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A strategy-filled handbook to understand, manage, and conquer your own stress. Anxiety disorders-grouped into three main categories: panic, generalized anxiety, and social anxiety-are among the most common and pervasive mental health complaints. From the subtlest effect of sweaty palms during a work presentation to the more severe symptom of reclusion, anxiety casts a wide net. Medication, once considered the treatment of choice, is losing favor as more and more sufferers complain of unpleasant side effects and its temporary, quick-fix nature. Now, thanks to a flood of fresh neurobiology research and insights into the anatomy of the anxious brain, effective, practical strategies have emerged allowing us to manage day-to-day anxiety on our own. Addressing physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms, Margaret Wehrenberg, a leading mental health clinician, draws on basic brain science to highlight the top ten anxiety-defeating tips. Everything from breathing techniques and mindful awareness to cognitive control and self-talk are included-all guaranteed to evict your anxious thoughts. 20

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Diana says

This is a very nice book with a series of techniques for overcoming anxiety. It begins by telling you what anxiety is, what kinds there are and some tests to help you gauge if you are suffering from it or not. And then it goes to show you the 10 anxiety techniques:

*Related to the anxious body, as the author has put it:

- change your intake: so, basically, how you see the world and how you let it affect you
- breathe: some breathing exercises to help you mitigate anxious effects
- mindfulness: some relaxation techniques. TBH, I have a very hard time with it. I am so wired up I can't.
- relax: basically, allowing yourself some disconnection times from work and such, so you can recharge and get back.

As far as today (March, 21st) this is as far as I've gotten with the lecture. I have to say that at least the part about managing the anxious body is more easily said than done, but is a good help. I guess it also depends on how high or not are your levels of anxiety, because if they are high all of this can help you get more anxious (this kinda books do for me, as I want to read it all and digest it and then I find myself stressing more, but this is just me).

* Related to the anxious mind, as the author has put it:

- stop catastrophizing:
- stop anxious thoughts
- contain your worry
- talk yourself into changing behaviour

And finally:

- to implant a plan and practice.
-

Greg Faxon says

This review is based only on a small portion of the book - Technique #9: Control TMA (Too Much Activity). I felt like it would offer some good tips for the type of chronic, mild anxiety that comes up for most highly-driven people. And there were definitely some helpful takeaways.

Three Sentence Summary:

If your anxiety comes from just being a high-drive personality, you're wired to be busy and staying in motion helps you discharge the anxiety. So accept that you'll never be a lie-in-the-hammock type of person and simply re-allocate your energy to things that will help balance out your life. Remember to do fun things, not to achieve something but simply to take pleasure in them, especially physical activity.

Favorite Quotes:

===== Technique #9: Control TMA (Too Much Activity)

The high activity level is probably not going to change, and people with TMA may not ever relax in the way a less driven person can

but they can change the way they direct their energy to achieve more balance, more fun, and much less anxiety.

If something blocks these high-drive people from working at their “normal” pace, they feel agitated, and if that interruption lasts too long, their anxiety skyrockets.

He appeared on the outside to be in a rage, and on the inside he was feeling out of control over not being able to follow a plan he made.

Having an unexpected few hours of free time when a meeting cancels can cause anxiety about how to use the time to their best advantage, and that stuck ACG can cause even more anxiety by preventing the person from finding a good alternative use of the time.

Why would someone with TMA from anxiety resist changing their behavior or activity? Because high activity diminishes anxiety.

Plan for Dreaded, Unexpected “Free” Time

This simple fix of planning is truly that: a simple fix for a frequent and completely manageable exacerbation of anxiety in the highly active person.

People with anxiety try to handle it by eliminating reasons to worry, and a good way to eliminate reasons to worry is to make no mistakes. The fewer mistakes they make, the less they will have to worry.

perfectionism. It sets them up to review their work repeatedly, double-check for errors, work extra hours, and do work themselves rather than entrust it to others.

What these perfectionists do not realize is that they are going to worry no matter how hard they work. They just find other things to worry about, and their heightened stress makes them more hypervigilant and uptight.

It becomes a vicious circle of looking for potential problems to avert, finding them, being convinced they handled them, and continuing to look for more.

they develop a fear that if they ever let down their perfectionistic guard, things will completely fall apart and others will blame them entirely.

In other words, they come to believe that everyone believes mistakes are intolerable and proof of their unworthiness.

“Perfection is impossible.”

“If something is really impossible, then I have no obligation to try for it.”

Actually, planning a non-perfect performance of some responsibilities works better than noticing accidental imperfection.

Decide not to take on a specific, one-time responsibility, and see whether the work gets done without you.

Observe and evaluate how people respond to the imperfect work of others.

Observe how little anyone cares whether or not you were perfect.

take note of what makes the difference between important and inconsequential things.

Often, one part of life assumes significance over other parts for good reason. It could be reasonable to work at your job 12 hours a day during a circumscribed period of time

However, shifting back to balanced activity can be a problem for the TMA person who gets used to the workload and keeps on doing it.

These people easily continue on the trajectory they set, while other aspects of their life fade from awareness.

The TMA person easily forgets that high activity is not a value in and of itself.

Being busy may just be the way your brain is made. Even if you work a little less, you are likely to be just as active, but the added activities should create some balance in your life.

They do not direct their high activity to their own benefit by using it for balance, rejuvenation, or relaxation. Rather, they just use their energy as a counterweight to worry.

Laughing is a great way to increase good feelings while discharging physical energy.

gradually take everyday life so seriously that they stop experiencing the humor in it. Their time is spent watching for potential problems rather than for potential delight.

do one thing she wanted to do over the weekend that involved no work whatsoever—she was to do it just because she felt like it at the moment. In other words, something for just for fun.

balance for her was not necessarily about taking a lot of time, but about the quality of the time. That gave her pause to think about how often she denied herself the moments that would make life more worth living.

People with TMA will probably never embrace the lie-in-the-hammock version of time off.

balance is usually better found in busy activity, as long as doing the activity is not a way to avoid anxiety but a way to use some energy in a fun way.

The high energy level needs to be discharged, and using it for active non-work activities is beneficial for anxiety relief and for calming the stress response.

the person with TMA needs to distinguish between the pleasure of accomplishment and pleasure just for the sake of pleasure. The actual doing of the activity—not just accomplishing it—should be pleasurable.

Their minds are in the future or the past, but not in the moment. Not paying attention to fun robs it of its usefulness.

Look for fun activities that require physical energy output.

Kelsey Hanson says

neurochemistry and insight into how neurotransmitter imbalances make you feel like your life is hell. Personally, I found that section really helpful in providing emotional distance. If I could say to myself "nope, this is just dopamine going to the wrong part of my brain", things seemed less terrible.

Amanda says

This book was fantastic!! The author discusses more effective ways to manage anxiety without the use of medications. She acknowledges that medications can be useful for a short time but that they should not be the primary treatment method. This really aligns with my personal beliefs about medications. Specifically, she focuses on breathing techniques and self-talk methods. If you have anxiety issues, I definitely recommend this book!

Ietrio says

Even for blog posts, the solutions are pretty much variations around the concept of "the power of prayer". Superstition well peppered with scientific sounding words. Like how neurosciences and breathing techniques. Still, cheaper than the membership to some oriental cults.

Vannetta Chapman says

Call me a freak, but I really liked this book.

It's VERY technical, but when you're talking about stuff like anxiety I think technical helps.

Here's an example of what I mean. "What's making you so worried? It's that darned negative, limbic-generated worry getting stuck in the anterior cingulate gyrus."

See? That just cracked me up.

But seriously, the emphasis is that things like anxiety are actually the result of over functioning parts of our brain. We're not just crazy. Comforting, to say the least.

Seawitch says

This is a great little book that nicely explains the neuroscience, medications and non-pharm strategies for anxiety. Perfect for the non-professional.

Diana says

This book goes around accepting the anxiety and also goes around about cbt, which I believe is the best approach but I don't think the book is that good. The author said at the beginning that she struggled with anxiety but that's all she said... I wish she would have talked more about her own experience. She talks about the symptoms of anxiety for like two pages which I didn't liked at all because it made me hard to

commit to her answers/recovery.

It's not a bad book but it's a hard book to relate to.

Suzie says

Book that has concrete strategies and behaviors to help you deal with anxiety. Each item is presented with an explanation in a straightforward way. Common objections, criticisms, and pitfalls are presented with support for the author's methods. She doesn't dumb it down or try to make you feel bad about yourself. I never actually finished the book. I got enough out of it to help my anxiety issues. I'm not saying that I'm NEVER anxious, but it helped me to feel more in control of what was happening. If I feel that I need a little more help, I would happily go back and read some more, and try some more techniques. The only negative thing that I will say is the section on improving sleep is pretty generic and not terribly helpful. Much of the book may be helpful in improving some types of sleep problems related to anxiety, so I'll cut the author some slack.

It should be noted, of course, that if you have mental health problems, in addition to the book, you may want to seek the help of a professional.

Amy says

This was a helpful book for everyone in my family. I originally checked it out to try and learn some new techniques to help my son with his OCD and anxiety issues. He's 11, and was very interested in all the parts of the brain and how to manage them to stop being afraid all the time. (He also receives therapy and treatment, but a LOT of it falls on the shoulders of the family to help him manage.)

Once I got into the book, I realized there was plenty in it for me. The breathing and relaxation techniques were helpful and written in just such a way that they were easy to read aloud with the kids and practice together. We have been practicing for about a week with good results.

The book is specifically geared toward those with panic disorders, social anxiety, or generalized anxiety. Since I was mostly reading it for the general anxiety, about 2/3 of it didn't apply (and honestly, some of the sections about panic made me feel like maybe I was going to panic! Ha ha). However, the tips on stopping anxious thoughts, avoiding catastrophizing, and replacing your thoughts were really helpful.

I've read quite a few books on anxiety now. My favorite for kids is What to Do When You're Scared & Worried: A Guide for Kids. This is my new favorite for adults. I have several pages of notes I plan to reference.

Fishface says

This book is good...as far as it goes. The sections describing physical and cognitive-behavioral interventions for anxiety are terrific, frankly, and I would recommend those to anyone. I have to say, however, that elsewhere in the book there are some enormous holes. It's one of the few guides for laypeople that gives the

lowdown on how alcohol makes anxiety worse, not better, for instance. But it doesn't mention at any point that marijuana, wildly popular as a "treatment" for anxiety, has exactly the same deleterious effects on those struggling with anxiety as alcohol, and it never mentions at any point that the "medicines" used for anxiety, like benzos, are much worse and much more of it. And I really have to take issue with the bass-ackwards Chapter One heading "How Your Brain Makes You Anxious," clearly geared to pander to those medical-model types who want us all to feel like victims of our wonky brain chemicals; FYI, peeps, it's EXACTLY the other way around. It also doesn't mention anywhere how other chemicals -- like opiates, the Drug Family of the Moment -- creates and worsens anxiety problems.
