

Free Sample:

Contents and Introduction from latest e-Book:

30 WAYS TO BEAT ANXIETY
Get more done by worrying less

by Chris Carling

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Acknowledgements

Important note: this e-Book deals with ordinary, day-to-day worry and anxiety, not serious mental health problems.

WHAT THIS E-BOOK IS ABOUT

'It is said that our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.'

Charles Spurgeon

The aim of this book is to help you recognise the role that anxiety plays in your life, and to take practical steps to reduce its impact. You'll find 30 tips you can put into practice in your bid to become a more relaxed and calmer version of yourself, at work, at home, or both.

Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Yet as anyone who has ever experienced anxiety knows (and that means a lot of us at one time or another), anxiety is not a simple state. On the contrary, anxiety can show up in many different guises, and can be a response to a whole range of perceived threats or fears. Some of us sit precariously balanced on a bubbling vat of anxiety yet are only dimly aware of it.

We can be anxious without fully realising it

This was true of me for many years. Though anxiety has played a big role in my life, a lot of the time I didn't really recognise it. Yes, I worried about people I cared for, but doesn't everyone? Yes, I tended to come up with 'worst case scenarios': 'what if x happened, or y, or z'. But, hey, that was just sensibly looking ahead and predicting possible problems, wasn't it?

Yes, I could be a workaholic, partly because I took a lot on, but partly too because I did everything very, very thoroughly, checked and double-checked just in case something might be wrong. I didn't delegate much either: how could I be sure anyone would do the job, whatever it was, as thoroughly as me? But that was just being super efficient and reliable, wasn't it? And aren't efficiency and reliability great virtues?

It wasn't until I became a coach, and began to take a closer look at my own behaviour, that I came to question some of my deepest-seated assumptions. My image of myself was as someone who generally had things under control,

and this was true. What I came to recognise, however, was that the driver to have things under control all the time was often an unacknowledged anxiety.

Anxiety can be very cunning

I came to see that anxiety can be very cunning. It fools us by showing up in much more respectable and acceptable guises. Anxiety can show up as caring, for example. Almost as a badge of honour. Worrying about someone shows you care. Anxiety can show up as foresight. Anticipating possible problems (my worst case scenarios) can seem like a sensible strategy – until you take it to extremes, seeing disaster round every corner. Anxiety can show up as being very conscientious, working very hard because only that way can you be confident you will succeed.

Does any of this sound familiar?

If it does, you'll be able to add to the list of guises that anxiety can show up as. In this e-Book we'll be taking three of the most common guises for starters. You'll find tips for reducing anxiety that shows up disguised as:

- caring about other people
- foresight or protecting against disaster
- conscientiousness, working very hard, putting work before everything else

But there's more to anxiety than this

Of course there is. What I also came to see more clearly is that anxiety is a response often to different kinds of fears. Sometimes a healthy response, but more often unhealthy. These fears include:

- **Fear of overwhelm** - A big source of anxiety for those of us who try to keep life very much under control is fear of being overwhelmed. As tasks, responsibilities and demands pile up, we feel more and more uneasy. Fuelling our uneasiness is a feeling of being threatened. It's as though we are on a knife edge, just about coping but dreading that one more demand that may push us over. A Friday deadline is changed to Thursday and suddenly all our plans for coping are upset. Sometimes our anxiety seeps through. Maybe we flare up, over-react. Or we may keep our feelings hidden and suffer the discomforts of anxiety alone.

- **Fear of failure** - Another big one is around fear of failure which can result from a loss of confidence in your own abilities. We worriers have vivid imaginations – we can be doing just fine, working on part of a task, when our worry antennae suddenly tune in to the whole task. And it looks enormous. So we start worrying about whether we'll get it done – which makes it feel even more enormous. If we're not careful we can generate a mini-panic where we completely lose touch with our abilities and competence (which, in reality, we have in spades: anxious people are usually very competent and very reliable). It can feel as if we've never achieved anything before and here is this enormous task bearing down on us. That's how vivid our imaginations can be. We don't so much fear failing in a task. It's more that anxiety can cause us to go blank, blot out our abilities and experience so that we can feel a stranger in our own skin.

- **Fear over others' demands** - This fear is around other people and what they may demand of us. Many anxious people find saying no difficult, partly because they are not in close touch with their own needs, and therefore don't always know what to say yes to, and what they might reasonably refuse. One way of talking about this is to say they have weak boundaries and are therefore easily invaded by others, which in turn can add to their fear of overwhelm. Others can be unpredictable in their demands and can come along at any time and upset your well-laid plans.

Do any of these fears strike a chord?

If so, then like the disguises in which anxiety may appear, you can probably add some of your own fears.

The second set of tips in this book will show you ways to reduce anxiety arising from three different sources of fear:

- fear of overwhelm
- fear of failure
- fear of others' demands or weak boundaries

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