

Keys to Choosing Faith Over Fear

Do you ever struggle with anxiety, fear, worry or stressing out? Dr. Amanda Porter is a psychiatric nurse practitioner who suffered from an anxiety disorder. She has devoted her career to helping others with anxiety realize they can live without feeling burdened, find peace and recover from feelings of fear, worry, dread or a sense of impending doom.

Some people can be in a state of denial about their anxiety. They can experience chronic pain, an autoimmune disorder or a gastrointestinal illness and may not realize that anxiety is the root of their struggle.

Porter helps people make the connections between their anxiety and the impact it's having on their physical health. She wrote "Dear Anxiety, Let's Break Up" to help others learn how to choose faith over fear and move from a life marked by anxiety to one of peace and abundance. Written from both a medical and a biblical perspective, this book is a collection of 40 devotions to help readers conquer worry and fear.

Our fight-or-flight instinct is with us from Day One, which is helpful because that stress response keeps us safe when we're in an acute life-threatening situation. The flood of emotions, hormones and chemicals dictates how we react. But it becomes a problem when we are in a non-life-threatening situation and that same cascade of emotions, hormones and chemicals occurs. We may have difficulty separating a life-threatening stressor from a non-life-threatening one because our bodies tell us we're in just as much danger.

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Sometimes during recovery from anxiety, you can become

“stuck.” To experience recovery, you need to find a good therapist to keep you accountable, ask the right questions and point out the ways your anxiety is lying to you. You need someone who is skilled and trained to expose the errors in thinking you’re embracing.

Anxiety can be quite powerful during the nighttime hours. To counter this, avoid using your smartphone and consider reading something positive or reciting Scripture. Fill your mind with something positive rather than letting it wander and ruminate on negative ideas.

Porter says there is a lot of toxic theology out there that preaches anxiety is a sin and those who suffer from it are not fully relying on God for healing. But anxiety is something we *all* deal with because of the way God has wired and created us.

It’s possible to pivot from fear to faith. There’s no quick fix when treating anxiety, but there is a holistic plan you can follow. You can engage in faith-based practices and communities, immerse yourself in Scripture, do self-care, connect with a therapist and possibly go on medication.

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Self-talk is also important in recovering from anxiety. Porter says, “In your head, you need to think about who’s holding the microphone. The words that you are speaking to yourself—your inner dialog that takes place between your ears—who is holding the mic and where are those words coming from? If those words are coming from anyone other than God, then they need to go.”

People with anxiety struggle with thoughts of guilt, self-loathing and self-deprecation. It can take a lot of work to overcome that negative self-talk. But when it comes to recovering from anxiety, developing a practice of inward positivity goes a long way.

Self-care could include good-sleep hygiene, exercise, good nutrition and hydration. Food is medicine too. If you're filling your body with things that aren't helpful or providing you with fuel, it is likely you will struggle with a mental health concern. It's all connected—mind, body and spirit.

By understanding the Bible's message on mental health, you can free yourself from shame, guilt and harmful stigmas, and learn to support loved ones who struggle with anxiety. Choose faith over fear!

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Marilyn Hickey founded Marilyn Hickey Ministries more than 45 years ago with God's vision to cover the earth with the Word. Marilyn co-hosts a daily television program, "Today with Marilyn & Sarah," reaching a potential viewing audience of over 2 billion households worldwide. Marilyn communicates deep biblical truths in a way that is understandable and practical for everyday life.

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