



**A W A K E N**  
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## YES ... BUT WHAT IF ..., APP'S OF INTEREST, AND MORE!

Can you believe it's the middle of February already? Here's hoping your 2018, so far, is what you want it to be. This month's newsletter is jam packed : our feature article is about worry, there's also information on some great App's, and a couple of articles by other authors that you might find interesting.

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And don't forget, our last article was about welcoming in 2018 and mindfully setting your intentions for this year. Click here to learn more, and to access all our previous articles.

## YES ... BUT WHAT IF ...,

**By Amanda Pulford**  
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If you've got a suggestion for  
an article, or there's  
something more you would  
like to hear about, please  
send us an email by clicking  
[here](#)

Yes ... but what if ...? Does this sound familiar? Is your brain really good at coming up with "what if's" and worst-case scenarios? Unrelenting doubts and fears can be paralyzing. They can drain your emotional energy, send your anxiety levels through the roof, and interfere with your daily life. But take comfort, chronic worrying is a mental habit that can be broken. Yes, you *can* retrain your brain to stay calm and look at life from a more balanced, less fearful perspective. Read on to find out more.

### **AWAKEN PSYCHOLOGY**

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**But why can't I just stop worrying?** Great question, interesting answer. Although none of us like the way worry makes us feel, it can be really difficult to stop it. That's because we all hold beliefs about worry – both negative and positive. *Negative* – you may believe that your constant worrying is going to spiral completely out of control, drive you crazy, or damage your health. *Positive* – you may believe that your worrying helps you avoid bad things, prepares you for the worst, or helps you come up with solutions. Unfortunately, negative beliefs, or worrying about worry, add to your anxiety and keep it going. Worse still, positive beliefs about worrying can be more damaging (it's tough to break the worry habit if you believe that your worry protects you). So, realize that worrying is the problem, not the solution! **See if you can change your belief that worrying serves a good purpose.**

**But how can I stop worrying?** Again, great question, and below are 6 tips to help you to reduce your worry.

1. **Create a Worry Period :** Telling yourself to stop worrying doesn't work. Trying to banish worrisome thoughts also doesn't work. In actual fact, these strategies can make it worse because you pay extra attention to the things that you don't want to worry about. Instead, give yourself permission to notice the worrying thoughts, but postpone dwelling on them until later. During the day, make a note of your worries for your Worry Period. If the same worry comes up again, tell yourself that you've made a note of it, and that you'll address it later, then get back to more important tasks. Choose a set time and place for worrying, daily – this is your Worry Period. During your Worry Period, you're

allowed to worry about whatever's been on your mind – you might even problem solve these worries (if you can). The rest of the day then becomes a 'worry free zone'. Having a specific Worry Period aims to break the habit of dwelling on your worries, and gives you a sense of control over your worries. Learn how to use a worry period.

2. **Is the problem solvable :** If a worry pops into your head, start by asking yourself whether the problem is something you can actually solve (is my worry real – rather than an imaginary "what if" : if it is a "what if", how likely is it to happen : can I prepare for it, or is it out of my control). While worry can make us feel less anxious temporarily, and maybe even fool us into thinking we're doing something positive, worrying rarely leads to solutions, adding to our anxious feelings. If the worry is solvable, brainstorm the solutions (they don't have to be perfect). Then make an action plan. And finally, start doing something about the worry. If your worry isn't solvable, take a note of your feelings. You might be worrying about something to avoid feeling the feelings that you have about it. **Learn to problem solve and take action. Learn to accept your feelings.**
3. **Accept uncertainty :** This is probably one of the biggest keys to dealing with anxiety and worry. Chronic worriers can't stand doubt or unpredictability. They need to know with 100% certainty what's going to happen. Worrying is seen as a way to predict what the future has in store – a way to prevent unpleasant surprises and control the outcome. The problem is, it doesn't work. Thinking about all the things that could go wrong doesn't make life any more

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predictable. And focusing on worst case scenarios won't keep bad things from happening. ***Learn to tolerate uncertainty.***

**4. Challenge your anxious thoughts :**

You may have irrational and pessimistic attitudes that feed your worry and anxiety. You may believe the world is more dangerous than it really is, you may overestimate the possibility that things will go wrong, you may jump to worst case scenarios, you may treat every negative thought as if it were fact, or you may believe you can't handle life's problems. Start by identifying the worrying thought. Then view your thoughts as hypotheses that you're going to test out. Finally, examine and challenge your worries and fears to develop a more balanced perspective. ***Learn that your thoughts aren't always real or facts.***

**5. Notice how others affect you :** Did you know that other people's moods are "catching"? Be aware of the impact that those you spend time with have on you. And choose carefully those people that you talk with about your worries, as they could be making it worse. ***Learn to choose wisely who you spend time with.***

**6. Practice mindfulness :** Mindfulness is an ancient practice of being more in the present moment, and not judging your experience. This is opposite to worry, which often tries to drag you into the future. In contrast to the previous points about challenging your anxious thoughts or postponing them, this strategy is based on observing and acknowledging your anxious thoughts and feelings (like you are a bystander or witness to them), and then not trying to control the thoughts or feelings, but letting them go (watching them drift across your mind). ***Learn to practice mindfulness.***

## Apps of Interest

Technology is everywhere these days. Smartphones, smart cars, even garden lighting you can control from your smartphone!! While there are some down sides to technology (especially for our mental wellbeing), there's also some fabulous benefits to technology that can improve our mental wellbeing. The following Apps are great. You may want to investigate them, and hopefully start using them.

### ***The Mindfulness App – Meditation for Everyone***

I know, 'mindfulness' is a pretty big buzzword these days, and sometimes the word 'meditation' conjures up images of Tibetan monks sitting in a cave. However, mindfulness and especially mindfulness meditation, can be so beneficial in our everyday lives. Research shows that 20mins of mindfulness meditation daily can actually change the way we relate to our thoughts and our emotions, which in turn changes our behaviours. This app is for those starting out, or even those who are experienced in mindfulness. The Mindfulness App will help you to become more present in your everyday life.

### ***Reachout WorryTime***

Do you find yourself 'worrying' – worrying more than you want to, worrying more than is helpful for you? If you do, this is a great app that captures your worries, and then gets you to 'put off' worrying about your worries until a certain time of the day (a Worry Period). At this time, an alarm will sound, and your worries will appear – and then it's time to problem solve (or let go of) those worries. It's a nifty little app that can help you retrain your brain – away from worry (which is pretty unhelpful) towards problem solving (which is super helpful).

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## More ...

Here are two articles that I found interesting over the last month. I hope you find them interesting too.

### **Rethinking Fear – It's All About Perspective.**

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mind-matters/201802/rethinking-fear>

### **How Meditation Training Transforms the Brain, the Individual, and Society at Large.**

Tania share's the latest insights from the ReSource Project, an impressive, large-scale study assessing the effects of mental training on wellbeing, health, brain plasticity, cognitive and affective functioning, the autonomic nervous system, and behavior.

<https://www.mindandlife.org/tania-singer-resource-project/>

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195,  
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