BE THE CHANGE: BE CALM

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Permission has been sought for the Stanley Rosenberg breathing exercises on pages 113 and 119.


Be The Change
BE CALM
Rise Up and Don't let Anxiety Hold You Back
MARCUS SEDGWICK
illustrated by THOMAS TAYLOR
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Introduction

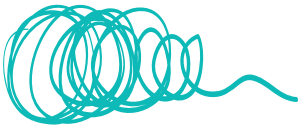
You weren't born worrying.

You weren't born worried.

And you definitely aren't "the type who worries".

How can I say that? You may well have picked this book up precisely because you feel you are "a worrier". It might seem such a basic part of you that you think you must have been born like that. But you weren't. *No one is born worrying*. There is no "type who worries"; because while it's entirely normal to worry sometimes, the more permanent state we call anxiety is simply something we learn to do, like riding a bicycle. And just like riding a bicycle you can get so good at it, you can do it without even thinking about it. That's part of the problem.

Worrying is a habit. Like any habit, you can do it without even being aware of it. But I have good news! The first piece of good news is that you are already on the way to breaking



this habit, and I can say that with certainty because you have *noticed* that you are worrying and have decided to do something about it. The simple fact that you've picked this book up shows that you have become aware of the problem, and I'm guessing are determined to stop worrying. And I have more good news! Like any habit you acquire in life, the habit of worrying can be changed. And that's what this book is going to help you to do.

Who am I? I'm someone who used to worry a lot. I did it for much, much longer than you, so you might think the habit would have been too hard to break after all those decades of "practice" at it. But I did, and to do it, I used a lot of the ideas in this book.

You can do it too because anyone can Be the Change.

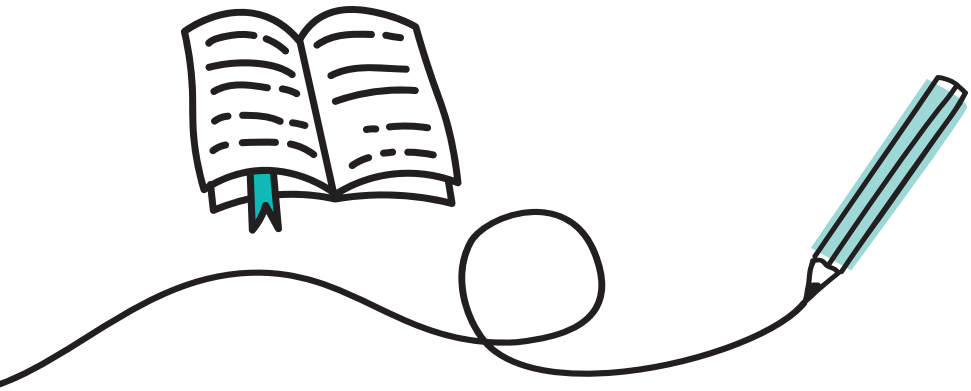




How to use this book

This book is designed to be read from the beginning to the end, rather than just dipping in and out. You'll get the most out of it if you read it from cover to cover at least once. Don't worry if it takes you a little while; we don't all read at the same speed, and it's not a race. Once you have read it through, you can go back and reread parts that you've forgotten or want to go over again.

That being said, this is a book about not worrying so much! So don't stress about it – just use it how you want to use it – do what's right for you.



Chapter 1

What is anxiety?



If you're reading this book, the chances are you are already all too familiar with anxiety – that terrible feeling of worry and dread that seems to never end. You sense that something bad is going to happen, and you can't seem to stop yourself from thinking about it...

Anxiety is a word with a long history, because anxiety has been around for as long as human beings have. The word "anxious" itself comes from a Latin word *anxius*, which in turn comes from an even older word *angere* which means to choke, to tightly squeeze or to press hard.



Possibly even just reading that description of the hidden meaning of the word ANXIETY has made your body react in some way. Maybe you recognize feeling as if you can't breathe properly or of your stomach seeming to rise up into your throat. If you do, that's a good thing.

What? Wait! How can that be good?

Well, it's because one of the most important tools to use in beating anxiety is this: your body and how it's feeling. While it's not good if your body is reacting in this way – with a beating heart or clammy hands – it really *is* good news if you're already learning to spot these clear signs of worry, because with them, we're going to help you reduce your anxiety and live your life more happily. We're going to help you be calm.

Anxiety vs worry

We all know what worries are but what's the actual difference between worry and anxiety? Is the second one just a fancy word for the first one?

No! There are many specific differences. Here are just a few of them:

- **Worries tend to be short term; anxiety lasts for longer.**
- **Worries tend to be over specific things, anxiety is more general, often without focus.**
- **Worries tend to be over realistic concerns; anxiety tends to get out of control.**
- **Worries are felt more in our thoughts; we feel anxiety throughout our bodies (more on this later!).**

These are technical distinctions; in this book we will use the terms more loosely and interchangeably.

All in the mind?

When we think about anxiety, we mostly think about the mind. We focus on the negative thoughts we're having, the fears and worries that are circling around and around in our head, which we just can't seem to put a stop to. While a lot of this book is going to talk about what happens in the **mind**, we're also going to talk about the **body**.

That's because to beat anxiety, we need to learn to listen to not just what our minds are telling us in the form of thoughts but what our bodies are telling us too, in the form of symptoms.

So, we're going to jump right into our bodies now, and learn...

