



Stop worrying
and get stuff done!

Description

Do you worry constantly about the future? How to stop worrying about the unknown

By **Lori Karpman**

Do you ever find yourself worrying about things that might happen in the future? Does your mind go into hundreds of different directions imagining a host of outcomes resulting in anxiety, stress and overwhelm? Well, STOP IT!! This practice only places unnecessary stress on your life that affects you and everyone around you.

When I learned how to worry only about real, actual problems, my life changed dramatically. I will show you how to do the same. You do have to make a conscious effort to implement this idea, and though it is not easy at first, it does become easier over time. By getting rid of the noise of the unknown future, you will free up room in your brain to creatively and effectively solve the problems you really do have. Your overall quality of life will increase dramatically; I am living proof of that.

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We all have a tendency to wonder about the “what if’s” in our life and to create a multitude of possible scenarios and outcomes in our heads; this is normal behaviour. What if you only worried about things that you knew for sure? Wouldn’t that be easier and significantly less stressful? By worrying about outcomes that can or may happen, you create a state of perpetual anxiety and waste precious mental energy on problems that well, aren’t really problems yet. The mind can create scenarios that aren’t even possible in real life or that have a zero chance of materializing.

This is my story and how this simple little lesson altered my life forever. At 37, I had a great life, successful business, married with great kids, my health and two living, loving parents. At 38 it was all gone! I was diagnosed with Crohn’s Disease (a chronic inflammatory bowel disease); my mother (and best friend) passed away, my marriage fell apart and I had major bowel surgery. My mother’s passing and my own health crisis made me realize that life is short and precious and it has to be lived happily.



So here I was only a few months later, chronically ill, grieving the loss of my mother, recovering from major bowel surgery, and getting a divorce when only a year earlier my life was completely intact. Talk about imagining “what if’s”? I had at least one hundred thousand of them and the permutations and combinations were endless and exhausted me. The fear of the unknown was unbelievably crushing and I was overwhelmed. At that time, I got the best piece of advice I have ever received from a dear friend.

The lesson is this: Worry about today’s problems today; they are the only problems that are known and real, that can and need to be solved or dealt with in the present. As for the future ones, that is, whatever concerns your mind conjures up – do not waste your energy or time on them. The imagined scenarios are just that, figments of your imagination, not reality and certainly not problems yet.

This is the trick, if you have the ability to create a desired outcome, or prevent a bad one, then you need to act in a way consistent with creating that outcome. For example, if you are worried about failing an exam, worrying about it will not help, you need to actually study to affect the outcome. If, however, you do not have the ability to change or affect the outcome with your thoughts or actions, then worrying about it is not going change the results but it will cause anxiety.

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In most cases we have no control over the outcome – and we can only imagine so many scenarios in our heads, not to mention the millions of them that we have not contemplated. I never in a million years imagined that I would live with a chronic disease, lose my mother so early, have major surgery and be divorced. But once these things did begin to happen I worried incessantly about what was going to happen next.

So, I diligently applied the advice I was given and decided not to worry about how to solve problems that had not materialized yet, and probably never would. The crises our minds can conjure up (1) will most likely never happen, or (2) will be a scenario entirely different than the one we mentally prepared to deal with, one of the thousands of outcomes we had never even considered, expected or foreseen.

Additionally, we most often assume negative outcomes, but assuming a positive one (even without determining what that would look like) is more likely to create one. The general rule is simple: wait until an imagined problem becomes a real problem, because only then will you have all the information you need to deal with it and solve it. Once it is “known” it is “Today’s Problem” and you will be able to put the energy required into creating a positive outcome having all the information required to deal with it effectively and put your full energy into analyzing the possible solutions.

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Once you get the hang of it, and it takes practice, you will see how liberating it is to be able to solve or work on the issues that really need to be solved. Each day becomes a new day and a new start. I know that this is without a doubt the best piece of advice I have ever received. While it takes a little time to master, eventually you just stop doing it, and when something arises you will hear that little voice in your head say, “I’ll worry about that if or when it becomes a problem” (and I know what I have to worry about”). It is not today’s problem”. I only work on today’s problems”.

Over time you will become calmer overall and your brain becomes much more functional and creative at problem solving in general since it now has the room to envision positive solutions without the overwhelm of issues that it need not be occupied with. The brain is free from worrying about non-materialized problems and



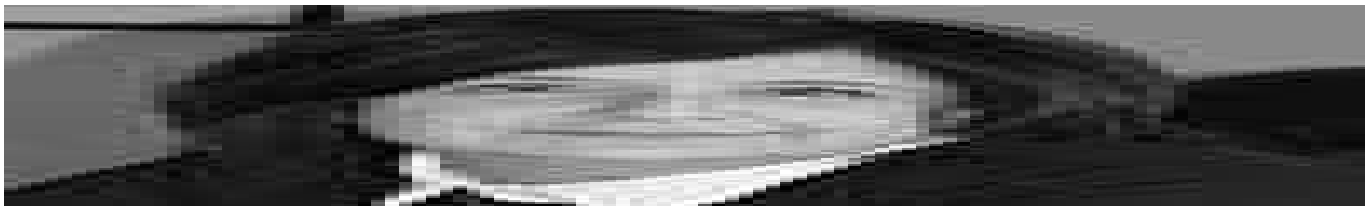
being overwhelmed by things that may never happen. This leaves open space for the mind to be innovative and have more energy to create and imagine the positive things in life.

Image: [Sasha Freemind](#) on [Unsplash](#)

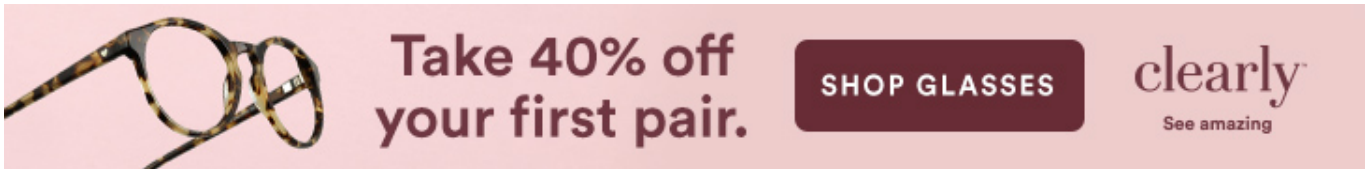
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