



*Your comprehensive guide to
breaking free from anxiety*

Overcoming Anxiety FOR DUMMIES®



Elaine Iljon Foreman

Consultant Chartered Clinical Psychologist

Charles H Elliott, PhD

Laura L Smith, PhD

Clinical Psychologists

A Reference for the Rest of Us!  **UK Edition**



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Dedication

From Elaine: This book is dedicated to Helga and Nickie Iljon, with special thanks to Sharon Malyan, a real source of inspiration to her students, friends, and most of all, family.

From Charles and Laura: We dedicate this book to our children: Alli, Brian, Sara, and Trevor. And to our parents: William Thomas Smith (1914-1999), Edna Louise Smith, Joe Bond Elliott, and Suzanne Wieder Elliott.

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Introduction

Growing up today, children and parents face yet more worries and anxieties added to the old. Children have always been taught, 'Don't talk to strangers', and there are new messages such as 'Report suspicious packages'. High profile terrorist incidents give a heightened sense of danger and vulnerability. To some extent we all worry, and there are sometimes good reasons to.

But although today's world gives people plenty to worry about, so it always has. Just as we don't want to become victims of terrorism, for example, we can't let ourselves become victims of anxiety. Anxiety clouds thinking and weakens people's resolve to live life to the fullest. Some anxiety is realistic and inescapable; yet people can keep it from dominating their lives. Even under duress, everyone can preserve a degree of serenity, and hold on to their humanity, common sense, strength, and zest for life. We can all still love and laugh.

Because we, the authors, believe in our collective resilience, we take a humorous and at times irreverent approach to conquering anxiety. Our message is based on sound, scientifically proven methods. But we won't bore you with the scientific details. Instead, we present a clear, rapid-fire set of strategies for beating back anxiety and winning the war against worry.

About This Book

We have three goals in writing this book. First, we want you to understand just what anxiety is and its different forms. Second, we think that knowing what's good about anxiety and what's bad about it is good for you. Finally, we cover what you're probably most interested in – discovering how to overcome your anxiety or how to help someone else who has anxiety.

Unlike most books, you don't have to start on page one and read straight through. Use the extensive Table of Contents to pick and choose what you want to read. Don't worry about reading parts in any particular order. For example, if you really don't want much information about the who, what, when, where, and why's of anxiety, and whether you have it, go ahead and skip Part I. However, we encourage you to at least skim Part I because it contains fascinating facts and information as well as ideas for getting started.

What Not to Read

Not only do you not have to read each and every chapter in order or at all, you don't have to look at each and every icon or aside. We try to give you plenty of current information and facts about anxiety. Some may not interest you, so don't get too anxious about skipping around.

Foolish Assumptions

Who may pick up this book? We assume, probably not too foolishly, that you or someone you love suffers from some type of problem with anxiety. We also believe that you want information to help tame tension and conquer anxiety. Finally, we imagine that you're curious about a variety of helpful strategies to choose from that can fit your lifestyle and personality.

How This Book Is Organised

Overcoming Anxiety For Dummies is organised into six parts and 22 chapters. Here, we tell you a little about each part.

Part I: Detecting and Exposing Anxiety

In these first two chapters, you find out a great deal about anxiety, ranging from who gets it to why people become anxious. We explain the different kinds of anxiety disorders, and we tell you who is most susceptible and why.

In Chapter 3, we help you to overcome the obstacles to change. You discover the most common reasons that people resist working on their anxiety, and what to do about it if you find yourself stuck. Chapter 4 gives you ways to keep track of your progress.

Part II: Understanding Thought Remedies

In Part II, you see how thinking contributes to anxious feelings. We show you a variety of proven strategies that can transform anxious thoughts into calm thoughts. And you discover how the words that you use can increase anxiety and how simply changing your vocabulary decreases anxiety.

Part III: Acting Against Anxiety

One of the best ways to tackle anxiety is by taking action. No place for cowards here. We show you how to look your fears full in the face and conquer them. We also explore other anti-anxiety actions, such as changing your lifestyle.

Part IV: Focusing on Feeling

In this part, we offer a treasure trove of ideas for quelling anxious feelings. These ideas range from special breathing techniques to imaginary journeys – using various means to relax your body and mind. We give you the latest research findings on what works and what doesn't among herbs, supplements, and medication.