

# 8

## worrying is worthless

### for you to know

It is common for people to worry about things that they feel anxious about. However, all the time and energy that is spent in worry is actually wasted. When you try to alleviate anxiety by worrying, all you do is make the anxiety grow stronger.

Most people don't realize why they worry. They think worrying is something that just happens. Or they say they "have to" worry about something. That is not true, of course. Usually we begin to worry because we feel anxious about a situation and we want to do something to try to prevent a negative outcome. If it is a situation that we have little or no control over, there is not much we can do. Not being able to do anything brings up feelings of helplessness, which trigger worry. Worrying is something we can do. When we worry, we may feel we are doing something to try to control the situation.

People have worried about things for centuries, but it has never once had a positive effect on the outcome of a situation. If there were any possible way that worrying would help you to relieve anxiety, there would be an exercise in this book teaching you how to worry and suggesting that you practice it diligently as both prevention and intervention.

What worrying does do is to drain you, both emotionally and physically. That makes your situation worse because you have less energy to handle whatever it is that is going on. Then your anxiety level goes up again because you feel even more helpless.



activity 8 \* worrying is worthless

## more to do

What was it like to spend five minutes purposely worrying hard about something?

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How did this purposeful worrying affect your anxiety level?

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What happens to your body and your mind when you worry so hard?

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Describe any way that the worrying you just did will have a positive effect on the outcome of the situation.

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Describe something you could do instead of worrying that would be more productive or would help you feel better.

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