

Worry is a habit of thought. It is no different than biting your fingernails, twirling your hair, wiggling your feet under the table, or anything else your mother told you not to do as a child. It is just a well-worn pathway of thought in your brain and like any habit, it can be changed or stopped.

Not worrying is a practice. It is difficult at first only because your brain is accustomed to the brain chemistry created by the habit of worrying. Breaking the worry habit requires some active thought training and some patience with yourself, but the more you practice letting go of this habit, the easier it will become.

Worry recycles fear, causing us to focus on and think about our fears. When we focus on that thing we are afraid of, we put energy into it: we give it power by investing our mental energy into it. The lovely thing is that you have control over your brain and you can invest the energy of your thoughts in any way that you wish. You can choose to focus on being afraid or on not being afraid (calm, centered, empowered, etc.).

When you catch yourself worrying, simply become aware that you are giving your energy and attention to something that you actually do NOT want to come about. Spend just a moment recognizing and becoming aware of what you are doing. Then change your thoughts. Instead of thinking about your fear, for example, that a plane will crash, visualize a smooth flight and a steady, easy landing of the plane. Instead of anticipating a fight with your sister-in-law, think about what a pleasure it will be to talk to her when you see her next. You cannot control the plane or your sister-in-law, but when you change the way you anticipate that things are going to happen in your life, it changes the way they happen. You show up differently in the situation, and by doing so, you have changed the situation.

Simply by changing the way that you anticipate, think, or focus on a situation, you are changing it. We know this to be true in quantum physics: when we focus on measuring a subatomic particle as a mass, it changes to energy. When we try to measure it as energy, it becomes mass. Simply by interacting with it, we have changed the parameters of the way that it shows up. You have this power too.

You can try the rubber band exercise or EFT when you find yourself worrying.

### **Rubber band technique**

- 1.) Wear a rubber band of a comfortable and non-constricting circumference on your wrist.
- 2.) Recognize when you use self-critical, worried or hopeless thoughts. (Take a moment to think about the “logic” that lead you to think of these fears. Is it a past experience that has you “anticipating” what could happen next? What is actually most likely to happen? How did you come to be afraid of the outcome you are focused on?)

- 3.) Decide if you want to stop these thoughts. (Are these thoughts helping or hurting me? What am I calling forth by thinking this way? Are these thoughts furthering my goals, desires, and aspirations?)
- 4.) Reinforce your decision through supportive comments. (I can let go of these thoughts. Instead of focusing on “x,” I can focus on “y.”)
- 5.) Snap a rubber band on your wrist. You can further reinforce the change in your behavior by saying “stop!” out loud or in your mind.

Snapping a rubber band directs your attention to your worry habit and gives a small negative feedback association with the process of worry. The visual stimulus and tactile presence of wearing the rubber band is a constant reminder to be aware of your thought habits and to focus on shifting them to something that is more supportive and desirable. With practice, the mental process will change and you will not need to wear a rubber band.

### **Emotional Freedom Technique**

Also called “Tapping” or “EFT”

EFT uses acupuncture points to help alter the habit of worrying. When you tap on these particular acupuncture points, you activate neural pathways in your brain that help you to break the habit of worry. While you tap, you help your brain acknowledge where it is now (worried and anxious about a particular event, etc.), and then help it to understand where it could be.

For example, if you are worried about an upcoming meeting with your boss, you might say to yourself:

“I acknowledge that I am worried about the meeting tomorrow morning with my boss.” (Acknowledgement).

“I recognize that this fear is coming from prior meetings which did not go smoothly.” (Recognizing that this fear is not coming from nowhere and giving yourself a break/understanding why you feel fear.)

“I also recognize that the prior meetings did not go well because I anticipated being scolded.” (Recognizing the part you were playing in generating an outcome you did not want.)

“I know that my performance has improved in the areas he/she previously scolded me for, and I expect that the interaction is going to go much better this time.” (Laying out what it is you actually want and giving yourself the reinforcement about why it should go well.)

Specific details on employing EFT can be found at:

<http://eft.mercola.com/>

<https://www.thetappingsolution.com/what-is-eft-tapping/>

or in this book:

“Tapping into Wealth” by Margaret Lynch