

# Overcoming Anxiety and Fear

Adapted from the writings of  
Norman Vincent Peale

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\* We recognize that in some cases, it is necessary to seek help from professionals to manage anxiety.



### Introduction

ANXIETY AND fear affect millions of people, but you do not have to be controlled by them and can be free of their continued harassment.

This booklet will help you better understand yourself and what can cause anxiety. Self-understanding is necessary for self-release. With God's help, and sometimes the help of a qualified professional, you can drive out dark shadows of apprehension, deepen your sense of confidence, and give you calm assurance for the days ahead.

These timeless principles from Dr. Norman Vincent Peale will show you how to achieve real faith in God, how to sense His strengthening Presence, and how to feel certain that you are always in His loving care. These techniques will benefit anyone who uses them. By following the steps in this booklet, you can enjoy the blessings listed above. May God guide and bless you as you find release from anxiety and fear.

### Guideposts Outreach

### Minimize Anxiety and Fear

FEAR IS common. But the way it affects us can hamper our productivity and interfere with our enjoyment of life. The good news is, we can minimize anxiety and fear in our lives and prevent them from having control over our lives. Some emotions such as anger, depression, hatred, and prejudice can be removed from our lives when we take positive steps to deal with them.

The first step in overcoming any fear is to admit it. Don't be afraid to be afraid. Honestly admit your fear. If your mother, father, or grandfather had apprehensive fears, you don't have to "inherit" them. You can choose whether you want to be controlled by fear all your life or be free from it. Fear is removable.

Aristotle said, "He who has overcome his fears will truly be free."

One step toward removing fear is self-discipline or self-control.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "I have often been afraid, but I wouldn't give in to it. I made myself act as though I was not afraid, and gradually my fear disappeared."

Push fearful thoughts aside and act with courage. In this way, you control the fear, and it doesn't control you.

Eleanor Roosevelt said it well also: "You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you look fear in the face."

Facing our fears and anxiety head-on removes its hold on

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you. When a person determinedly stands up to something, that something tends to fold and finally give way. There is much less danger in standing up to a difficulty or fear than in trying to avoid or run away from it.

Many fears are baseless and empty. A friend of mine figured out that, over his lifetime, 92 percent of the things he feared never did happen. Of the 8 percent that did happen he said, “I stood up to them, handled them, and overcame them.” He added, “All fears are controllable.”

### Face Life's Storms

An old cowboy said he had learned life's most important lesson from Hereford cows. All his life, he had worked cattle ranches where winter storms took a heavy toll among the herds. Freezing rains whipped across the prairies. Howling, bitter winds piled snow into huge drifts. Temperatures dropped to below-zero. During these storms, most cattle would turn their backs to the icy blasts and slowly drift downwind, mile upon mile until they died. But Herefords would instinctively head into the wind. There they would stand, shoulder-to-shoulder, facing the storm's blast, heads down against its onslaughts. “You most always found the Herefords alive and well,” said the cowboy. “The greatest lesson I ever learned on the prairies was to face life's storms.”

The lesson is valid. Do not attempt to avoid things you are afraid of. Every human being has to decide again and again whether to meet fearsome difficulties head-on or run away.

You can never outrun fear, so try a better way. Take a long,

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searching look at your fear. Stand up to it. It probably won't happen anyway. And if it does, you have what it takes to meet it and successfully control it.

### Attack Anxiety with Common Sense

SOME ANXIETY is normal. It helps us cope with everyday life and exercise caution. Concern for others is selfless and shows a caring heart. But abnormal fear, or overwhelming anxiety, is destructive to your physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Anxiety may be defined as continuous and pervasive apprehension that can become fear. It is basically an accumulation of irrational mental attitudes. When an anxiety is broken apart, you will often find there is not as much to be afraid of as you thought. Anxiety is like fog: huge mists arising from little moisture.

I always encourage people to visualize themselves hitting anxiety hard with reason. When you employ the power of your mind and unemotionally dissect your anxiety, ask yourself if there is any real reason to feel nervous and apprehensive. Realize that you possess enormous potential power to use cool, factual thought and action. Keeping anxiety under reason-control prevents it from developing into deeper fear.

List the reasons you should be anxious and the reasons you should be confident on a piece of paper. At the top of the confidence column, put the word *God*. Under this write anything about the problem that you can turn over to God, which should be everything. The more sincerely you do this, the less you have to write in the anxiety column.

You will discover that your anxiety is generally motivated by emotional causes. If you constantly emphasize commonsense considerations, emotional elements will give way, and your intelligence will take control.

The Bible says, “What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me” (Job 3:25). Fear itself can produce the thing feared. But positive, faithful thoughts can result in a positive attitude and dispel the fearful thoughts.

It is important, then, to eliminate fearful thoughts to stop the flow of negative results. A doctor came into a sick room where family members were sitting near the patient’s bed—thinking and talking about unfavorable outcomes. The doctor said, “I want you all to leave. I cannot cure my patient as long as you are here sending out death thoughts.” It was a bitter cold day, but he threw open a window, letting a frigid breeze whip through the room. “I’ve got to fumigate this room of your anxiety thoughts,” he said. That wise doctor hit anxiety hard with strong common sense and action.

### An Action Program

When you are struggling with anxiety, try asking yourself, “Is there a valid reason for me to be anxious? What good is accomplished by my worrying over this? Will my anxiety help the result, or perhaps harm it?” The more you apply common sense, examining the situation with cool, rational intelligence, the more you will reduce self-built emotion. This will help reduce anxiety. For example, suppose you feel anxious about a loved one. Everyone knows accidents can happen. But the chance of anything happening to

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your loved one is minimized by the law of averages. In fact, the law of averages actually works out to people's good rather than to their bad. Reduce or eliminate anxiety by reminding yourself that God will protect you and be with you no matter what happens.

Thoughts tend to reproduce themselves in kind. If a person constantly sends out apprehensive anxiety thoughts, those thoughts multiply. Conversely, if you surround your loved ones and yourself with faith thoughts, protection thoughts, love thoughts—all of which may be called God thoughts—then you encompass your loved ones and yourself with the most powerful protection in this world. A good rule to follow is found in Philippians 4:8, “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

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### Quit Fearing the Future

ONE OF the most painful and devastating forms of anxiety is fearing what might happen. This type of fear leaves its victim in a constant state of apprehension that some disaster, trouble, illness, or accident may befall a loved one or himself. To live with the perpetual worry that something bad is going to happen can develop an unhappy, unstable state of mind, to say nothing of the acute tension it creates.

Fear and anxiety can be rooted in childhood, often as a result of other people's fears. An illustration is that of a middle-aged man plagued from boyhood by apprehensive fear of something terrible happening. Always this anxiety lurked in his mind, sometimes dominant, sometimes repressed, but he was never completely free of it.

In this instance, the man's anxiety stemmed from an acute sense of insecurity based on his family's history. When he was a child, there wasn't enough money to pay bills, much less provide the next meal. Even when finances improved, other insecurities developed. One was the mother's uncertain health. She had high-blood pressure and whenever the doctor came to test her blood pressure, the boy became anxious.

The mother also lived in perpetual fear that she would suffer a physical disability and made the mistake of warning the boy to be prepared in case something happened to her. For years, especially when away from home, whenever he heard a telephone ring, his heart constricted, and he became

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breathless. It might be the long-feared word....

His father also projected his own fears upon the sensitive boy. Despite being a grown man, he was still afraid of the dark, painstakingly checking doors and windows each night. He had other fears as well, such as traveling by boat. “There is only a plank between us and the implacable sea,” he would say. And of air travel he said, “An engine might fail. There is always a possibility of human error and mechanical failure.” He worried that he or his loved ones might be harmed. He was afraid of losing his job as well. Security and insecurity battled in the boy’s mind until he too, became a victim of excessive fear.

### The Power of Faith

When the young man married a clear-minded young woman who didn’t struggle with fear, he was impressed with her faith. Her trust in Almighty God, and that He would always guide and protect her, influenced her husband, and he began to see the first ray of hope and the possibility that he could escape the harsh tyranny of fearing the future. He began a lifelong study and practiced the power of faith in God to deliver him from his fear. In this way, he finally accomplished mastery over his fear and anxiety by learning to trust in God’s love, care, and guidance.

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### How to Let Go of Your Fear

The Bible says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

Here are four methods for overcoming the haunting fear of the future:

1. **Let go and let God.** Worry is a spasmodic clutching by the mind of an obsessive fearful thought. To counteract it, replace the fear with the belief that you can leave your concerns with God. By a deliberate mental act, take charge of the fear. Order your mind to release its hold on the obsessive anxious thought. Let go and let God deal with those thoughts.
2. **Remind yourself of one great fact and affirm it constantly:** “God loves me and those whom I love. He is now taking care of us all.”
3. **Having left your fears with God,** affirm His watchful care, and go about your daily life confidently.
4. **Every day, morning, and night,** thank God for his loving kindness and protection. Believe and affirm the things for which you are thanking Him.

The Bible has good advice about this. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).

### Increase Faith, Diminish Fear

LITTLE DID flight attendant Jackie Myers realize, on that beautiful morning as she walked out to the huge waiting jet, that within a few minutes she would face the greatest crisis of her life. After takeoff, Jackie suddenly found herself face-to-face with death. At what seemed certain to be her last moment, a remarkable insight came to her. She knew then that the greatest thing she had ever done was to develop faith that could counteract fear.

“Eleven minutes after takeoff,” Miss Myers said, “our beautiful huge shiny jet went into a nosedive. We were 249,000 pounds hurtling through space. We went into the dive at 19,000 feet and, forty seconds later, the captain pulled us out of it at 5,000 feet—just eight seconds before we would have crashed!

“As we pulled out of the dive, the number-three engine tore out of the wing and fell to earth. Number four was hanging on by a few bolts. We lost most of our hydraulic fluid and a lot of electrical power. Several other mechanical failures developed. But our captain landed the plane in an emergency field as gently as one would handle a newborn baby. If eggs had lined the runway, they would not have been damaged. It was the greatest miracle I shall ever experience.”

Jackie Myers told of the thoughts that crowded her mind in those agonizing 40 seconds during which the plane was in a nosedive. Here was an instance. “When we started to encounter turbulence, I ran to my jump seat in the tail of the

plane but was thrown off balance. I grabbed onto a shelf as we nosed over. At first, I couldn't believe it was happening. Our pilots were superbly skilled. I felt certain they would pull us out of it.

“But it was an unmistakable fact: We were plunging through space. I thought of a beloved aunt who, every night, says a little prayer for me. I thought how happy I was to have been even a small part of my church. I thought how strongly I had endorsed the power of positive thinking and the Golden Rule. At no time did I experience fear. I was so happy about my life, including religion. I did tell God there were so many things I wanted to do yet. I said ‘Lord, I never got my happy marriage and my happy family.’

“But we were still hurtling downward, and I reluctantly terminated my conversation with God. I accepted that we would be blown to bits upon impact. I added a little P.S. to God: ‘If this is the way You want it, Lord I guess this is the way it's going to be.’” Then suddenly, the plane righted! Jackie could hardly believe her senses. “But it was real. We were flying merrily along on a level!”

Later she told me, “I found in this terrible experience that by positive thinking and right living from day to day, you can develop an inner condition that will sustain you through life's worst ordeals and roughest moments.” By practicing faith and right thinking, by praying to God, and by seeking direction from Him, Jackie Myers had built up a resistance against fear so that it could not touch her, even in the worst moment of her life. The development of faith against fear is one of the most fundamental methods for controlling



anxiety and conquering fear. Faith neutralizes fear.

### Step by Step: Managing Anxiety and Fear

- 1. To counteract fear with faith, say with determination:** “I do not want to be motivated by anxiety and fear anymore. I want to cast out fear and anxiety from my mind, and no longer be dominated by them. I now decide, determine, and command my anxiety and fear to be brought under control, even eliminated. I will be a person of faith.” Saying these things will not in itself accomplish them; but affirming them will increase your belief.
- 2. On a sheet of paper list all of your fears.** Determine your worst fear and decide to attack that particular fear alone. Next, attack the next fear. If you overcome first one fear and then another and another, you will gather strength to fight all your fears.
- 3. A third procedure is what might be called a spiritual crash program,** or a method for increasing faith quickly. Faith is the result of growing our belief. There are ways to increase that growth. Work at it by saturating your consciousness with faith. Search for Scripture passages that express faith. Look up the word *faith* in the Bible concordance for passages about faith and people of faith. Memorize them and repeat them until they become familiar and dominate your thinking.

One example is in Psalm 34:4: “I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.” To say that I sought the Lord means that I really determined

to find Him, and this very determination brought me to Him. Then He took all, that is every, fear from me. Another verse is Psalm 23:4: “I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” Get fixed in your mind the presence of God and fear will fade away. Still another is Isaiah 41:10, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

### Remove the Fear of Intimidation

WHEN I was a young reporter on the old *Detroit Journal*, my editor, Grove Patterson, took a kindly interest in me. He was a man of keen and perceptive insights. One day, he called me into his office. “Norman,” he said, “you’ve got a lot of fear and anxiety. You must get rid of it. What is there to be afraid of? Why should anyone go through life like a scared rabbit? The good Lord has told us that He will help us and be with us.”

I shall always remember that conversation. “Look, son,” he continued, “I’m going to give you a little advice. The only one in this world to fear is God, and that doesn’t mean to be afraid of Him. It means to esteem Him. There is nothing else to be afraid of, so never be afraid of anything or anyone.”

“But, Mr. Patterson,” I said, “how can anyone possibly go through life afraid of nothing or no one?”

He leveled a long, inky finger at me. “Listen,” he said, “I’ll tell you how: ‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid... for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go’ (Joshua 1:9). Just hang onto that promise,” he added, “and don’t forget that it’s made by Someone who never let anybody down.”

The world is full of individuals who live miserable lives because fear or intimidation from other people affects their personal relationships. The employee fears the boss. The bashful person is fearful of assertive people at school or office. Some wives fear their husbands and vice versa, and

there are parents who fear their children. The introvert cowers before the extrovert; the shy person cringes in the presence of the bold. Some people do not participate because someone else makes them feel inferior.

### How Can Fear of Other People Be Overcome?

1. **Let the shy help the shy.** In every group there are other shy people. You may be surprised to discover who they are. Sometimes the loudest talker is covering up his inferiority feelings. Single out a shy person in the group and show him or her attention. This will help them, and it will help you as well.
2. **Accept yourself.** Be yourself. You are unique, because God made only one of you. Understanding this fact will free you from trying to be someone else because you’re afraid of being different.
3. **Learn to love people.** “Perfect love drives out fear.” The more you develop genuine appreciation and esteem for others, the less you will feel inferior in their presence and the easier, more normal, your relationship with them will be.
4. **Pray for people with whom you feel uncomfortable.** Ask God to help them with their problems. When we focus on others’ needs, we understand that we all have problems.

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### What Is Your Image of Yourself?

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Man surrounds himself with the true image of himself.” You surround yourself with situations and attitudes that reflect the image you have of yourself. If you respect other people, take them as they are, practice loving them, and deal with them on this basis of facts rather than emotions, they will react to you in normal and friendly fashion. On the other hand, acting embarrassed, shy, and withdrawn will turn others away. These reactions show fear of others and makes them uneasy around you.

A young man consulted me about a fear of his boss, a stern, hard man. The young man said, “I feel shaky whenever I go into his office.” I offered the opinion that the boss may have become seemingly stern because of his own problems. I suggested that the young man pray for his employer and think thoughts of friendly affection toward him. “It will be like trying to dent a wall of steel,” he complained.

But when the young employee began to see his boss as a human being, a warm feeling developed between them, and fear passed away. It is a simple law of human relationships: Genuine love and friendliness overcome fear of other people.

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### Deal with Guilt and Watch Fear Decrease

GUILT AND fear are so inextricably interlocked that, when these two enemies of human happiness gang up, they make life miserable. I urge anyone who suffers from fear or anxiety to honestly face whether guilt is a possible cause and to consider spiritual healing.

The difference between fear and anxiety may be illustrated in this way. If a big dog barks at you, you may feel anxious and walk faster to avoid it; but if a lion in the street roared at you, your fright would cause you to run in terror. This would be fear.

Sometimes fear can stem from a sense of guilt. It is difficult for a sensitive personality to assume guilt without hatching a flock of anxieties and fears.

An old friend became a victim of anxiety in a dramatic reversal of his personality, which was previously free of fear. In our talks, he revealed an enormous sense of guilt based on participating in behavior contrary to his own beliefs and values of right and wrong. As a result, he suffered from an assortment of anxieties, and these had hardened into chronic fear.

### How to Overcome Guilt

I recommended several steps to him. First, a complete purging with a spiritual counselor. By purging, I meant he

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was to empty out of his mind all the evil he had thought about and done, holding nothing back from his counselor. Second, he was to ask and to receive God's forgiveness. God forgives quickly and generously. Third, he was to forgive himself and no longer condemn or criticize himself for past sinfulness. Man instinctively believes he must continually punish himself. Self-forgiveness comes hard but is vital. Fourth, he was to rebuild his character on a moral level harmonious with his deepest convictions. These were difficult steps, especially self-forgiveness and rebuilding; but all were possible to achieve by real effort and through prayer and faith.

These, then, are the techniques for dealing with guilt and watching fear diminish: counseling, God's forgiveness, self-forgiveness, and rebuilding. Guilty thoughts must be kept from the mind, and action related to such thoughts avoided. I reminded my friend of the old saying: "You can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair." You may not prevent guilty thoughts from entering your mind, but you can keep them from staying there and influencing your actions.

You can become the fearless person God meant you to be. Baseball manager Branch Rickey, who had a rare talent for developing character in his baseball players, once had a player who rushed into the clubhouse after every inning to telephone his wife. He was neurotically suspicious of his wife's faithfulness, although she was completely trustworthy and loyal.

It turned out that the player was projecting his own

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disloyalty onto her. "You know how it is, when you're on the road with the boys and there is a lot of pressure on you..." he told Mr. Rickey as an excuse for his behavior.

But Branch had an answer for the miserable young man, "Where are your inner braces? If you really want to go straight, there's Someone who can help you, and you know who He is." Branch Rickey prayed with that player about his fear-morality problem, brought something real into that baseball player's life, and saved his marriage—and a player, too. His guilt had resulted in fear. When his guilt was removed, so was his fear.

### End the Fear of Failure

ONE COMMON fear is fear of failure. Fear of failure can work against you by causing the very failure that you fear, often referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Everyone will fail at something sometime. Think of a child learning to walk. The child will fall often before he or she masters the ability to walk, but each time they fall, they get back up and try again. The important question is, how do you react to a failure? A failure can be an excellent teacher—mistakes teach us how not to do something, while our successes tell us how something is done right. It is important to study both our failures and successes to discover new insight and knowledge. You can bring great accomplishments out of what seems to be overwhelming failures if you learn from those failures instead of dwelling on them.

Never let yourself give in to a continuing fear-of-failure psychology. The best strategy is to continue striving for better performance until it is attained. Look at a failure and ask yourself why you failed. Then try again, wiser and more competent, knowing what didn't work. Never entertain the thought that you will continue to fail. The secret of courage is to admit your feelings of failure—then, with God's help, go on and do your job in spite of them. This procedure will keep fear under control and, when controlled, it cannot bother you.

Thomas Edison, who invented the lightbulb, said this: "I

have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work. Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

Never give up. Learn to recognize and bypass emotional reactions, and stress cool, rational thinking. Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who rallied Britain against the Nazis, said, "Success consists of going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm."

One of life's greatest satisfactions is overcoming the fear of failure. Conquer your fear by planning, learning, thinking, studying, trying, believing, and praying. Visualize success and celebrate it mentally.

Maurice Chevalier was a famous French entertainer who graced Broadway stages and Hollywood films. One night, while on stage, he felt extremely dizzy. His brain seemed on fire. Cues seemed to reach him from far away. He tried desperately to get back on the track, but his mind was a jumble. His fellow actors covered up for him, but the old debonair ease that was his trademark was gone. He would hesitate and stammer. Failure for the first time in his professional life had come to the great performer.

Ordered to rest, Maurice Chevalier came under the care of Dr. Robert Dubois in the southern part of France. "I am beaten. I'm afraid of being a failure. I have no future," he told the doctor. He was advised to take long walks to repair his damaged nervous system. Yet the inner turmoil did not leave him. He had lost all confidence and he was afraid.

After a time, the doctor suggested he entertain before a small group in the village hall. "But," said Maurice, "I am

terrified at the thought. What guarantee is there that my mind will not go blank?”

“There are no guarantees,” the doctor said slowly. “But you must not be afraid of failing. You are afraid to step on a stage again, so you tell yourself that you’re finished. But fear is never a reason for quitting: It is only an excuse. When a brave man encounters fear, he admits it and goes on despite it.”

Maurice suffered untold agony of fear before his appearance, but he went on and performed very well. Joy welled up inside him. “I knew that I had not conquered fear. I had simply admitted it and gone on despite it; and the scheme worked.”

From that night, Maurice Chevalier performed before audiences everywhere. “There have been many moments of fear,” he said. “The gentle doctor was right; there are no guarantees. But being frightened has never since made me want to quit.” And Maurice added: “My own experience taught me this: If you wait for the perfect moment, when all is safe and assured, it may never arrive. Mountains will not be climbed, races won, or lasting happiness achieved.”

### Don't Fear a Problem—Solve It

MANY PEOPLE seem to believe that this world would be wonderful if we had fewer problems, less difficult ones, or, better still, none at all. But really, is a problem a bad thing? Would we be better off with no problems whatsoever?

Problems are part of life. We might as well face the fact that we are going to have problems. The Bible, most realistic of all books, says: “Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7), and “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33).

This Bible verse also says: “But take heart! I have overcome the world.” This is what you and I can do. I want to assure you that we need fear no problem on earth but, with God’s help, can overcome it. So don’t fear a problem—solve it. In the book of 2 Timothy, verse 1:7, the Bible says, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”

Sometimes life throws us a challenge like an unexpected illness. But these challenges can be faced and endured. The Apostle Paul said, “I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances” (Philippians 4:11).

My father had arthritis until he died at 85 years of age. He told me that it bothered and pained him for years, until he made up his mind that he had it, that there was no real cure for it, and that he would have to live with it. When he had adjusted his thinking to the inevitable facts, the arthritic condition did not annoy him nearly as much. He lived a long,

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vigorous life, regardless of his arthritic affliction. In a mental and spiritual sense, he mastered his problem.

### Master Your Problems

The method I personally worked out for dealing with problems is an uncomplicated one, but it works. I completely committed my problems and myself to God's help and guidance. I found that by trying to practice the teachings of Jesus Christ, I had increased inner peace and better ability to organize myself and my thoughts. In this way, fear, tension, and inadequacy in the face of a problem were brought under control. Here are some suggestions to help you do the same:

### Seven Ways to Solve a Problem

1. **Remember Psalm 73:24:** "You guide me with your counsel." Ask God for guidance and follow it when it comes. Believe that God will guide you and thank Him for it.
2. **Don't panic or you will not be able to think clearly.** First, get quiet. How do you do that? Pray to God and relax in faith. Then keep relaxed and calm.
3. **Don't be overwhelmed** or make the problem bigger than it is. Simply apply common sense.
4. **Don't spend time on regrets.** Don't ask "Why did I ever get into this?" Begin where you are.
5. **Seek a solution,** not for the whole problem, but for one step. Take it a step at a time. As you do so, pray continually.

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6. **Ask yourself what is right** and avoid the wrong, for no wrong thing ever turns out right.
7. **Never give up.** Keep at it. Keep praying. Keep believing. Focus on finding the answer, not on the problem. Remember, the darkest hour is often just before the dawn.

### When to Seek Professional Help

YOU ARE not alone in your anxiety. Somewhere around 40,000,000 Americans grapple with anxiety. And some anxiety is normal—especially when we face stressful changes, unexpected challenges, or traumatic events. Sometimes it is hard to know when the problem is just a temporary issue and when it is something more serious. Proverbs encourages us to seek counsel, and we urge you to seek help if you're experiencing some of the signs below.

Here are just a few red flags that indicate it might be time to seek the help of a professional for your anxiety or depression. Please seek help from your minister, a counselor, or a medical professional if you experience several of these symptoms for more than two weeks:

- 1. You feel empty or sad.**
- 2. You lose interest in things that you once enjoyed.**
- 3. You feel a distinct lack of energy.**
- 4. Your sleep patterns have changed significantly.**
- 5. Your appetite has changed or you experience unexplained changes in your weight.**
- 6. Your self-esteem is low and you experience feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, or restlessness.**
- 7. You have trouble concentrating.**
- 8. You are uncharacteristically irritable.**
- 9. You have thoughts of suicide or self-harm.**

In addition, if you have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), it is wise to seek help from your physician, especially if your PTSD is preventing you from enjoying or living your life to the fullest.

### Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Help

Here are some resources that might serve as a first step in getting the help you need:

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help>

#### NAMI (NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH)

<https://nami.org/help>



# Prayer When Worried or Afraid

BY NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

*DEAR LORD, I'm worried and full of fear. Anxiety fills my mind. Could it be that my love for You is weak and imperfect and, as a result, I am plagued by worry?*

*I have tried to reassure myself that there is nothing to worry about. But such reassurances do not seem to help.*

*I know that I should just rest myself confidently upon Your loving care and guidance. But I have been too nervous to do that.*

*Touch me, dear Lord, with Your peace, and help my disturbed mind know that You are God and that I should not fear evil. In Christ's name, I offer this prayer. Amen.*

Reprinted from *A Prayer for Every Need* by Norman Vincent Peale.  
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS: We hope that these timeless tips from Dr. Peale will be beneficial to you. We also recognize that anxiety and depression sometimes require the help of a qualified medical professional, who can advise and, in some cases, provide medication to help. We strongly encourage you to seek help if your anxiety, fears, or depression linger or intensify.

# Overcoming Anxiety and Fear

## NOTES

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**We inspire the world to believe  
that all things are possible with  
faith, hope, and prayer.**

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