

# *Be anxious for nothing???*

Dealing with anxiety in a frightening world

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[www.wisecounsel.wordpress.com](http://www.wisecounsel.wordpress.com)

[www.biblical.edu](http://www.biblical.edu)

# What makes you anxious?

- Health? Safety? Financial security?
- Salvation? Messing up God's plan?
- Your kids? Whether you will have kids?
- Career choices? Retirement?
- Embarrassment? Being seen?
- Rejection?
- Everything?

# Types

- Generalized
  - The content changes, the fear stays the same
- Specific
  - Phobias, Panic, OCD, Trauma related
- Existential/spiritual/relational
- Physical triggers

No matter the type, fear controls you

# Physical Triggers

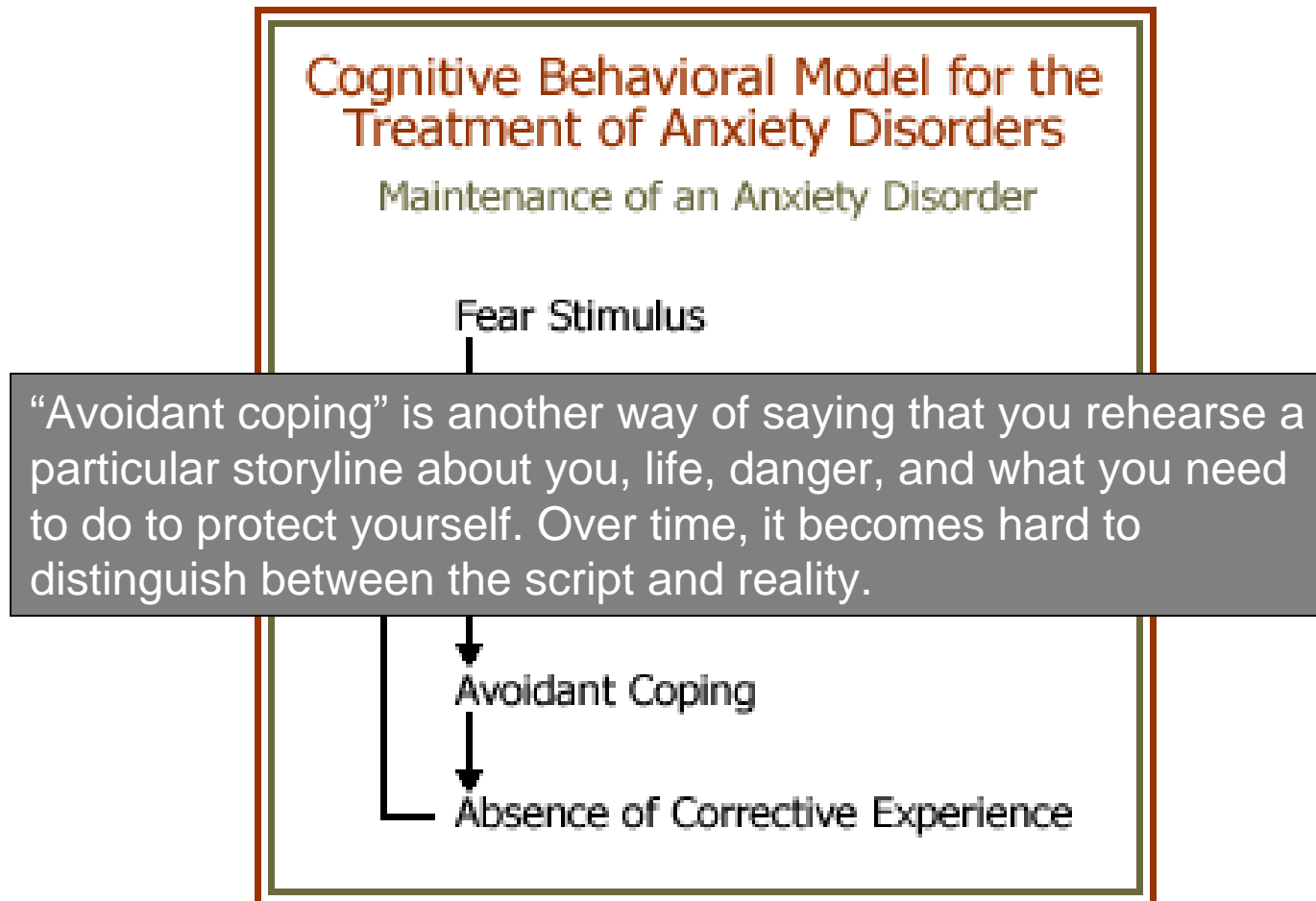
- Biological causes
  - Hyperthyroidism
  - MVP, arrhythmias,
  - Reflux
- Substance induced
  - Caffeine, stimulants, steroids, bronchodilators, street drugs, withdrawal from anxiolytics
- Check with your doctor...

# Common reactions to you

- Look at the bright side (pollyanna)
- It's not that bad (it's all in your head)
- Knock it off (it's a sin)

*How's that working for you?*

# One Schematic of Fear



# The recipe for anxiety

- It's a dangerous world →
- Bad stuff happens (and I can imagine it) →
  - And is going to happen to me!
  - It might be happening right now!
- I might be able to stop it if I stay vigilant →
  - Can't seem to stop thinking about it

Equals:

*Ambiguous data read in the worst possible light and then rehearsed*

# What do you rehearse?

- God will not protect me
- Others will reject me if they see my flaws (I'll be exposed as a fraud)
- God will not give me my desires
- If I stay vigilant, I can avoid pain, problems, etc.

# But doesn't the bible say it's a sin?

- Phil 4:6: Be anxious for nothing
- Jos. 1:9: Do not be terrified...(78x!)
- Mark 4:40: "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- 1 Jo 4:18: There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

# Even when our fears are reasonable?

- Psalm 23:4: *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*
- Psalm 27:1f: *The Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear?... Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear*

# Godly concern vs. worry

- What effect does it have on your relationships with others?
- What impact does it have on your relationship with God?
- Does it activate your trust in God? Or paralyze?
- How much power and control does it have?

# But, we worry just the same

- God's presence, the promise of heaven and the gift of faith—are they enough for today?
  - Our current concerns seem more real
  - We need something extra?
    - More protection, medicine, denial?
  - What do you try to do with your fear when you know you shouldn't be afraid or worry?

# Look a bit closer...

- Commands to not fear are connected to the common fear: what is going to happen to me? (shame, harm, destruction)
- Anxiety is most frequently connected to the problem of discouragement (Pr. 12:25)
- The antidote? God with us in the midst of danger (Ps. 23; Jer. 40:9; Rev. 2:10)
- God's tone with fearful people? *Little flock*

# Fighting Anxiety

- Worship/meditation
- Truth telling
- Fighting old habits, building new ones

**Habits**

**Self-Deception**

**False Worship**

**BONDAGE!**



# Self-Deception

- Self-deception is the gateway sin
- Having thoughts of self other than we want to have
- Refusing to identify as lost sheep
- “What ifs” seen as being a good steward



# Worship

- What do you meditate on?
- 1 thing?
- Example: What do you think about when you wake up in the night?



# Habits

- Rehearsing a story
- Habits reinforce our fears...
- And take on a life of their own impacting our bodies, minds, and relationships



# Our solution

- Break self-deception with truth
- Worship and meditate on an alternate storyline
- Break old habits, build new ones with the help of all the means of God

**Habits**

**Self-Deception**

**BONDAGE**

**False Worship**



# Truth/Story-telling

- Anxiety is the chronic overemphasis of the possible which creates a lopsided storyline
- Truth-telling rehearses an alternative storyline—God's!
  - Look for ways to do it when not afraid
- Go for the jugular. Example: If I die then I am with God and he will take care of my family. [www.algroves.info](http://www.algroves.info)

# Story lines to sing

- God's mighty power
- God's comfort
- God's compassion
- God's past blessing and future promises

If you sing this story, expect to meet God and fear, fall down, be lifted up, and loved!

# Worship

- Def: the repetitious act of setting one's mind on things of God
- Pick a meditation or biblical image to repeatedly take your mind to, to savor and rehearse. (ex: just one thing meditations)
  - Ps 131; Ps 23;
- Not intended to stop anxiety in the short-term but a submission to God's providential care for you

# Habits

- Anxiety says that certain things should be avoided (e.g., open spaces, certain foods, airplanes, scary people etc.)
  - Once we give in and avoid, we confirm the danger was real and that our actions helped
- Setting up habits that fly in the face of our anxiety

# Habits, con't.

Ed Hallowell says do these three habits

- Don't worry alone
- Get the facts
- Write it down

What do you think of his view: “Anxiety is not something to defeat, but something to manage.”

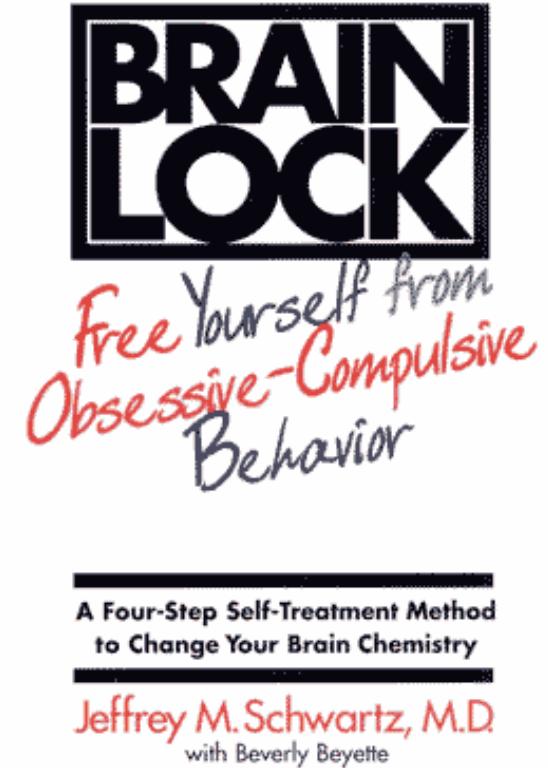
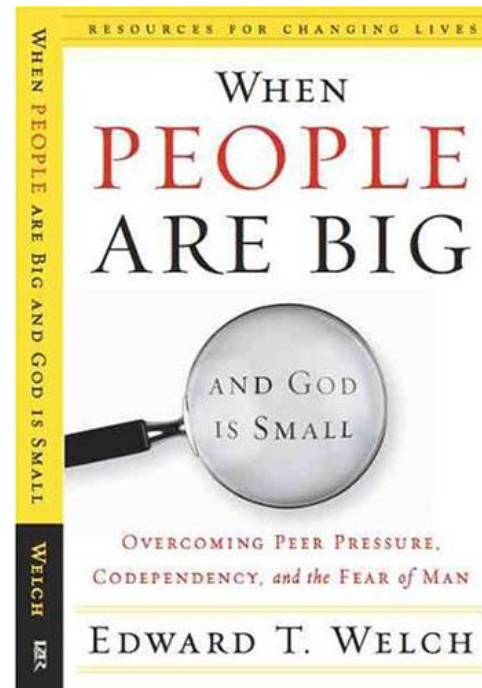
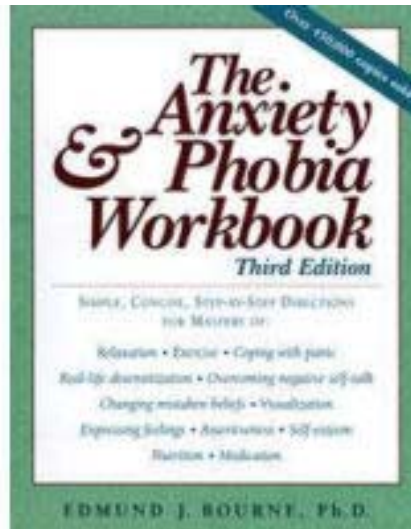
# How to help a friend

- Understand, don't debate
- Plan with them your response
  - Distractions, choosing other truths to focus on, defining triggers
- Don't try to take away the fear

# Medication as an option?

- Short Acting?
  - Benzodiazepines (e.g., Xanax, Ativan)
- Long acting?
  - SSRI Antidepressants (e.g., Zoloft, Lexapro, Paxil)
  - Antipsychotics (e.g., Seroquel)
  - Beta-blockers
- Should you?

# Some good tools...



<http://www.anxieties.com/>