



PENNY HOLBURN COACHING

It's about You and Results

How to Worry Less

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Note that the heading is not, "How to stop worrying". I don't think zero worrying is a good thing. If you never, ever, worry about anything you will be approaching a state akin to mania and are most likely to be reckless. Some worry keeps us alive, motivated, and solving problems. On the other hand, story-fondling catastrophic thoughts that have a close to nil probability of happening is not a good use of the mind. Unrelenting doubts and fears increase our anxiety, reduce our immune function, and stop us from doing anything.

7-Point Plan to Worry Less

1. Create a worry list. Write down everything that is concerning you on your worry list
2. Go through each item on the list. Can you solve the problem? If you can then write down how you can solve the problem. This can include getting advice, doing research etc. Create a plan and start taking actions on the plan. If there is nothing you can do then let it go. You are not in control of everything that happens in your life.
3. Create a worry period - a specific time of the day (preferably not near bedtime) - when you will worry. Anytime you catch yourself worrying write the worry down on your worry list to deal with during your worry period.
4. Accept your feelings. Don't fight them. If you try and fight them you will give them energy and your worries will get bigger. Practice mindfulness. Observe your worrying thoughts. Just watch them. And let them pass you by like clouds in the sky. Uncertainty is a part of life. Practice trying to make it a friend and not an enemy.
5. Ask yourself if your worry thoughts are grounded in reality or are distortions of reality. Challenge and question your anxious thoughts. What is the probability that this will happen? Some common distortions include: 1) All or nothing thinking - for instance, I am always a failure. 2) Overgeneralisation - for example, I will never get a job. 3) Negative filter - we only interpret events through a negative filter seeing only the negative and not the positive. 4) Jumping to conclusions - without evidence. 5) Catastrophising - expecting the worst case scenario to happen. 6) Emotional reasoning. I am feeling frightened so I must be in danger. 7) Labeling - labelling yourself as a liar, hopeless, a victim etc. 8) Personalisation - holding yourself accountable for things you are not in control of.
6. Remind yourself of all the past times you were worried and fearful and you made it through. For instance, you were retrenched but you found a new job.
7. Look at the people you spend time with. If you spend too much time with people who are overly anxious and fearful, you want to spend less time with those people and more time with confident, "can-do" people.