

WORRIED? Read This.

ADD and anxiety often go hand in hand. Here, 10 ways to help you get a grip.

BY SANDY MAYNARD

Many clients who come to me are in transition or are in the process of doing something quite new, and they bring along their various worries. The old “Not to worry...things will be just fine” doesn’t cut it. They need more than my reassurance that hard work and patience will pay off, and that the doom and gloom they project is not necessary.

“Stop right now and list three things you are grateful for today, and notice how good it makes you feel.”

It’s comforting for them to hear that 95% of what we worry about never comes to fruition, but that’s not quite enough. Some still leave with nagging thoughts that are distracting, as well as limiting to their efforts to move forward. As an ADD coach, I want proactive, positive suggestions to give my clients, and I found them in Dr. Edward Hallowell’s book, *Worry*. In *Worry*, Dr. Hallowell gives 50 tips for managing worry, and provides valuable insight

into “toxic worry.” His book helps coaches determine if the amount of worry is excessive or the type of worry is pathological, and whether a referral for therapy is needed. He explains how worry relates to depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, social phobia, paranoia, and generalized anxiety disorder, all conditions that exceed the scope of coaching and require treatment from a mental health care professional.

Surprisingly, the book also describes how worry is beneficial. When we worry, it warns us of danger, so we can take corrective action before it’s too late. By thinking of all the things that can go wrong, we can take steps to prevent a disaster from occurring and give ourselves the edge for success. In 1908, Yerkes and Dodson studied anxiety and performance and determined that performance improved as the level of anxiety

ety increased, but only to a certain point. At this level, increased anxiety begins to have a detrimental effect, and performance plummets downward.

I now have 50 suggestions in one book to refer my clients to when I've run out of steam. Many of the tips use basic stress management techniques that I routinely encourage my clients to use, but it's nice to have alternatives on hand for those days when I'm not as focused as I should be! Below are Coach Sandy's top ten tips from Dr. Hallowell's book. Some are old favorites of mine that I have used with great success, and others are ones that I am beginning to suggest to my clients, as well as use myself, more and more. They are:

- 1 Get the facts. Don't assume or mind-read. Imagination can play havoc with the worry spiral.
- 2 Pray or meditate. If you do this already, you know how effective this can be in combating worry, and if you don't, it's time you found out.
- 3 Don't watch too much TV or read too many newspapers and magazines. This is one of Dr. Andrew Weil's recommendations also, so it's got to be a winner.
- 4 Use humor. If I didn't do this myself, I'd be in big trouble some days.
- 5 Touch and be touched. There's nothing like a hug to make your worries melt away.

6 **Have faith.** There's an old saying that, when fear knocked on the door and faith opened it... there was no one there.

7 **Don't sweat the small stuff.** This has been on my list of stress busters for a long time. If your going to worry, and nothing can stop you, at least worry about something really big.

8 **Hire experts to guide you.** As a coach, I am hired to help, but my clients often need additional resources to reduce their worry, such as an accountant, or financial consultant.


9 **Don't drink excessively or use other drugs as a means of making your worries go away.** Worries become worse when you alter your state of mind with alcohol or drugs.

10 **Never worry alone. Good friends are of paramount importance.** When you share your sorrows with a friend, you cut them in half, and when you share your joy, you double it. When you share your worries, they almost disappear!

There's just one tip that I would add to Dr. Hallowell's list, and that is: List three things that you are thankful for right now at this very moment. It's hard to worry when you have an "attitude of gratitude," but even gratitude takes steps to achieve. Stop right now and list three

things you are grateful for today, and notice how good it makes you feel!

Coach Sandy Maynard is ADDitude's Expert Coach on Call. For more articles by Sandy Maynard, visit the Experts section on the ADDitude Web site: www.additudemag.com/experts.asp or Sandy's Web site: www.sandymaynard.com



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