

Spirit of Fear on the Rise?

Almost 40 million American adults suffer from some type of debilitating anxiety disorder. If left untreated, these become gradually worse.

In our modern world, there are many things to worry about and not all are irrational fears. There have been more recorded tornados in the United States in April, for example, than ever before. The earthquake in Japan, increasing instability in the Middle East, high gasoline prices, a declining housing market, and an out-of-control national debt that consumes 42 cents of every dollar.

Some people are more susceptible to anxiety than others and women are twice as prone as men to phobias, according to Dr. Gregory Jantz, founder of The Center, a treatment facility near Seattle that specializes in eating disorders, phobias, and depression. Jantz sees a surge in anxiety disorders.

"It seems the more we know, the more we worry," says Jantz, author of *Overcoming Anxiety, Worry, and Fear: Practical Ways to Find Peace*. "Anxiety and worry tend to cause reality to become unhinged."

While some fear falls within the normal range, much of it does not. Irrational fears become phobias and these keep us from experiencing life to the fullest. These reactions, such as Posttraumatic Stress, can keep returning veterans locked in a prison for which there seems to be no escape.

"Within the throes of an anxiety disorder, you can feel like you've lost your mind . . . you just want to find some place of normalcy again," explains Jantz.

For those who succumb to stress or fear, Jantz says the risk is turning to illicit activities that will exacerbate rather than ameliorate their fears. These, he calls, "self-medicating

behaviors.” He suggests that relief from our anxieties is being proactive-or simply taking advantage of what is in our control by staying active, organized, controlling our minds, and dealing with reality. He calls these “anchoring activities.”

Of course, he says, the most important of these is allowing God to be in charge of your fears rather than growing comfortable in your fears and anxieties.