

# Worry

Verb or Noun | wor•ry | /'werē/

**Definitions:** give way to anxiety or unease; allow one's mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles; a state of anxiety and uncertainty over actual or potential problems; a cause of uneasiness or anxiety

**Synonyms:** anguish, apprehension, concern, doubt, fear, problem, uncertainty, woe, annoyance, distress, irritation, perplexity, torment, trial, bad news

## Rule: Worry Helps Me Feel in Control

Worry helps me feel like I'm doing something productive about a bothersome or anxiety provoking situation.

What is worry? Well, besides the definitions and synonyms listed above worry can also be viewed as the thinking component of anxiety. Worry brings to mind a threat (real or imagined) and the human body responds to this threat with an automatic hardwired response (fear or anxiety). Occasional worry about major life events is common. However, experiencing excessive worry repeatedly puts the body into crisis mode, which can lead to physical problems over time. A common quality amongst worriers is a low tolerance for uncertainty. In this way worry could also be defined as an internal process people use to attempt to reduce uncertainty by exerting imaginary control over the future. In fact, most people who worry a lot believe that worrying is helpful to them in some way – perhaps it feels like planning or problem solving, or maybe it feels motivating... Humans are really good at controlling many different situations but ironically when it comes to the stuff that happens inside (our thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, etc.) using control strategies – like worry- can often bring about even more pain! Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) encourages us to let go of the things we cannot control and then mindfully move in a direction we hold dear.

So notice... how many worry thoughts have you had in the past few days? Can you let go of what you can't control? Does letting go give you the space to be able to actively **care** about this area of life?

For more info on worry and how you can begin to let go of control check out *The Worry Trap* by Chad Lejeune, Ph.D.

## Challenge: I Can Let Go of Control

Worry keeps me stuck in the land of thoughts. If I let go of what I cannot control I may have more space to do what matters most to me.