

The Secret to Crushing Anxiety Once and for All

Fear, worry and anxiety are all cousins. Fear is our reaction to something that intimidates us.

Worry is what happens when we dwell on our fears. And anxiety is when worry works its way into our very physiology. And in our culture, we're very anxious.

The big question is, how do you move from fear, worry and anxiety to peace with life? Is peace even possible in a world like ours? Yes, it is.

Sometimes you may experience anxiety resulting from chemical issues in the brain or past trauma. If you suffer from that kind of anxiety, talking to people about it regularly, including your physician and a trained counselor, is going to be very important to your journey. But for the kind of anxiety almost all of us suffer from, there's a relatively simple antidote to worry that ushers us into a place of peace: gratitude.

The apostle Paul spelled it out this way:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7, NIV).

The advice "don't be anxious about anything," by itself, would seem dismissive and impossible. From money to health to relationships to the news headlines, we have plenty of things to be anxious about. But Paul gives us God's solution: "In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving."

Thanksgiving is the secret to living at peace with your life. When you can be thankful for any circumstance, you can overcome worry.

There's a scene in the movie *It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, the biopic of Mister Fred Rogers as played by Tom Hanks, in which Lloyd Vogel (played by Matthew Rhys) is interviewing Mr. Rogers in his apartment. He becomes frustrated with the unshakeable positivity Mr. Rogers exudes and abruptly tells him, "It must have been hard growing up with you as a dad."

Mr. Rogers, taken aback by the comment and seemingly stung, pauses and then replies, "Thank you, Lloyd. Thank you for that perspective." His response merely frustrated Mr. Vogel, but it teaches the rest of us something powerful. There is always *something* to be thankful for, if you can simply find the right angle. And finding the right angle is worth it because, if you can find it, you'll enjoy peace with life.

Want peace? Express gratitude. Thank God every morning for life and the day ahead. Thank God in all of your moments of potential frustration. And then close every day by listing three things you're thankful for from the day. {eoa}

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