

How Not To Worry Summary

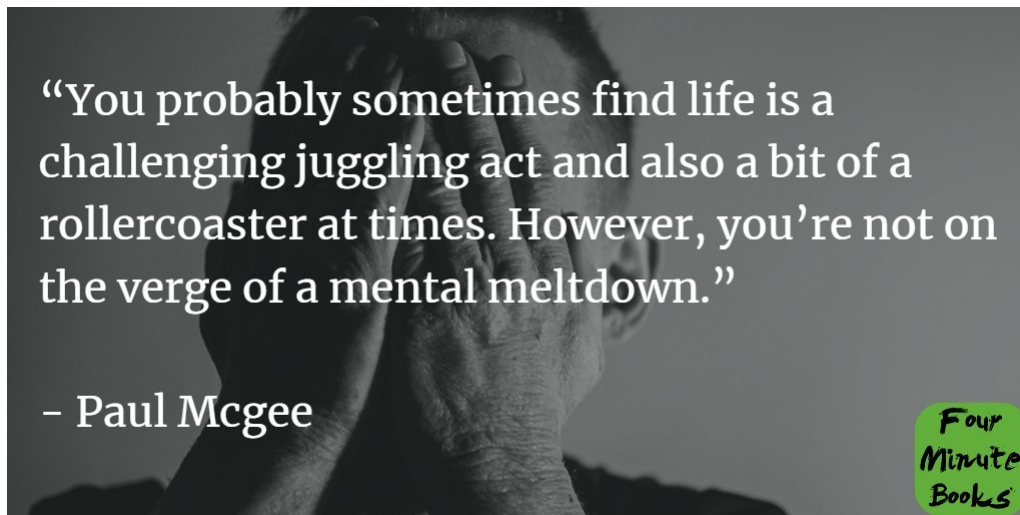


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1-Sentence-Summary: *How Not To Worry* will teach you how to live stress-free by revealing your brain's primitive emotional survival instinct and providing a simple and effective roadmap for letting go of your anxieties.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



When it comes to irrational fears, public speaking ranks high for many people. I know it has always been a big stress point for me. I find myself worrying and stressing for days before having to deliver a public speech.

The last few times I gave a talk in public it was fine. Not only was I well prepared, but I ended up doing a good job and felt pretty silly for all of the time and energy that I spent agonizing in those days leading up to it.

Why does it seem so impossible to keep from worrying and fretting about these kinds of situations? It doesn't achieve anything. Paul McGee, author of the book, *How Not To Worry: The Remarkable Truth of How a Small Change Can Help You Stress Less and Enjoy Life More*, addresses this evolutionary hardwiring and explores some ways to overcome this primitively instilled "fight or flight" response.

Here are 3 lessons I've learned from this book:

1. Stress, anxiety, and worrying can adversely impact your health and well being.
2. Analyze the different types of worry to better understand their root cause and get over them.

3. Take action and focus on outcomes that you can control.

Let's dive right in and find out how we can worry less!

Lesson 1: Worry is a mode of thinking that can manifest in a series of unhealthy physical reactions.

Worries can compound quickly and snowball completely out of control if you allow them to. If there's one thing that you need to keep in mind it's to "stop before you spiral." This is easier said than done because of how the worrying mode of thinking leads to anxiety and quickly triggers your body's survival mechanism.

Some of the physical manifestations you might experience include shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, racing heart and pupil dilation. A kind of feedback loop is created where worry becomes both the cause and effect of anxiety and/or stress.

What's worse is that over time, getting stuck in this cycle can begin to take a toll.

This typically impacts your health and the quality of life. Stress can compromise your immune system, leaving you more vulnerable to illness. It has also been proven to decrease sex drive.

It becomes difficult to really enjoy life and live in the moment when you're constantly consumed with worst-case scenario thinking. You can lose your motivation and creativity. Let's take a closer look at analyzing the different types of worry.

Lesson 2: 'Historical', 'Hysterical', and 'Helpful' are three types of worry we should learn to identify.

There is some good news when it comes to the topic of worry. Rather than succumb to the stress and anxiety often associated with it, let's take a more offensive position and confront worry head-on!

Worry covers a broad spectrum, so let's take a closer look to see if we can't sort it from the ridiculous reasons to more valid thinking patterns. By identifying those worries that are just too hysterical to entertain, we can begin dealing with some of the others.

The best way to begin the sorting process is by first reflecting on the root cause of each individual worry occasion. Think of it as three buckets for sorting your worries:

- Historical
- Hysterical
- Helpful

Historical worries are a form of anxiety that reflect a past bad memory or experience. Let's say that you were mugged while walking home one night. So anytime you find yourself walking down a dark street that prior experience is the root of your worry.

Hysterical worry is the opposite – it's completely irrational. It would be stressing more about unlikely scenarios like shark attacks, getting struck by lightning or a plane crash. These you can overcome by looking at the evidence for them. When you see there's not much, you'll quickly give them up!

Helpful worry is the most rational and based on real problems. Examples of helpful worry might be a performance review at work, a new business plan presentation to investors or an end/of-year thesis presentation. To overcome these, you might try planning ahead.

Lesson 3: A good step to tackle worry is to focus on outcomes you can control.

Don't let anybody tell you that the world is out of your control. We obviously can't have control over everything, but you do have a lot more control than you give yourself credit for. So find out what it is that you do have influence over. That's the place to begin focusing your energy.

In Stephen Covey's popular book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he talks about people's many worries. Some stress about work, their health, relationships, the weather. **He notes that the problem isn't so much the worry, but the fact that so many people worry about the things they have no control over.**

There's a huge difference between worrying about a mass shooter coming into your workplace and a slideshow presentation that you are preparing for. Some worries can be addressed and prepared for while others can't.

The author suggests using a sliding scale from zero to ten as a gauge in assessing your helpful worries. Zero means you have no control whatsoever, while ten means you have some capacity to determine the outcome.

The more influence you perceive yourself as having, the more likely you are to take action. There's something to be said about people who see the glass as half full. What's even better is the power you have in filling the rest up yourself!

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longer - no matter what you read.

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How Not To Worry Review

How Not To Worry is loaded with great and simple-to-apply lessons. Most of the tips are so simple and logical that they really serve more as reminders that we should control those things in which we have control over, and ride out those things that just happen to us – surf those waves of life's trials and tribulations. I really got more out of this read than I expected.

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Who would I recommend the How Not To Worry summary to?

The 18-year-old college freshman who fears the prospect of his life away from home, the 36-year-old account executive who just received a promotion to team leader, and anyone who's scared shitless about the end of times.