



*Fearless
Female*

Coping With Worry And Anxiety During The Current Health Crisis.



@TotallyFearlessFemale



Wendy Dignan | fearlessfemale.co.uk

Words Of Support

During a time of change when our daily lives are interrupted and the future is uncertain, it's very difficult to maintain a healthy balance, especially when it comes to anxiety and worries. It can be hard not to worry and become consumed by the news and find ourselves in an endless loop of worry.

Even when the world is more certain we can often find ourselves stuck in a world of 'what ifs.' As the world continues to rapidly change with an uncertain future ahead of us, it's important to take a step back and to think about the bigger picture.

At **www.FearlessFemale.co.uk**, we want to help spread positive information everyone can use during these difficult times. Feel free to share, print, download this file as you see fit. If you feel the exercises will help you then try to fill those out, even if you don't feel like they will be very helpful you may surprise yourself by trying.

After reading this booklet, I'm sure you'll be in a better place. For more help with worry and anxiety, please follow me on social media. **Facebook | Instagram**

If you're struggling with life in general and need a way forward, please visit my private practice page and get some time booked in for me to help you find solutions quickly **www.WendyDignan.co.uk**.

And remember....

You can do this!

Wendy Dignan



Introduction To Worrying

Understanding Worrying

Worrying is our way of trying to mentally solve problems that haven't actually occurred yet. When we worry, we're actually talking to ourselves about a potential future event, one that we're afraid of, that may or may not happen, and that may or may not have a negative impact if it does occur. Worrying is therefore a way of trying to cope with a potential threat that hasn't actually happened.

Normally worrying can be beneficial to us, it helps us solve problems and to anticipate future events or obstacles. We're worried about getting sick, so we plan by washing our hands to prevent spreading or catching the virus. This is helpful worrying to keep us safe.

Worrying can also take on a more problematic form where it leaves us worrying excessively, thinking about the worst possible case scenario and forming worry cycles. Unhelpful worrying will be out of all proportion and consume our daily lives.



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Triggering Worrying

There are so many triggers for worries and overthinking, and most are specific to each one of us. However, there are a few common external triggers, things such as seeing upsetting news about the virus or being put in a situation where you feel out of your comfort zone i.e. being furloughed from work.

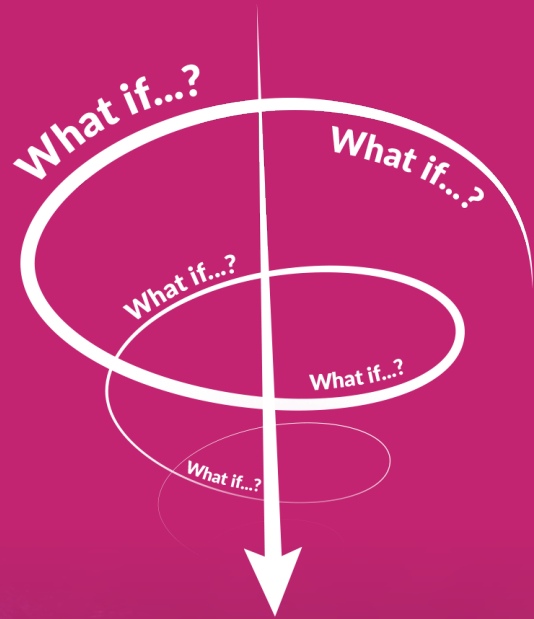
Unpredictable outcomes and putting yourself into a situation where you have no prior experience are common triggers. This matches perfectly with the current crisis on our hands. It's unpredictable and we have never experienced this before. Which leads us to feel anxious and worried about the future.



Worry Spirals

Have you ever had one worry then found yourself worrying about a whole plethora of other things, some not even related to the original trigger? This is a worry spiral.

Usually after a worry is triggered it will cause a spiral effect where that worry will cause another worry, and you'll get sucked into a never ending spiral of worries all building up on top of each other, making it harder and harder to get yourself out of it.



A person with long brown hair, wearing a dark grey jacket over a red patterned top, is holding a single pink camellia flower with green leaves. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor scene.

When Worrying Is Problematic

Studies show that worrying is something we all do, even animals worry occasionally. You only have to see your dog following you around frantically at supper time because he's concerned you may forget to feed him.

But there's a difference between normal worrying and problematic worrying.

Worrying becomes a problem when it consumes your mind and makes you feel exhausted, preventing you from living a normal life.

It doesn't matter how much worry or anxiety you struggle with, it can be overcome. www.FearlessFemale.co.uk has helped hundreds of people overcome worry and anxiety, quickly, easily and from the comfort of their own home.



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How You Can Deal With Worrying

I've put together the most important parts of overcoming worry and anxiety for you. The following pages are a summary of the solutions that www.FearlessFemale.co.uk covers in depth.

The different parts of the solution are;

Allocating worry time - This will cover how to take control of when you allow worry to take over your mind.

Keeping your mind distracted - Distraction is a very useful tool that starts to convince you that you can focus on whatever you choose, not just on worry.

Mindfulness - Anxiety and worry thoughts mean that you're always living somewhere in the future. Learning how to bring your mind into the here and now is an essential tool.

Finding your balance - Spending all your time stuck in anxiety and worry thoughts means that your life quickly becomes unbalanced. You find yourself constantly feeling out of sorts.

Challenging faulty thinking - Anxious thoughts are always about the worst possible case scenario rather than the reality. This part will help you make those thoughts more realistic.

Reading and using these solutions will have you well on your way towards tackling worry and anxiety which can quickly spiral out of control and blight your life.



Allocate A Worry Time

1

Allocate your worry a time when you will think about it.

- Set a time during your day when you will allow yourself to think about your worry. During this time allow yourself to worry as much as you like.
- Set this time aside for thinking every day, routine is key. If you can, give yourself a time, a duration and a place you can go to think. If you need to change this thinking time, give it a new time and place in your diary, don't let it linger.
- Don't choose a time right before bed as it will disturb your sleep.

2

Park all worrying thoughts until your allocated worry time.

- Every negative thought that pops into your head, acknowledge it, accept that it's normal to have these negative thoughts and then say you'll get back to it during your thinking time. Note that the words here are all about accepting the thought, not ridiculing it, or belittling it, just accepting it for what it is. Treat it as a thing, rather than focusing on the content of the worry.
- Make a note of the negative thought, in a few words, jot it down in a notebook in case you forget it.
- Consciously decide to think about it during your allocated thinking time.
- If the thought should pop back into your head, repeat the above steps. And don't be disheartened that the negative thought hasn't stayed parked, nobody has any control over what thoughts they think, so it stands to reason that negative ones can recur. If this is the case, treat it as a new thought and accept it for what it is.



3

Take thinking time seriously.

- Read through your list of worries and only pay heed to the ones that you truly believe deserve airtime.
- If the negative thoughts no longer worry you, cross them out and move on, don't waste energy on anything that is no longer of concern to you.
- Don't let your thinking time over run.
- If you truly have no control over the issue at the heart of your worry, accept it and let it go. We talk through mindfulness and meditation later.
- Always plan a fun activity for after your thinking time to lift your spirits. i.e. taking your dog for a walk, watching your favourite TV show, or phoning a friend for a chat.

Keeping Your Mind Distracted.

Now we're confined to home, it's easier for our minds to worry because there are less distractions available to us. You can find yourself falling into worry cycles far easier than before. You may not notice it at the time but distractions stop our mind from going inwards, and ultimately worrying. Keeping your mind occupied in new ways will help alleviate some of the worries you have. There are lots of opportunities available to you, now is the best time to make use of them.

You had that project you always wanted to do but just couldn't find the time. Or perhaps you had a skill or hobby you wanted to pick up and learn. With today's technology you can purchase and enrol in online courses to help keep your mind busy. There are plenty of ways you can use the resources available, to your advantage.



Here are some ideas for activities you can do from your home:

- Start an online journal/blog.
- Start an online course.
- Download software to organise finances.
- Practice meditation using videos and guides.
- Find a fitness and eating plan to do at home.
- Connect with old friends you lost contact with.
- Join a new community/groups.
- Facetime your friends/family.
- Find a game to play.
- Use streaming services to watch movies/shows.
- Make a Wishlist.
- Look for deals on products that might have special offers.
- Watch virtual tours.
- Offer to help with a community group or service, either practically or virtually.
- Put together a pile of things you never wear/use and get them listed on eBay.
- Order some vegetable seeds and plant your own vegetables. You don't even need a garden, a window box will do.
- Bake some cakes and leave some on your neighbours doorsteps.
- Sign up to a freelance site and offer your skills to people virtually.
- Get involved with forums online.
- Invite your friends to a virtual party using meeting software.
- If you're at home with family/friends, set up a movie night complete with popcorn and drinks.
- Have an evening of good old-fashioned board games or similar.
- Try out a new look with different make-up, hair and styling.
- Use your phone to practise your photography skills.
- Have a pamper day and spend the day at your own spa with facials, manicures and beauty rituals.
- Organise a date night in with your significant other. Get dressed up, decorate the table and cook up fabulous food.
- If there's no significant other, register on a dating website and start connecting.



Practice Mindfulness

To help lift your mood you can learn and begin to practice mindfulness. It's a technique that's almost magical once you figure it out. Just focusing on your senses and what you're feeling can help you let go of the worries you have. What do you see? What do you feel? Do you smell or hear anything? Are you in a comfortable position whilst you read this? Focusing on the things around you can help bring you back into the present moment.

Another method to practice mindfulness is meditation. A word of advice: there are different meditation techniques out there for different types of people. It's possible you've tried it before or you've tried a beginner's guide and it simply won't work for you. That isn't because meditation doesn't work for you, it just means you haven't found the correct way to meditate yet.

Beginner's guide to meditation:

1.

Sit down, somewhere calm, warm and quiet. Observe how you're feeling, what you're thinking, seeing, hearing. Don't judge, just acknowledge and accept, don't try to change anything or influence anything. Spend up to 1 minute doing just this.

2.

Begin to focus on your breathing. Think about the sensations of breathing, how the air feels going in and out of your nose and mouth, how your tummy rises and falls, the sound of the air as it is drawn in and blown out. Let your focus ebb and flow with each in breath and out breath.

3.

If your mind begins to wander, don't critique yourself, acknowledge that it went, accept it, then draw it back to your breathing. Spend up to 2 minutes doing this.

4.

Once you're able to do this, widen your focus on your breathing to your whole body. How the chair feels under you, how the air feels around you. If your mind wanders, don't chastise yourself, just acknowledge outside thoughts, accept them, then refocus on your breathing again. Do this for up to 2 minutes.



Finding Your Balance

Our world has suddenly changed, our routines are constantly changing and the daily activities we're involved in are different, but our needs are still the same. We still need to maintain a healthy balance in our day to day lives, even if your life looks different now. Just because the way our day looks is different, we still need to look after our fundamental needs as humans in order to maintain a happy mind. A happier mind is a mind less likely to worry.

Our balance can significantly alter our moods. For example, if you spend too much time focusing on having fun, you won't do the tasks that are important to you. Then you may feel less fulfilled and useful, and this can weigh on your mind and impact your mood for the rest of the day. If you spend too much time on work, then you can feel isolated and lonely. If you spend too much time socialising, then you may feel exhausted from too much interaction.

It sounds almost too simple, doesn't it?

It can be helpful to create a new daily routine for yourself that involves making sure you have a balance between activities.

The balance can be broken down into 3 categories.

Fun.

Why Fun is important - It's important to spend time doing things that you enjoy. This can be as simple as reading a great book or being out and about with friends. Whatever it is that you gain enjoyment from makes life feel more worthwhile. Doing hobbies or things you enjoy means that you take some time out to relax and unwind. Moving your mind elsewhere also means you focus on other things than worrying. Having fun will lift your mood and help to shift those anxious or low feelings.

Ways you can have fun - Hobbies are things that you enjoy so make to sure to allow enough time to fit these in. If you haven't got a hobby, get busy trying different things until you find something you love. You can do something on your own or be as sociable as you like. At the moment sociable hobbies will have to take place virtually.



Achievement

Why Achievement is important - Having meaning and purpose to your life is an important part of feeling happy. Achievement isn't just about having a job or building a career, it's more about your life purpose. Without identifying your life's purpose and goals you'll live a life less focused which usually leads to a sense of discontentment.

Ways you can get Achievement - What's your life purpose? It could be to raise your children to the best of your ability. You could be very career orientated and want to carve out a niche for yourself. Your purpose could be more about an idea, for example you could want to help fight the decline of the environment or to constantly challenge yourself physically.

Social

Why being Social is important - I know that some introverts out there will try and skim over this pillar of happiness. Yes, even introverts need to engage socially from time to time. As humans we have evolved from being a herd species to a social one. On an individual basis, our need for social contact can vary hugely, but we all need a certain amount.

Ways you can be Social - Technology is now so advanced that even the most sociable can get their people fix online. There are lots of digital platforms out there that make it easy to connect with multiple friends simultaneously. Social media is all about connecting with others, just be careful not to absorb too much of the positive spin everyone puts on their world.

Introverts, during lockdown can now legitimately control how much time they allocate to others. Enjoy your bit of splendid isolation, guilt-free, while it lasts.



Step 1: Make a Plan - What will you do tomorrow?

(You can type in the area below. If you want to save what you wrote, save this file afterwards)



Step 2: Evaluate at the end of the day.

At the end of the day you can reflect and ask yourself:

- Did I do something today that made me feel rewarded?
- Did I spend enough time being social with the people I care about?
- Did I spend enough time doing fun things that I wanted to do?
- Did I get a good balance today?
- What can I do differently tomorrow?



Challenging Your Worries

Anxiety and worry can mean that we always distort our sense of reality. It's almost as if people who worry put everything through a filter to make it the worst it can be. You may find yourself constantly saying 'but what if' and then hitting a worry spiral.

Anxious thoughts are usually triggered from something perfectly reasonable which makes it seem rational;

- *How will I cope if I do get coronavirus and end up in hospital?*
- *How will my family cope if I get coronavirus and die?*

Remember that anxious thoughts are always about worst case scenario. What I also know is that these thoughts are not realistic. There's only a small number of the population with the virus and 80% of these cases will be mild.

I know that most of you will be saying;

- *But that won't be me, I'll definitely get life threatening symptoms.*

Challenging your worries and fears is all about making these thoughts more realistic.

Ask yourself:

- What happened?
- How did I feel?
- What was the actual worry thought?
- Did it make me worry more; did it make me anxious?



Now ask yourself:

- How realistic is this thought and what evidence have you for it being true?
- What evidence have you that it isn't true and accurate?
- Do you believe this thought is always true, or in less anxious times would you think differently?

What did you notice?

- Did looking at this through somebody else's eyes make the thought less powerful?
- Did you notice that the way you think about the worry makes a difference to how powerful it is?



Some Final Tips:

Maintain a Balance - Despite our sense of normality being turned on its head, spend some time thinking about how you can maintain a balance that works for you. It's all about changing how we meet these needs from home.

Exercise & Stay Healthy - Exercise is important for people with a tendency towards worry and anxiety. It helps our brain dissipate chemicals that make us feel more anxious and increases the chemicals that make us feel happy. Research tells us that regular exercise can be just as good as low level medication, without the side effects.

Set a Routine - Avoid the temptation to spend your day eating cake in your pyjamas. Get up at your normal time, get dressed and get on with your day. Decide how your day is going to be to stay mentally, emotionally and physically healthily.

Watch out for Fake News - Pick one credible media source and stick to it. Don't fall down the rabbit-hole of reading the bulletins on your phone all day. Balance a need to be informed against feeding anxious thoughts.

Stay Compassionate - There will always be lots of people feeling worse than you. Check on neighbours (from a distance), help with community projects. We're all in this together and it may get worse before it gets better. Think outside of yourself and your bubble of safety.

Limit worry triggers - Write down worry triggers and store them up for worry time. Don't allow yourself to instantly react to each and every worry trigger.

Be Kind to yourself - Treat yourself with the same kindness and compassion you would show others. Anxiety and worry is frustrating but don't beat yourself up about it. It's easy to marginalise worry as just the way you are. Remember it's a clinical condition and you don't have to put up with it. Everyday I help lots of people just like you who join **www.FearlessFemale.co.uk**.



If anxiety and worry is starting to control your life and you'd like to find the solution to feeling happy again, there is a way. Join hundreds of women who have enrolled in **www.FearlessFemale.co.uk** and found how to have peace and happiness and move their lives forward.....all from the comfort of their own home.



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If you'd like more hints and tips to live a happier life, follow me on social media;



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If you need a more tailored solution, have a look at my private practice page by visiting **www.WendyDignan.co.uk**.



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