

How to Stop Worrying



The problem of worrying affects all human beings.

Worry is a form of anxiety, created by repeating circular thoughts in regards to a possible future event. It is an expression of a mind which is out of control, and its repercussions are fatigue, distraction and the inability to be in the present moment.

Nobody wants to worry, but as strange as it may sound we sometimes think that if we don't worry, it means we don't care, or that we are ignoring the future possibilities of failure.

Therefore, to stop worrying, we first need to practice the fundamental philosophical axiom: Know Yourself. Above all we need to understand our minds, a part of ourselves which we must admit we don't know much about.

When a person gets a new instrument, whether it is a Smartphone or a drill, the first thing he does, is to learn the mechanisms of the instrument, how to handle it, and more importantly how to control it.

Unfortunately, we don't seem to make the effort to learn to use our minds in the same way. We just turn the ignition on, and let the mind operate automatically, assuming that we don't need to make any effort in order to get the best results.

What happens then is that our mind emits random notes, instead of the beautiful music it has the potential to create.

Many civilizations in the past, those who have not focused their efforts so much on developing technology, but on understanding reality and the human being, viewed the mind as a composite element with different attributes, some positive and some negative. In general, we can speak of two different aspects of the mind, the lower mind and the higher mind. These, for example, were named in esoteric Buddhism, as the Kama-Manas (mind of desires) and the Manas (the pure mind).

Worrying is an instinctive mechanism of the mind of desires, which is related to survival. We worry because of our desires, whether it is a desire for something to happen, or a desire for something not to happen. It results from a process of acceleration. By feeding one disturbing



thought, we help it multiply, until there is nothing but disturbing thoughts, a tyranny of the mind over the body and the emotions.

To control the lower mind, we need to activate Manas, the higher mind, which is related to intelligence - a word which originates in the verb *elegir*; to choose. Basing ourselves on this etymology, intelligence will therefore mean to choose wisely. When our intelligence is developed, we can discern between those thoughts that are helpful to us, that are productive, that are beneficial, to us and to others, and those thoughts which are desire-driven, selfish, destructive, and unnecessary.

Intelligence also helps us apply those ancient teachings of the Stoics, specifically Epictetus, who encouraged us to separate between the things we can control, and the things we cannot. It is a useful exercise to examine the thing that worries us, and to observe if we can change or affect it, or not. If we can, then we should be proactive, and do whatever we can to create a positive result. **Action can many times be the best remedy for anxiety.**

If we cannot change it, then there is no point worrying, simply because it does not help in any way.

In the case worrying has already overcome us, it can be useful to make a change in ambience, to do something different, in order to distract the ill mind, preferably with a positive and healthy vibe, whether it is a walk in nature, a talk with a friend on a different topic, a good read, attentive listening to soothing music, or anything that will allow our mind to take a breath.

Eventually perhaps we will be able to elevate our consciousness and see things from a new perspective.