ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SELF-HELP

The Worrywart's Companion: Twenty-One Ways to Soothe Yourself & Worry Smart
Beverly A. Potter
McGraw Hill
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Everyone worries occasionally but some people let worry control their lives. Obsessive fretting causes physical and psychological consequences that negatively affect the worrywarts of the world. *The Worrywart's Companion* offers practical ideas that can help mollify the repetitive self-talk that persuades individuals to worry too much.

The author explains that negative thinking causes fear and anxiety. Worriers begin to imagine worst-case scenarios and the cycle of worry repeats itself becoming habitual. People can help themselves by learning to "worry smarter." Interspersed in the text allegorical discussions between the Shaman Woman and the Seeker demonstrate the unconscious nature of worry. The book concludes with descriptions of twenty-one activities that can calm and soothe worrywarts as they work towards adopting more rational tactics.

Potter earned a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling from San Francisco State University and a doctorate in counseling psychology from Stanford University. She works as a corporate trainer and motivational speaker. Her previous books address other psychological challenges related to work and everyday life.

The worrywart quiz in section one helps readers identify their level of worrying. "Not only is worrying normal but it is a survival skill—if you worry smart" Potter explains. She suggests journal writing to reinforce positive self-talk that leads to more rational worry behavior.

Breaking solutions to a worry-inducing problem into small segments helps make the process seem more manageable. This relieves people of the feelings of discouragement that prevent change. "Set yourself up to succeed by looking for almost perfect partial solutions" she says.

Eating controlled amounts of sweets and starches calms those who feel stressed by worry. “Sugar plays a pivotal role in the brain’s manufacturing of serotonin often called the ‘feel good’ neurotransmitter” Potter writes. These foods are believed to supplant the low doses of serotonin that some people develop with age or due to dietary habits.

The author writes in a straightforward comforting style that will appeal to readers stuck in the throes of worry. Unerringly supportive in her approach Potter encourages individuals to take control of and conquer unrealistic fears. Given the universality of worry even those who scored low on the worrywart quiz will benefit from applying the book’s coping strategies to their lives.