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No worries

8 steps to less stress

Are you tired of worrying about everything from the moment you wake-up to the second your head hits the pillow? Spiritual teacher and reiki practitioner Dawn Mellowship helps you banish those all-day blues

We are plagued by worry from an early age. Our environment, upbringing, interactions and social pressures breed new stresses faster than we can begin to worry about them! Our constant anxiety not only leads to emotional issues, but physical health problems to boot. When we are stressed our bodies produce more of the stress hormone cortisol, which can suppress the body's ability to fight off viruses and attack cancer cells, as well as disrupting the immune system and potentially becoming a causal factor in the onset of insomnia, memory problems, depression, reproductive problems, high blood pressure, headaches, digestive and even eating disorders and diabetes. Worry and chronic stress are truly unwelcome additions to our already complex lives and we need a way to effectively lay them to rest. To this end the following steps will give you a kick start in the war against worry.



Make good choices

Always remember that you have choices in life. It can sometimes feel like situations are imposed upon us, but regardless of the situation we find ourselves in, we can choose how we react to and perceive that situation. George Eliot once said that "the strongest principle of growth lies in the human choice." By seeing everything as an opportunity for learning and growth, a chance to instigate positive changes, we can transform worry into faith and life no longer feels like an ongoing struggle. See the negatives in your life as opportunities and use your power of choice to learn from your mistakes.

Remember that the worry will pass

However bad something may seem in this present moment, time is not static, it will move on and your problem will pass. Try to say to yourself, "OK I might not be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel now, but this will change, tomorrow is another day." One way you can help yourself get through a difficult situation is to imagine the worst that can happen. Prepare yourself for that outcome. The worst outcome may never materialise but if you can learn to deal with that eventuality, anything smaller than that will be a walk in the park.

"HOWEVER BAD SOMETHING MAY SEEM AT THIS MOMENT, TIME IS NOT STATIC, IT WILL MOVE ON AND YOUR PROBLEM WILL PASS"

Use your intuition

My life was a constant battle that I couldn't come to terms with, until I learned to silence my physical and emotional desires and listen to the voice of my intuition. Your intuition is your connection with the universe. Albert Einstein, said, "The only real valuable thing is intuition." A truer phrase was never said. Learn to listen to your intuition; it will never fail you. It might start off as a whisper but as you begin to take heed of its wisdom it will rapidly transform into a roar. The following exercise will help you connect to your intuitive voice.

TRY THIS: Create connections

Sit down comfortably either on the floor or on a chair. Make sure your back is straight. Have your hands palms facing upwards, in your lap.

Gently close your eyes and visualise yourself floating up into outer space, where you find yourself with nothing else around you but the galaxies, stars and the endless dark skies. Breathe slowly and deeply, breathing in through your nose, into your stomach and out of your mouth.

Visualise a bright white light, so bright it is almost impossible to look at, coming down through space as far up as the eye can see. Visualise the light entering the crown of your head from above, like a radiant beam. Allow the light to enter your entire body from your head, through to the tips of your toes. As you breathe out, feel the light pulsating through your body. Do this for between 10 and 30 minutes until you feel completely relaxed.

Accept life's lessons

Everything happens for a reason. Rather than fighting against the universe in a senseless war that you can never win, let go, and by doing this you will begin to see the reasons behind your experiences in life. Sometimes it's easy to say, "Bad things always happen to me. It's not fair," but you need to ask yourself "Why is the same vicious circle perpetually repeating itself?" The answer is usually that we are not learning from life's lessons. Take time out from every situation and ask yourself, "What is this experience trying to teach me?" There is always an answer and when you find it, will learn to deal with and respond to situations in a much healthier way.

Find your purpose

We all have a reason for being on this earth, a life purpose if you like. The path to true happiness comes when we learn what this purpose is, set our sights on achieving it and take the actions necessary to fulfil that purpose. When we surrender to our paths and allow the universe to guide us, instead of trying to control our lives so rigidly, everything falls into place and our lives flow as they should. Ask yourself and the universe, "why am I here?" and be open to the answer. It is there for the taking.

INTUITIVE PROBLEM SOLVING TECHNIQUE

Grab a sheet of A4 paper and a pen. Draw a table divided into four columns and leave yourself plenty of rows. Head each column as follows: Home Life, Work Life, Social Life and Spiritual Needs. Under each column write a list of all the problems that fit into that category. Each section can include anything to do with that aspect of your life. See the box below for examples.

HOME LIFE	WORK LIFE	SOCIAL LIFE	SPIRITUAL NEEDS
No time to myself	Boss expects too much from me	Feel obligated to go out when tired	Feel like a part of me is missing
Too much house work to do	Hate my job	Some friends seem to use me	Find it hard to make sense of the world
Can't afford to pay the bills	Don't feel motivated	Feel lonely even in a crowd	Difficult to understand myself
Not enough time with my partner	Bad relationship with workmate	Feel left out of everything	Feel lost
Can't sleep at night	Not earning enough	Not earning enough	Lacking direction

- Once you have listed everything you can think of, find a quiet place to sit down. Take a slow, deep breath in and out and place your palms over your eyes. Silently say to yourself, or out loud, with meaning and purpose, "Light of the Universe let me see, which problem is my first priority." Sit quietly for several minutes, remaining with your palms over your eyes.
- When you feel calmer, take your hands away from your eyes and grab your pen. Look at the table you have drawn and without even thinking, straight away put a star by the problem that you feel intuitively drawn to.
- Again sit quietly, breathing slowly, with your palms over your eyes for a few minutes. Say to

- yourself, "Light of the Universe let me see how I may solve this problem I have before me." Following this, repeat to yourself what the problem is.
- Remain sitting quietly for between five and 15 minutes. The answer may pop into your head instantly, or if not, you should receive your answer from the universe within the following three days, either as intuition, or as a sign, or as a vision. You should accept the first answer you are given.
 - You can repeat steps three through to six for about three or four of your problems at a time if you wish, prioritising each problem accordingly. However, I would suggest that it's better to address one issue at a time.



Take a deep breath, relax... and meditate

We lead such chaotic lives in our modern day society that we rarely take the time to stop and take stock. Learn to meditate, either by enrolling in class or in the comfort of your own home. If meditation isn't for you, try something more active such as qi gong, tai chi, reiki or yoga. Allow yourself that time every week to relax and find a more peaceful and altered state of consciousness. Bring that tranquillity into the other areas of your life. Try the simple meditation technique below as a starting point.

TRY THIS: Easy meditation

- Sit relaxed, with your back straight and your feet on the ground. Keep your hands palm facing down on your thighs. Breathe normally, in and out through your nose.
- Close your eyes, and bring your attention to your breathing.
- Continuing to breathe normally, noticing the passage of air in and out of your nostrils and the sensation as your breath almost tickles the top of your life on the out breath. Focus on that feeling with each breath.
- If your mind wanders, bring it back gently to the feel of the air passing in and out of your body. Do this for at least three minutes.

Talk to a friend

Sometimes it helps to have a listening ear, so get in touch with a good friend, one that makes you feel good about yourself, one who will let you take as long as you need to explain your anxieties and will perhaps even offer you sensible and intuitive advice. Remember that it works both ways, so if your good friend needs a listening ear, be there for them too. One-sided relationships where one individual gives and the other takes are not healthy for either person.

"IF SOMETHING IS CAUSING YOU ANXIETY, YOU NEED TO DECIDE IF IT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN CHANGE OR IF IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE NO POWER OVER"

Deal with the problem

If something is causing you anxiety, you need to decide if it is something you can change or something you have no power over. If your answer is the former, then you need to work out what you can do to solve the problem. The intuitive problem-solving technique (page 15) will help you to discover a solution. If your answer is the latter, then you have to let go of the worry – if there is nothing you can do about it, there is no use in worrying. Try to see the bigger picture and look at the situation more objectively, become a detached outsider.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dawn Mellowship is an author, journalist, ethical stylist, spiritual teacher and a Reiki practitioner and teacher based in the UK. Her first book, *Passage to Freedom* (O Books) is available from Amazon and all good book stores. For more information see www.dawnmellowship.com.

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