

## THE BIG IDEAS

### What Worry Does

It's not good.

### Live In:

Day-tight compartments.

### Be Willing to Have It So

Don't argue with reality.

### Decide

And rock it!

### Don't Cry

Over spilt milk.

### Rest

\*BEFORE\* you get tired.

### The Answer to Fatigue?

4 of 'em.

### Other People

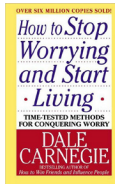
(Aren't) thinking about you.

### Get Busy!!!

No leisure to be miserable.

*"Obviously, circumstances alone do not make us happy or unhappy. It is the way we react to circumstances that determines our feelings. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is within you. That is where the kingdom of hell is, too."*

~ Dale Carnegie



# How to Stop Worrying and Start Living

Time-Tested Methods for Conquering Worry

BY DALE CARNEGIE · POCKET BOOKS © 2004 · 298 PAGES

“No one living has enough emotion and vigor to fight the inevitable and, at the same time, enough left over to create a new life. Choose one or the other. You can either bend with the inevitable sleetstorms of life—or you can resist them and break!”

~ Dale Carnegie from *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*

[Dale Carnegie](#) rocks.

If you've read *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, you've been exposed to his laid back, tell-it-like-it-is style.

If you've got a little more worry in your life than you'd like (who doesn't, eh?!) then me thinks you'll love this book and Note. It's packed with goodness and I'm excited to jump right in. So, let's! :)

## WHAT WORRY MAY DO TO YOU

“Seventy per cent of all patients who come to physicians could cure themselves if they got rid of their fears and worries.”

That's a powerful stat, eh?

So, why should you care about stopping your worry habit?

Well, in addition to the fact that being a worrier makes you a bummer to be around (sorry to break it to you :), you're destroying your health—reducing your energy today and trimming years (decades?) off your life.

Carnegie quotes a Dr. Montague: “You do not not get stomach ulcers from what you eat. You get ulcers from what is eating you.”

And a Dr. Alexis Carrel: “Those who do not know how to fight worry die young.”

And some philosopher guy named Plato: “The greatest mistake physicians make is that they attempt to cure the body without attempting to cure the mind; yet the mind and the body are one and should not be treated separately!”

Alright. So, you don't need any (more) convincing on the WHY, right? Time for the HOW!

## LIVE IN “DAY-TIGHT COMPARTMENTS”

“So let's be content to live the only time we can possibly live: from now until bedtime. ‘Anyone can carry his burden, however hard, from now until nightfall,’ wrote Robert Louis Stevenson. ‘Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, till the sun goes down. And this is all that life really means.’”

That's Chapter 1 in a nutshell. “Live in Day-tight Compartments.” Carnegie's a bit of a quote machine like me and goes from Jesus to Montaigne and Dante to Carlyle.

*" I spent twelve years working with cattle; yet I never saw a Jersey cow running a temperature because the pasture was burning from lack of rain or because of sleet and cold or because her boy friend was paying too much attention to another heffer. The animals confront night, storms, and hunger calmly; so they never have nervous breakdowns or stomach ulcers; and they never go insane."*

~ Dale Carnegie

*" Epictetus, the great Stoic philosopher, warned that we ought to be more concerned about removing wrong thoughts from the mind than about removing tumors and abscesses from the body."*

~ Dale Carnegie

*" The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."*

~ Milton

Jesus: "Have no anxiety for the tomorrow."

Montaigne: "My life has been full of terrible misfortunes most of which never happened."

Dante: "Think that this day will never dawn again."

Carlyle: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."

Horace: "Happy the man, and happy he alone, | He, who can call to-day his own: | He who, secure within can say: | "To-morrow, do thy worst, for I have liv'd today."

The Big Idea: "Shut the iron doors on the past and the future. Live in Day-tight compartments."

And ask yourself these questions:

1. "Do I tend to put off living in the present in order to worry about the future, or to yearn for some 'magical rose garden over the horizon'?"
2. Do I sometimes embitter the present by regretting things that happened in the past—that are over and done with?
3. Do I get up in the morning determined to 'Seize the day'—to get the utmost out of these twenty-four hours?
4. Can I get more out of life by 'living in day-tight compartments'?
5. When shall I start to do this? Next week? ... Tomorrow? ... Today?"

GREAT questions to reflect on.

(btw: the answer to #5 is: TODAY! :)

## BE WILLING TO HAVE IT SO

"Professor William James, the father of applied psychology, has been dead since 1910. But if he were alive today, and could hear this formula for facing the worst, he would heartily approve of it. How do I know that? Because he told his own students: 'Be willing to have it so... Be willing to have it so,' he said, because '...acceptance of what has happened is the first step in overcoming the consequences of any misfortune.'

Have you read [Loving What Is](#) by Byron Katie? Brilliant book. (You'll dig the Notes.)

Basic idea? She says: "I realized that it's insane to oppose it. When I argue with reality, I lose—but only 100% of the time." Hehe. I love that. And: "If you want reality to be different than what it is, you might as well try to teach a cat to bark." :)

You want to stop worrying and start living? QUIT ARGUING WITH REALITY. Or, in the words of William James: "Be willing to have it so."

Arguing with reality is one of the absolute BEST ways to RUIN your life.

As Deepak says in his great book [The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#) (see Notes): "This means that your acceptance of this moment is total and complete. You accept things as they are, not as you wish they were in this moment. This is important to understand. You can wish for things in the future to be different, but in this moment you have to accept things as they are."

Of course, in challenging times, we want a better future (whether that's 5 seconds from now or 5 days or weeks or years), but we MUST accept what is. From that place, the tension melts, the worry evaporates and we connect to Source and have all the strength we need to embrace the moment and take the next constructive step toward creating our ideal life.

And the best part?

*"Every man is a damn fool for at least five minutes every day. Wisdom consists in not exceeding that limit."*

~ Elbert Hubbard

*"The sovereign voluntary path to cheerfulness, if your cheerfulness be lost, is to sit up cheerfully and to act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there."*

~ William James

*"De minimus non curat lex - the law does not concern itself with trifles. And neither should the worrier - if he wants peace of mind."*

~ Dale Carnegie

*"Life is too short to be little."*

~ Disraeli

We can enjoy THIS MOMENT.

No matter how challenging it is.

As [Marcus Aurelius](#) says in his classic *Meditations* (see Notes): "So here is a rule to remember in future, when anything tempts you to feel bitter: not, 'This is a misfortune,' but 'To bear this worthily is a good fortune.'"

## DECIDE AND ROCK IT!

"Experience has proved to me, time after time, the enormous value of arriving at a decision. It is the failure to arrive at a fixed purpose, the inability to stop going around and round in maddening circles, that drives men to nervous breakdowns and living hells. I find that fifty per cent of my worries vanishes once I arrive at a clear, definite decision; and another forty per cent usually vanishes once I start to carry out that decision.

So, I banish about 90 per cent of my worries by taking these four steps:

1. Writing down precisely what I am worried about.
2. Writing down what I can do about it.
3. Deciding what to do.
4. Starting immediately to carry out that decision."

Amen. So:

1. What's stressing you out right now? I am stressed out about: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What can you do? I can do this about it: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What will you do? I will do this: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Cool. Now DO IT!

## DON'T CRY OVER SPILT MILK

"Some readers are going to snort at the idea of making so much over a hackneyed proverb like 'Don't cry over spilt milk.' I know it is trite, commonplace, a platitude. I know you have heard it a thousand times. But I also know that these hackneyed proverbs contain the very essence of the distilled wisdom of all ages. They have come out of the fiery experience of the human race and have been handed down through countless generations. If you were to read everything that has ever been written about worry by the great scholars of all time, you would never read anything more basic or more profound than such hackneyed proverbs as 'Don't cross your bridges until you come to them' and 'Don't cry over spilt milk.' If we only applied those two proverbs—instead of snorting at them—we wouldn't need this book at all. In fact, if we applied most of the old proverbs, we would lead almost perfect lives. However, knowledge isn't power until it is applied; and the purpose of this book is to remind you of what you already know and to kick you in the shins and inspire you to do something about applying it."

That. Is. Genius.

We all seem to want the fancy new techniques or the check-me-out-I'm-really-smart intellectual philosophies. But I \*love\* the good ol' fashioned obvious truths.

And I equally LOVE the way Carnegie puts it here: "knowledge isn't power until it is applied; and the purpose of this book is to remind you of what you already know and to kick you in the shins and inspire you to do something about applying it."

*"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor... If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."*

~ Henry David Thoreau

That pretty much sums up my intention with these Notes. Move my foot up from a kick in your shins to a kick in your butt and we're there!

So, two things:

1. First, specifically about worry: What spilt milk are you worrying over? What in your past are you STILL ruminating about, complaining about, losing sleep over, etc? The relationship? The family argument? The job? The missed opportunity? The whatever. When, exactly, do you plan to move on? (NOW might be good. :)
2. Second, what piece of wisdom do you KNOW to be true but for whatever reason you have yet to EMBODY? Remember "Knowledge isn't power until it's applied." So, what's the knowledge you need to apply? And when do you plan to apply it? (Now's *always* good. :)

Knowledge I KNOW but have yet to apply: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I will apply this knowledge starting: \*NOW\*

## REST \*BEFORE\* YOU GET TIRED

"So, to prevent fatigue and worry, the first rule is: Rest often. Rest before you get tired."

Carnegie gives us a chapter-full of the benefits of using relaxation as a means to reduce worry—and the fact that preventing fatigue is a huge step toward preventing worry. He starts by making the point that it's \*impossible\* to be totally relaxed and worried at the same time. Impossible. That alone is enough advice to solve most of our worry.

Stressed? Relax. TOTALLY relax.

The point is simple: you can prevent WORRY by preventing FATIGUE. How do you do that? A lot of ways. But the smartest is to rest before you're tired. Carnegie cites the U.S. Army, your heart, Winston Churchill, Rockefeller, Thomas Edison and many others to prove his point.

The U.S. Army? Rests its soldier ten minutes out of every hour they march. BEFORE they get tired. And they're overall efficiency goes up.

Churchill? Worked 16 hours a day in his late sixties and early seventies during World War II. His secret? He worked from bed a \*lot,\* took naps and rested frequently.

Rockefeller (lived to 96) took a half-hour nap EVERY noon.

Edison attributed his enormous energy and endurance to his habit of sleeping whenever he wanted to.

And, how about the coolest example? Your heart. As Carnegie says: "Your heart pumps enough blood through your body every day to fill a railway tank car. It exerts enough energy every twenty-four hours to shovel twenty tons of coal onto a platform three feet high. It does this incredible amount of work for fifty, seventy, or maybe ninety years. How can it stand it? Dr. Walter B. Cannon, of the Harvard Medical School, explained it. He said 'Most people have the idea that the heart is working all the time. As a matter of fact, there is a definite rest period after each contraction. When beating at a moderate rate of seventy pulses per minute, the heart is actually working only nine hours out of the twenty-four. In the aggregate its rest periods total a full fifteen hours per day.'

*"To be wronged or robbed is nothing unless you continue to remember it."*

~ Confucius

*" I know with conviction beyond all doubt that the biggest problem you and I have to deal with—in fact, almost the \*only\* problem we have to deal with—is choosing the right thoughts. If we can do that, we will be on the highroad to solving all our problems."*

~ Dale Carnegie

*" Let me repeat: do what the Army does—take frequent rests. Do what your heart does—rest before you get tired, and you will add one hour a day to your waking life."*

~ Dale Carnegie

Wow. That's amazing.

So, how about you? Are you taking enough rest?

If you're worried, check in and see if you're also fatigued. And then know that it's \*impossible\* to be totally relaxed and worried. So get relaxed. :)

(Speaking of which, it's time for my 9:30 am meditation. Seriously. Hehe. brb. :)

... More on fatigue: "Psychiatrists declare that most of our fatigue derives from our mental and emotional attitudes... What kinds of emotional factors tire the sedentary (or sitting) worker? Joy? Contentment? No! Never! Boredom, resentment, a feeling of not being appreciated, a feeling of futility, hurry, anxiety, worry—those are the emotional factors that exhaust the sitting worker, make him susceptible to colds, reduce his output, and send him home with a nervous headache. Yes, we get tired because our emotions produce nervous tensions in the body."

## THE ANSWER TO FATIGUE?

"What is the answer to this fatigue? Relax! Relax! Relax! *Learn to relax while you are doing your work!*"

How about some how-to's on relaxing?

1. "Relax in odd moments. Let your body go limp like an old sock." Carnegie says he keeps an old maroon dress sock on his desk to remind himself to relax. Classic.
2. "Work, as much as possible, in a comfortable position." Ten years ago when I was a stressed out 25-year old CEO with 45 employees who'd raised \$5m to finance my first business (eteamz.com) during the dot com boom of the late 90's, I used to get what I'd call "Frankensteined"—my neck wouldn't move because it was so tight. I realized that all the tension was adding up, exacerbated by the fact that I had my computer monitor set up so I had to look to my right while typing. Not comfortable. In fact, DUMB. Do you look STRAIGHT at your computer monitor? If not, please fix that today. Seriously. Get comfy and RELAX while you work.
3. "Check yourself four or five times a day, and say to yourself, 'Am I making my work harder than it actually is? Am I using muscles that have nothing to do with the work I'm doing?'" Love that. I often set my stop watch's timer to repeatedly count down from 30-minutes. When it beeps it's a brilliant reminder for me to pause, stretch out quickly, shut my eyes, breathe deeply, relax, say a few mantras and do a quick re-charge. You might dig that. It's amazing to see just how much tension can build even doing stuff we love!
4. "Test yourself again at the end of the day, by asking yourself, 'Just how tired am I? If I am tired, it is not because of mental work I have done but because of the way I have done it.'" Know that if you're cranky or tired, it's probably because of the tension you allowed to build during the day. RELAX. Breathe, crumple yourself up like an old sock and keep the fatigue and the worry away! :)

## OTHER PEOPLE (AREN'T) THINKING ABOUT YOU

"I realize now that people are not thinking about you and me or caring what is said about us. They are thinking about themselves—before breakfast, after breakfast, and right on until ten minutes past midnight. They would be a thousand times more concerned about a slight headache of their own than they would about the news of your death or mine."

Hah. That's awesome.

And sooo true.

" God grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I  
cannot change,  
The courage to change the  
things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the  
difference "

~ The Serenity Prayer

Tim Ferriss in his great book, *The 4-Hour Workweek*, says something along the lines of "Don't worry about what other people think. They don't think that often, anyway." :)

Funny.

Fact is most people rarely think and when they do, it's more likely to be worrying about what YOU think about THEM than about something going on with you.

So, a key way to stop worrying and start living?

Get totally independent of the good or bad opinion of others!!!

## GET BUSY!!!

"George Bernard Shaw was right. He summed it all up when he said: *'The secret of being miserable is to have the leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not.'* So don't bother to think about it! Spit on your hands and get busy. Your blood will start circulating; your mind will start ticking—and pretty soon this whole positive upsurge of life in your body will drive worry from your mind. *Get busy. Keep busy.* It's the cheapest kind of medicine there is on this earth—and one of the best."

Classic. You giving yourself the leisure time to be miserable?

Well, spit on your hands and get to work on something constructive already, will ya?!? :)

Of course, as we've discussed, we need time to reflect and envision our ideal lives but be careful lest you spend too much of that time in anxiety. If you find yourself worrying, go back up there to the four step worry-busting formula and rock #4. (The just do it part. :)

Let's stop worrying and start living our greatest lives,

B

**Brian Johnson,**  
*Chief Philosopher*

If you liked this Note,  
you'll probably like...

[The Magic of Thinking Big](#)

[Think and Grow Rich](#)

[Creative Mind  
and Success](#)

[Positive Addiction](#)

## About the Author of "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living"

DALE CARNEGIE



Dale Carnegie (1888-1955) described himself as a "simple country boy" from Missouri but was also a pioneer of the self-improvement genre. Since the 1936 publication of his first book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, he has touched millions of readers and his classic works continue to impact lives to this day.

## About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at [brianjohnson.me](http://brianjohnson.me).