the evidence that you have been able to handle problems that occur? Have you ever adapted to a break-up, a loss, an unexpected bad outcome? You may be harboring a belief that you are incompetent, but you may be more competent at solving real problems. Worriers are actually good at solving real problems. They just aren't that good at solving problems that don't exist over which they have no control. Worriers can't do the impossible.

Solving real problems when they occur is enormously helpful. But you don't have to solve every problem that you can think of. Or do you?

If you think that worry will help you solve a problem, then make your TO DO LIST now and carry it out. What is the actual behavior plan that your worry suggests? For example, I have to give some lectures and workshops next month so I had a problem to worry about--- I don't have a plane reservation. I solved it by going on-line and making a reservation. I worried for two minutes, solved the problem and now it's done. But I can't bother myself with useless worries that I cannot do anything about today---such as, "What if no one likes my talk?" There is no TO DO TODAY.

Worriers often think they have overlooked something. Now if you look at your list of worries you have found out it is the same list over and over. Worriers often worry to REMIND THEMSELVES. I suggest simply keeping a written list of things to remember and things to do, set it aside, and put off the worry to worry time. You don't have to keep nagging yourself.

Doing something is better than worrying about it



Worry can motivate--- but you have to ask if it is actually motivating you, simply scaring you, or making you so [anxious](#) you can't move forward. The real proof of whether it motivates you is if you are spending more time worrying about something or more time getting something accomplished. I am currently writing a new self-help book on depression. I can either worry that I am behind deadline or I can start writing something right now.

Well, I'll have to leave you with that thought. I've got to write something about depression or my publisher might be annoyed.

See [THE WORRY CURE](#) for more ideas on how to handle your worry. My new book, [Anxiety Free: Unravel Your Fears Before They Unravel You](#), will be published in April 2009.

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Links:

- [1] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/anxiety-free/200808/eight-weeks-end-your-worries>
- [2] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/anxiety-free/200809/first-week-ending-your-worries>
- [3] <http://www.amazon.com/Worry-Cure-Seven-Steps-Stopping/dp/1400097665/sr=8->

1/qid=1170179793/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/104-8070893-9749523?ie=UTF8&s=books

[4] http://www.amazon.com/Anxiety-Free-Unravel-Fears-Before/dp/1401921639/ref=ed_oe_h

[5] <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/anxiety-files>