

Walking Away from Anxiety & Fear

By Tracy Shawn, MA



Anxiety. The very word can make me feel tense, fretful, stressed. It pinches a personal nerve, as I have suffered from both chronic and acute varieties. (And I'm not just talking about the normal, everyday fare either: Mine has included quite over-the-top irrational fear, which makes watching end-of-the-world movies a relaxing respite). But I have fought my anxiety, an ongoing process that — for the most part — has been a journey of positive transformation.

I know I'm not alone. If you look at the statistics, anxiety disorders affect about 18% of U.S. adults, creating some 40 million tormented citizens. That makes a heck of a lot of people walking down the street, trying to push past their fear.

Some may turn to counseling, some to medication, and some may battle the angst with a combination of therapy and medication. Like so many things in life, what works for one person, may or may not work for the next.

I had tried all the above (including a host of herbal remedies), yet still had not been able to live a life without chronic and acute fear intruding into my daily thoughts and happiness.

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2015/06/05/walking-away-from-anxiety-fear/>

So, on a sleepless summer night, I edged toward the TV as I listened to bright-eyed Lucinda Bassett, author of the best-selling book *From Panic to Power*, talk about how she was able to transcend her own fear and why she had started the Midwest Center, a well-respected program that treats people suffering from chronic stress, anxiety and depression. (Please note that there are a plethora of helpful books and programs available in a variety of price ranges, which may help you on your own personal journey through anxiety.)

By the hazy light of the screen, I scribbled down the number, and in the morning ordered their program. I listened to the tapes on a portable cassette player (yes, it was that long ago!), as I walked by myself on the beach or hiked alone on mountain trails. In doing so, I was better able to absorb and practice the ways to replace negative, fearful thoughts with more productive — and sane — self-talk.

I am happy to say that over time, with a lot of practice (and from the cathartic healing from my own writing), my overall anxiety has significantly decreased.

In the process, I also learned a poignant lesson: I wasn't alone. I wasn't the only person leading a normal life while battling the undertow of irrational fear. Somehow that fact alone helped me become even more hopeful and empowered.

If other people with thoughts just as scary as mine could climb out of their anxiety, then I could too. Yes, I still face some dark days. But it's different than it used to be. Now I realize that no matter how bad things look, the dread won't last.

Since anxiety can be isolating and is also an essentially a thick kind of worry about the future, knowing that I'm not alone — and that it will eventually fade away have become my best antidotes.

[Woman walking photo](#) available from Shutterstock

Last reviewed: By John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on 4 Jun 2015
Published on PsychCentral.com. All rights reserved.

<http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2015/06/05/walking-away-from-anxiety-fear/>