

8 Simple Ways to Feel Better

Anxiety has haunted me since I was a teenager, sometimes bringing its ghastly friend, depression along for the ride. There were some days when my body was such a mess with headaches and stomach aches that all I could do was go home, go to bed in a dark room, and pray while I attempted to sleep as I waited for the attack to pass – sometimes for as long as three days. I knew in my head that the fear I was experiencing that led to the anxiety attacks was irrational, but I felt powerless to overcome those thoughts on my own. I WAS powerless to overcome these thoughts on my own. I knew all the Scriptures on taking your thoughts captive and giving your concerns to God, but I couldn't get release from this fear and anxiety that was holding me captive.



My doctor prescribed medications that worked moderately until I built up a tolerance to them, at which point I decided they were no longer a good option for me. I weaned off the medications (that was ugly), learned some holistic ways to take care of my body (that's a whole separate conversation!), and I learned some new techniques to relax my body and change my thought patterns. But even more important than all of that, I surrounded myself with women who loved me, who would help me think clearly, and who prayed in the Spirit over me – who taught me how to pray in the Spirit – who through the power of Jesus, brought freedom into my life.

Do I have it all figured out now? No. I still struggle with fear. BUT, praise God, I am free from its power now! It no longer holds me captive! I

remember the day God released me from the fear of preaching and leading worship like it was yesterday – except it was several years ago now. February 28th, 2015 – a day of prayer with my dear friend and confidante. I used to get so anxious before preaching that my head would hurt so badly that I couldn't focus and my stomach would be so upset that I ... well... I'll spare you those details. ;-). Since that day, I know who I was made to be in Christ – who God has called me to be – and when fear tells me its sweet little lies, I have the power (Christ's power!) to overcome each little lie with the truth of who I am in Jesus Christ.

You, too, are an overcomer! God has a magnificent role for you to play in His Kingdom on earth. You have been given the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit and in His power, can overcome all fear, anger, rejection, unforgiveness, resentment, and anything else that is binding you up. You have freedom in Jesus' name!

As you work out your freedom (not work for it, but work it out – retrain your body, mind, and soul), you may find the following 8 simple techniques helpful.

8. Take a time out. Remove yourself – if only for 10 minutes – from the situation that is causing you strife. If it's your work, step away from your desk or your work station for a few minutes. If it's your children (I love mine, but let's be real, parenting can be HARD), make sure they are in a safe place/doing a safe activity, and then lock yourself in your room for a few minutes to ...

7. Take several deep breaths. Deep and slow breaths. Count to 4 breathing in through your nose. Hold your breath for the count of 7, and then breathe out for 8 through your mouth (audibly and forcefully). Do this for 4 breath cycles. (This is the method taught by Dr. Weil and there are several videos available on YouTube if you want a guide.) Think on a Psalm while doing this – one of the Psalms of praise. Think on the majesty and wonderment of our God while you do this. Offer God thanks and praise during your slow breaths.

6. Go for a walk – outside – in the fresh air and sunlight. Even if it's cold (I live in ND and, boy, it gets cold here in the winter!). The fresh air and natural lighting will do you a world of good and can help you clear your head. It gives you space to adjust your thinking as it changes your posture and gets your blood moving in a healthy way.

5. Check what you eat. Wheat, dairy, and sugar all cause inflammation in the body. Inflammation leads to all kinds of physical ailments and can alter the chemicals in your brain. If you want to feel better, eat better. Cut out the processed foods, the fast foods, and eat fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, and lean meats. Cut out the MSG and anything with propylene glycol, “natural flavors,” and food coloring. Eat nutritious foods to feel better.

4. Utilize some aromatherapy techniques with essential oils. When we breathe in certain fragrances and certain chemicals, it can impact our brains. Take advantage of this with therapeutic grade essential oils! Some of my favorites for times like this are: Frankincense, the Believe blend, Orange, Stress Away, Valor, Release, and Lavender. Combining essential oils with new thought patterns can be extremely effective in supporting a state of emotional balance. Learn more about essential oils here: <https://saratherev.com/page/essential-oils>

3. Visualize yourself and/or physically act out actually giving your problems over to God. He has promised to provide for our daily needs (Matthew 6:25-34). Imagine everything you are worried about right now. Roll it all up into a ball and hold it in your hands – if it's too big for that, hold it in front of you like a big exercise ball. Now, imagine that God is right there with you, looking on you with a love so much greater than even your own parents could give you. Give this ball over to Him. Go ahead – actually visualize yourself giving all your worries over to God – and then, let-them-go. God's got it – even if it seems that things are falling apart, He will put the pieces back together again.

2. Join an Inner Circle/Community Group. This is a group of people who gather regularly to support one another, pray with each other, and do life together. This is the tangible place where God's love meets up with us in the form of other humans. If you don't have one, get one here: <https://saratherev.com/page/inner-circles>

And, the number 1 thing you can do to feel better is:

1. Pray. Get some prayer partners and pray together. Pray for healing. Pray for release. Pray for wisdom and discernment. Learn how to pray in the Spirit. PRAISE GOD, for He is wonderful and merciful, and He loves you even in your brokenness. I am just beginning to learn about this (so more to come as I learn more!), but as we praise God – as we think grateful thoughts – the makeup of our brains changes to a more positive composition. So, if you want to be happy, praise God and be grateful for somethings in your life and your brain will change (check out anything by Dr. Caroline Leaf for more information on this).

Finally, you – yes, you – were designed by God for greatness and a purpose. Not for your own glory, but for the glory of God. Trust Him. Ask for help in overcoming emotional challenges. ***If you need help asking for help, send me a message at saratherev@gmail.com.***

To connect with one of my Inner Circles, register here: <https://saratherev.com/page/inner-circles>

In Christ, you are an overcomer. Christ has already conquered the devil and death on your behalf. Rise up out of the ashes and claim your victory in Him!