

Volume 10, Issue 9

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Motivated Vol 10, Issue 9
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During the last part of 2018, I came across a free training program offered by the motivational speaker and author, Mel Robbins. This month-long *Mindset Reset* program included a daily email and short video on a variety of topics crucial to success and productivity. (You can find all of the videos on Mel's *YouTube* channel.)

The tips she shared on setting goals, visualization, overcoming negative beliefs about ourselves, and getting into the habit of a good morning routine were eye-opening and life-changing. But the topic that especially spoke to me, and to which she devoted over a week, was anxiety and worry.

I've been a worrywart my entire life, and I was somewhat aware of how it affected me. It was only after a recent doctor's appointment, when I was referred to a heart specialist to check on a problem with irregular heartbeats, that I realized the extent and seriousness of it. After many tests, I was happy to hear that my heart was healthy, but quite surprised when the doctor attributed the irregularities and problems I'd been experiencing to "severe anxiety."

When I asked some of my friends and family if they felt my problem with worrying and anxiety was severe, they all chuckled and confirmed the doctor's conclusion. Apparently I was the last one to know how bad it had gotten.

I can't say that after watching Mel Robbin's talks I have permanently overcome my anxiety, but it helped me to be much more aware of how fear and worry affect me both physically and mentally. The content of that course provided me with some great tools for minimizing the negative effects fear and worry have had on me.

I've been reading and researching a bit more on the subject too, and I am excited to share some of what I've found in this issue of *Motivated*. I hope it will be as eye-opening and liberating for you as it has been for me, and will provide you with some tools also to help you take control of the anxiety that may be holding you back.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*



The Worry Tree

Author Unknown

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face wreathed in smiles. He hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward, he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

“Oh, that’s my trouble tree,” he replied. “I know I can’t help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again.”

“Funny thing is,” he smiled, “when I come out in the morning to pick ‘em up, there aren’t nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.” ■



You're Not Alone

Top things people worry most about

By Michelle Pomlett, adapted

Worry, that sense of insecurity, unease, and fear over what negative events may happen—as unrealistic as these concerns may be—is one of the most unpleasant emotions that you can experience as a human being. It is also one of the most common. While everyone has worried at some point, many people suffer from chronic worrying in the form of anxiety.

If you worry often, you're far from alone. In fact, it may comfort you to know that many of us tend to worry about the same issues. All of those anxieties and stressors that may plague your life affect a huge chunk of the rest of the world as well.

What are our common worries as human beings? More importantly, what can be done about them?

Worries We All Share

Money and the future: Whether it's debt—worrying you won't be able to cover all your bills next month, or fear about your financial security in the future, when you have kids or when you retire—financial insecurity is a major cause of

stress. Financial worries can take a heavy toll on your mental health, causing serious anxiety and impacting self-esteem.

But with this being the number one most common worry, rest assured that almost everyone you know is in the same boat as you, and many are probably even worse off than you. The best thing you can do to assuage financial worries is to get a good handle on your actual financial situation and make a solid plan and budget. Often times, when you crunch the numbers and get a plan in place, the problem isn't as big as we've built it up in our minds.

Job security: Worry about losing your job? Many people experience fears over being laid off. This stress gets even worse as pressures at work increase, causing people to feel as if their job is at risk if they do not perform to a certain standard, not to mention the external pressures when the economy slows and the job market becomes even more competitive.

Again, a pragmatic approach can work wonders in alleviating work related anxiety. Build strong lines of communication between you and your employer. Ensure you know exactly what

is expected of you and request regular (annual or six monthly) performance appraisals to allow you to outline your successes and get constructive pointers on areas for improvement.

Relationships: About half of both men and women worry about their personal relationships. Those who are single worry about finding a partner, while for those in a relationship, it is common to worry about how secure the bond is or where the relationship is going. And it's not only romantic relationships that can put a strain on the psyche. Strained relationships with family, children, colleagues and friends can also weigh heavily on your mind.

Communication is key to solving relationship problems. Sharing your worries with a trusted third party can take some of the weight off, but trying to communicate more effectively with those you are in a strained relationship with is the most important way you can solve these worries. Relationship counselling can be a huge help in mediating a situation, and it's not just reserved for romantic relationships—it can help in mediating issues with family and friends too.

Health: Many people worry about their health, or the health of a loved one. To the point that this encourages you to eat a healthy diet and exercise, a little worry can be a good thing. But if it's causing severe anxiety and mental turmoil then it is not doing you any good. Health anxiety—worrying about developing a serious disease or health condition—is a very real problem for many people, which can negatively impact other areas of life.

It's difficult to do, but accepting one's mortality is an important part of life. Only by accepting that life is fleeting can you enjoy the time you do have on earth. All you can do is try your best to live a healthy life, and accept that the rest is out of your control.

How to Cope—and Stop Worrying

Of course a certain level of worry is normal in everyone's life—we all worry about these common things—but when worrying becomes anxiety it isn't just uncomfortable, it can impact our mental and physical well-being, and it can get worse if we don't do anything about it.

At times, your anxiety may come from a deep-rooted wound that originates in your childhood. At other times, the stressors in your life can be ongoing, because a certain situation is anxiety provoking. If worrying is a problem that you feel you cannot control, it is important to get help.

Sometimes talking with a trusted friend or family member can help. There also are coping strategies that can help reduce the sense of anxiety and insecurity about life. Seeing a mental health professional for anxiety counselling can help you talk through your worries and learn coping techniques such as meditation and/or prayer, deep breathing, and mindfulness to help release overwhelming feelings and regain a sense of calm. The more these techniques are practiced, the easier it becomes to perceive problems as smaller and more manageable.

There is no reason to let anxiety ruin your life. With help, you can overcome it, and reach a point where you can embrace life once again. ■

Top 5 Anxiety Dos and Don'ts

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



By Mel Robbins, adapted

Getting your kids to talk about their worry is one of the most important steps in helping them manage it. A 2009 study by the American

Psychological Association found that an overwhelming number of parents were not even aware of their kids' worries.

That's understandable. Busy work, school, and extra-curricular schedules means quality time together to talk about tough topics like feelings is hard to find. But if we're not aware of our kids' worries, we can't help them deal with them. Here's a list of Dos and Don'ts that might help:

1. DO be honest with your own feelings. Emotional awareness is a skill that's learned, but not unless we teach it to our kids. When you're worried about something that can be shared in an age-appropriate way, do that. THEN share how you're managing that worry with tools like anchor thoughts or reframing the worry into excitement. While you're at it, share the times that you're angry, sad, excited, happy, and frustrated, too, and how you manage each of those emotions. Kids need to know that feelings are normal; it's what we do with them that counts.

2. DO watch for signs. Anxiety can look like the inability to focus, moodiness, avoidance of school, isolation, crying, and tantrums. When those behaviors become consistent, it's necessary to talk with your kids. If they're not ready to share their feelings, keep sharing your own. Consider gifting them a journal. Counseling can be a critical tool for kids with anxiety. Trained therapists can help your child and the whole family work through anxiety.

3. DO take their fears seriously. When you're tired, the last thing you want to hear about are monsters under the bed or a fight with a friend, but dismissing your child's fears by telling them, "There's no such thing as monsters," or "Everything will be fine tomorrow," will not get rid of

the fear. It instead tells your child that his fear doesn't matter. When kids feel that way, they're less likely to open up about them in the future. Spray under the bed with special "monster spray," and be an active listener when they tell you about what's happening with their friends.

4. But DON'T feed the monster. Children will do whatever they can to avoid what's giving them anxiety. As adults, we have to be careful not to let them. If they learn "throw tantrum = avoid hard stuff" because we remove them from the very situation they're trying to escape, we have taught them that tantrums are a good coping mechanism. And that's a behavior they'll carry into adulthood. Starve the anxiety monster. As best you can, be patient and understanding, but hold firm. Taking action in the face of their worries helps your kids feel empowered and confident. (100% exception when kids are being put in dangerous situations, as with a bully.)

5. DO let your kids make mistakes. Kids who never learn to handle mistakes grow up to be adults who are afraid to make them, and become paralyzed with indecision. Of course, step in when your child's safety is at stake and be a compass when they make a character blunder (i.e. create a safe atmosphere for your child, let them be honest with you, and if you catch her in a lie, opt to discuss the reason behind the lie instead of a lecture). Learning to deal with emotions that follow consequences builds resilience and confidence in your child, as they see that they can handle the obstacles life will inevitably lay down before them. ■

FINDING HOPE, LOSING WORRIES

The real life story of a worry-wart who learned to have faith

By Kathryn Slattery, adapted

I've always been a worrier.

When I was little, we had a ceramic ashtray on our coffee table decorated with a picture of a tidy little house with a red roof, white picket fence, and these words: "Don't worry. It may never happen."

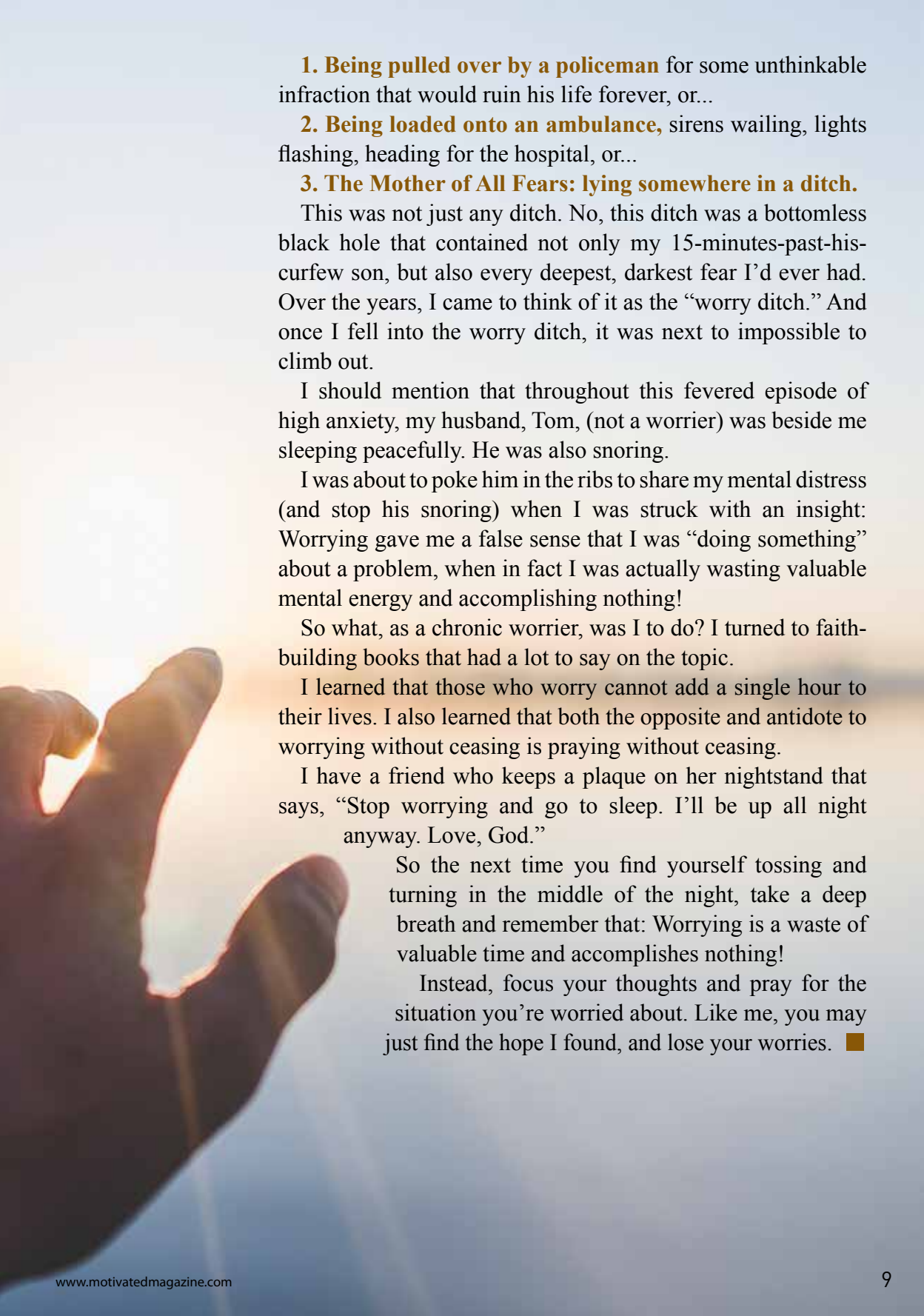
Oh, but I did. Worry, that is. About everything. A lot.

One day I noticed a new freckle on my nose. I'd recently read about something called skin cancer. What if I have skin cancer, too? I worried. When I told my mother about my fears and she told me to stop being such a "worrywart," I worried that all my worrying was going to give me warts!

Sometimes, when I was busy at school, playing with friends or lost in a good book, worry would leave me alone. But it always returned—chronic, vague, and menacing. On the sunniest days it lurked inside me like a storm cloud, threatening to steal my joy.

As I grew older, I began to see how worry, for me, was more than a bad habit. It was the way I was wired. Worry was my futile way of trying to control the uncontrollable. And, if I was honest, I had to admit that my chronic worry revealed a certain lack of trust not only in myself and others—but also in God. If I truly believed in God, why should I worry about anything?

One night I tossed and turned in bed, waiting for our teenage son to come home from a party. I glanced at the green glowing numbers of the clock on my bed stand and felt a surge of anxiety. He was 15 minutes past his curfew. Lying there, alone with my racing thoughts, I quickly became convinced that our son was:



1. Being pulled over by a policeman for some unthinkable infraction that would ruin his life forever, or...

2. Being loaded onto an ambulance, sirens wailing, lights flashing, heading for the hospital, or...

3. The Mother of All Fears: lying somewhere in a ditch.

This was not just any ditch. No, this ditch was a bottomless black hole that contained not only my 15-minutes-past-his-curfew son, but also every deepest, darkest fear I'd ever had. Over the years, I came to think of it as the "worry ditch." And once I fell into the worry ditch, it was next to impossible to climb out.

I should mention that throughout this fevered episode of high anxiety, my husband, Tom, (not a worrier) was beside me sleeping peacefully. He was also snoring.

I was about to poke him in the ribs to share my mental distress (and stop his snoring) when I was struck with an insight: Worrying gave me a false sense that I was "doing something" about a problem, when in fact I was actually wasting valuable mental energy and accomplishing nothing!

So what, as a chronic worrier, was I to do? I turned to faith-building books that had a lot to say on the topic.

I learned that those who worry cannot add a single hour to their lives. I also learned that both the opposite and antidote to worrying without ceasing is praying without ceasing.

I have a friend who keeps a plaque on her nightstand that says, "Stop worrying and go to sleep. I'll be up all night anyway. Love, God."

So the next time you find yourself tossing and turning in the middle of the night, take a deep breath and remember that: Worrying is a waste of valuable time and accomplishes nothing!

Instead, focus your thoughts and pray for the situation you're worried about. Like me, you may just find the hope I found, and lose your worries. ■

The Waste in Worry



By Brad Stevens

If we were to keep a record of all the things we worried about during a given period of time, we would discover—in reviewing them—that the great majority of our anticipated problems or troubles never come to pass. This means that most of the time we devote to worrying, even the constructive kind that prompts us to try to come up with a solution to what is troubling us, is wasted. Thus, we not only caused ourselves unnecessary mental anguish, but also took up valuable minutes and hours that could have been spent more profitably.

To avoid this, it is often necessary to subject potential sources of worry to the coldly objective and analytical light of reason.

Once, shortly before a major concert before a standing-room-only audience, a member of Arturo Toscanini's orchestra

approached the great Italian conductor with an expression of sheer terror on his face. "Maestro," the musician fretted, "my instrument is not working properly. I cannot reach the note of E-flat. Whatever will I do? We are to begin in a few moments."

Toscanini looked at the man with utter amazement. Then he smiled kindly and placed an arm around his shoulders. "My friend," the maestro replied, "Do not worry about it. The note E-flat does not appear anywhere in the music that you will be playing this evening."

The next time we find ourselves in the middle of worrying about some matter, we might be wise to stop and ask ourselves what the odds are of the problem really coming to pass. Upon reflection, we may come to the conclusion that we can go on to something more constructive. ■

Tips to Work through Your Fear and Live Your Life

By Sherry Amatenstein, LCSW

If you are experiencing overwhelming fear or anxiety, especially a phobia, please consider working with a therapist. Additionally, here are some suggestions that have helped many of my patients work through being hostage to their own fears:

- **Allow yourself to sit with your fear for 2-3 minutes at a time.** Breathe with it and say, “It’s okay. It feels lousy but emotions are like the ocean—the waves ebb and flow.” Have something nurturing planned immediately after your 2-3 minute sitting period is completed: Call the good friend waiting to hear from you; immerse yourself in an activity you know is enjoyable and engrossing.
- **Write down the things you are grateful for.** Look at the list when you feel you’re in a bad place. Add to the list.
- **Remind yourself that your anxiety is a storehouse of wisdom.** Write a letter, “*Dear Anxiety, I am no longer intimidated by you. What can you teach me?*”
- **Exercise.** Exercise can refocus you (your mind can only focus on one

thing at a time). Whether you go on a short walk, head to a boxing gym for an all-out sweat session, or turn on a 15-minute yoga video at home, exercise is good for you and it will ground you and help you feel more capable.

- **Use humor to deflate your worst fears.** For instance, what are some ridiculous worst-case scenarios that might happen if you accept an invitation to deliver a speech to a crowd of 500 people? Imagine something so far-fetched that it makes you laugh.
- **Appreciate your courage.** Someone I know would tell herself during difficult times, “Every time I don’t allow fear to keep me from doing something that scares me, I am making myself stronger and less likely to let the next fear attack stop me.”

Perhaps the most important coping tool is to be kind to yourself. What advice would you give to a best friend about those negative inner voices that whisper: *Be afraid. Don’t try anything new?* Do as you advise others—don’t listen to the negativity; be your own best friend. ■

Overcoming Anxiety

NOTABLE
QUOTES



People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them.—**George Bernard Shaw**

Smile, breathe, and go slowly.
—**Thich Nhat Hanh**

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.—**William James**

You don't have to control your thoughts. You just have to stop letting them control you.—**Dan Millman**

You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do.
—**Eleanor Roosevelt**

We must be willing to let go of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us.—**Joseph Campbell**

Just when the caterpillar thought the world was ending, he turned into a butterfly.—**Proverb**

Everything you have ever wanted is sitting on the other side of fear.
—**George Addair**

Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.—**William James**

