

# Want A Magic Wand For Worrying?



It might be much easier than you think.

Life isn't as serious as the mind makes it out to be." Eckhart Tolle

Many of us are what could be called 'natural born worriers'.

It's an epidemic, which we do our best to make contagious. Yet it never, ever brings happiness or inner peace - and it rarely even creates the future we are hoping for. Esther Hicks has a lovely way of looking at it:

“Worrying is a way of creating a future you don't really want.” Esther Hicks

It is a fact of life that we tend to get the things that we give our attention to.

*I remember, many years ago, when I was learning to drive, that I would steer towards whatever I was looking at. If I got distracted by somebody on the pavement, I would*

*unconsciously steer the wheel in the direction of my focus. If I looked over at my driving instructor, he knew that he was going to have to grab the steering wheel - fast.*

Life is just the same. We tend to move towards that which has our focus and attention. But most of the time we're running on auto-pilot, so we don't even notice where that focus and attention is. We are at risk of worrying our way into a future we don't really want, without even noticing!

Meditation and mindfulness really help, by bringing us back to the present moment.

The techniques help us to relax, helping us to focus and concentrate. Then we can have clarity to see the difference between what is 'real' and what is the projection of our mind's story.

It can help us to break free of the story that we normally tell ourselves, the one that goes round and round in our heads, causing so much frustration and pain. The 'story' is what keeps us

stuck, heading in a direction we didn't want to go in. The story might be a retelling of past hurts and failures, a constant reminder of our excuses and limiting beliefs or perhaps a running commentary and critique of our observations of life.

**Yes, thinking is important. But most of our thinking is a waste of time.**

By allowing ourselves to access a point of inner stillness and inner calm, which is what meditation helps us do, whenever we are feeling worried we know we can go back there and let go of those worries. When we have done that, for even just ten minutes, the worries don't seem so real any more.

Our minds could be considered to be full of seeds - seeds of happiness, seeds of anger, seeds of excitement, seeds of worry – all waiting to grow. Our experience of life depends on which seeds we are watering. Watering our 'worrying seeds' (the general worrying about "What if this

happens? What if that happens?") does nothing other than make us feel miserable and stressed! And it will make it more likely that we'll create circumstances that will allow those things to happen.

Meditation and mindfulness can help to calm a worrying mind, setting you free to choose which seeds to water; helping you to feel happier. Then you can create the space to ask yourself that magic question, "What do I want instead?" Then you take action.

It can dramatically impact your experience of life, if you are ready to trust yourself and let go of worrying. It helps by allowing you to spot the gap between the stimulus and your auto-pilot response, so you can regain your choice - you can choose whether or not to feel worried or stressed. It puts you back in the driving seat, reclaiming your personal power.

Mindfulness and meditation help us to learn how to stop and become non-judgemental observers

of our thoughts – even the negative ones – without getting caught up in them.

If you can do something about it, then there's no need to worry. If you can't do anything about it, then there's no point in worrying.

HH Dalai Lama

### Want to know how you can quickly and easily use mindfulness techniques to help reduce worrying?

Here's a sixty second technique that can turn things around – and no one will notice you're doing it!

1. Stop whatever you are doing and take a deep breath in to your belly. Breathe out with an 'ahhhh' sound, as you relax your body and mind. Do this 3 times. (You can do this silently and imagine saying 'ahhhh', if you're not on your own).

2. Now allow your breathing to settle into a natural rhythm.
3. Bring all of your focus to your breathing.
  - As you breathe in, you might like to mentally say something like, "I breathe in."
  - As you breathe out, you might like to mentally say something like, "I breathe out."
  - If you are feeling particularly stressed, you might choose phrases such as "I breathe in relaxation; I breathe out stress and worry."
  - Repeat this for ten breaths. Do it in a relaxed way, with a gentle smile on your face.
4. When you feel you have 'tuned in' to your breathing, you might like to briefly think back to whatever was worrying you and ask yourself, "What is real in this?" It helps you to detach from the story and the worry and helps to steer your mind back in the direction of solutions, rather than problems. Then ask yourself the 'magic questions':

"Is this really what I want?"  
and, if it isn't, then  
"What do I want instead?"

This technique is a wonderfully fast de-stressing tool, as well as being useful mindfulness practice. If you can take one peaceful breath, you can take another... and another. Paying attention to your breathing helps your body to relax and your mind to return to the present moment.

Breath awareness is a core mindfulness technique.

You focus on one breath at a time. The last breath has gone. Your next breath hasn't yet arrived. All you have – all you will ever have – is the breath you are currently breathing. This breath is your present moment.

That's why so many of the meditations I teach begin with gently focussing on your breathing. This slows your thinking down, allows your adrenals and other stress responses to relax and brings you back to the here and now.

By taking good care of the present moment, we take good care of the future.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Even if you're not feeling stressed, you can still benefit hugely from regular practise of mindful breathing throughout your day. It can help you move into the present moment much more easily.

And the more you practise, the easier it gets. It has a subtle, yet profound, impact on all aspects of your experience of life.

I'd love to hear how you get on with today's techniques. How about sharing your experiences over at the forum?