

Manage Your Worry So Worry Doesn't Manage You

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Worry is a part of your body's survival system. Your brain is equipped to register fear and worry more sensitively than any of your other emotions so you will be able to detect danger in your external world.

Worry comes from a heightened sense of vulnerability in the presence of a diminished sense of power. The danger of the situation is often exaggerated, and one's power to face and deal with the situation is often underestimated.

In his book, *Worry: Controlling it and Using it Wisely*, the author, Edward M. Hallowell, M.D. writes about two types of worry.

The first kind is **adaptive worry**. This is a wise worry that alerts you to real danger. It flags that something needs your attention. This worry can be helpful. It warns you of danger and urges you to take corrective action.

Adaptive worry can be your teacher. You can take notice and deal constructively with the substance of the concerns your worry raises for you. By studying a group of successful entrepreneurs, it was found that they use worry as a useful warning signal, instead of seeing it as an unpleasant state of mind to be avoided or minimized.

Worry can become your reason to take positive action. You can attack a problem before it attacks you. You can create growth out of worry.

The other kind of worry is **maladaptive/toxic worry**. This type of worry serves no useful purpose and will negatively affect your ability to live your life.

One example of toxic worry is the worry that accompanies certain treatable conditions, such as depression, panic attacks and generalized anxiety disorder. Another example of toxic worry is the worry that comes from a tragedy or trauma experience. A third example is that of the chronic worrier who has developed the habit of worrying always and everywhere, no matter what.

Individual therapy can help you understand your particular style of worry, encourage you to transform worry to wisdom whenever possible, help you work with the issues that are related to your worry, and teach you tools to manage your worry so it doesn't continue to manage you.