



Judy Ringer

Are You Worried? 4 Steps to Peace of Mind

My friend Tom has this quotation on his office wall: "I know worry works because nothing I worry about ever happens."

I think I must believe that, because I worry a lot – and about the most insignificant things. I worry about the big things, of course, like health, relationships, and finances. But I'm also liable to fret about anything and everything that finds its way into my consciousness.

Because I spend so much time on worry, I've decided to embrace it with a personal research project. Maybe you'd like to join me.

Here are some avenues I'm exploring:

1. I practice catching myself at it. "Hey, I'm worrying again." During a recent morning swim, I caught myself worrying 10 times during one lap! I'm not kidding. On rare days when I don't have anything to worry about, I find something. What I've learned is that worry is a mental habit. I can change habits; I've done it before. There's hope.
2. My second approach is to practice presence. By this I mean stopping my thoughts. In my workshops, I ring a bell to help participants practice centering. The quieter we are, the longer we hear the bell. There's a lovely moment when we all listen . . . until the ring is barely audible . . . then just a memory. I relish that moment of quiet before my thoughts re-engage. There is no future or past, just Now. No worrying thoughts – no thoughts at all. It's a peaceful place, which is why I stretch the moment. I want to strengthen the connection to something greater than my worries.

3. When I told my friend Rosie about my worry project, she told me about her approach, which is to do one of three things:

- decide to address the issue right then;
- if you can't do anything about it right then, make an appointment with yourself to address it later; or
- decide that it is not important and let it go.

In other words, act on it, file it or throw it away.

4. Finally, one of Rosie's favorite worry stoppers (and mine) is to sing. Connect with your joy, your creativity, and the place where everything really is okay.

Awareness and acknowledgment are the keys to changing our habits. Perhaps my research project on worry will help me to lighten up, smile, and live each day with joy, creativity, and gratitude.

Are you worrying? Stop your thoughts for a moment. Listen to the sounds around you, pay attention, and be present to this key moment. And smile . . . for no reason. You may find that's the best reason of all.

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About the Author: Judy Ringer is Founder of Power & Presence Training, specializing in unique workshops on conflict, communication, and creating a more positive work environment. Judy is also a black belt in aikido, and is writing her first book on the connection between aikido, conflict, and living a more purposeful life. To sign up for more free tips and articles like these, visit <http://www.JudyRinger.com>

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