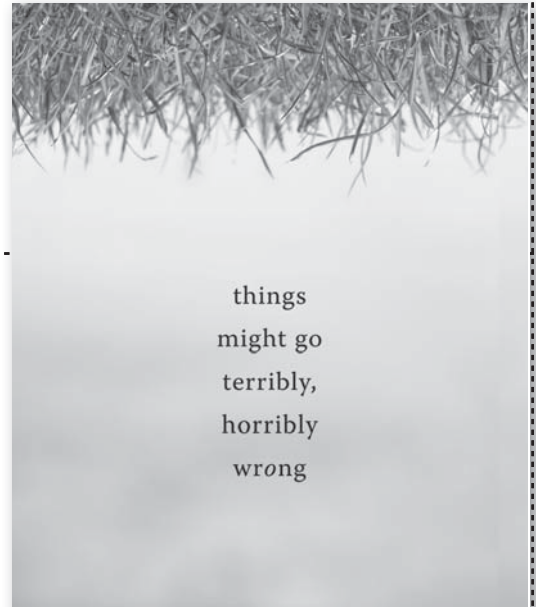


THINGS MIGHT GO TERRIBLY, HORRIBLY WRONG
A Guide to Life Liberated from Anxiety
KELLY G. WILSON, PH.D., AND TROY DUFRENE



things
might go
terribly,
horribly
wrong

a guide to life liberated from anxiety

KELLY G. WILSON, PH.D.
TROY DUFRENE

“In this very moment, will you accept the sad and the sweet, hold lightly stories about what’s possible, and be the author of a life that has meaning and purpose for you, turning in kindness back to that life when you find yourself moving away from it?”

—Kelly Wilson’s
BIG QUESTION,
from *Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong*



PHOTO BY KEITH HENRY

“Sometimes things go terribly, horribly wrong. Sometimes this happens in ways we aren’t prepared for. And sometimes it happens in ways we could never have taken seriously or even imagined.”

Whether it manifests itself as worry, fear, rumination, obsession, compulsion, or shyness, anxiety is everywhere, and it causes no end of trouble for just about all of us. But at its core, anxiety serves an important purpose: it helps us to avoid the world, rather than accept it the way it is.

Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong (New Harbinger) begins with a whirlwind tour of anxiety: what causes it, what we think about it, and what it might look like. Then the book looks at some of the approaches to treating anxiety and poses an intriguing question: *What if you don’t need to get rid of anxiety in order to live a terrific life?*

Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong approaches this startling hypothesis through acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) and offers a series of thinking points and short games readers can do to easily and effectively begin to incorporate ACT techniques into their lives.

Filled with literary references and possessing a light-hearted authorial voice, ***Things*** is not a full-scale self-help approach for someone with serious anxiety problems; rather, it is an easy way for readers who have wrestled with worry, fear, and shyness to put those feelings into perspective and focus instead on what they want to do in life. Wilson and DuFrene will help readers to foster the flexibility they need to keep from succumbing to the forces of anxiety and open themselves to the often uncomfortable complexities and possibilities of life.

PAGE 2 AUTHOR BIOS

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About the Authors

PHOTO BY KEITH HENRY



KELLY G. WILSON, PH.D., is associate professor of psychology at the University of Mississippi and the founder of One Life Education and Training. Wilson is coauthor of the seminal book *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*, which set the foundation for this new model of psychotherapy, as well as the book *Mindfulness for Two*. He lives and works in Oxford, MS.

Visit Kelly Wilson online at www.onelifellc.com.



TROY DUFRENE is a writer specializing in psychology, particularly acceptance and commitment therapy. He is coauthor of *Coping with OCD* and *Mindfulness for Two*. He lives and works in Oakland, CA.

Visit Troy DuFrene online at www.mindfulnessfortwo.com or www.troydufrene.com.

MF2 Praise

“Kelly Wilson does a masterful job of framing the many different ways in which a therapist grounded in mindfulness might skillfully nurture greater awareness and self-knowing in his or her clients. His approach is a very creative use of mindfulness within the dyadic relationship, both verbal and non-verbal. Of course, it is impossible to engage in authentically without continually listening deeply to and learning from the myriad “dyadic relationships” we have within ourselves, as he so aptly and honestly recounts. This book makes a seminal contribution to the growing literature on ACT and its interface with mindfulness theory and practice.

— **Jon Kabat-Zinn**, author of *Full Catastrophe Living* and *Letting Everything Become Your Teacher* and coauthor of *The Mindful Way Through Depression*

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MF2
Praise

"This is a book of enormous breadth and depth, a book full of wisdom from an internationally acclaimed clinician and researcher. Wilson builds bridges between therapy traditions in a wonderful way. For those who already teach mindfulness as part of their therapy, this is a must-read. For those who are yet to do so, this book is the best invitation possible."

— **Mark Williams**, professor of clinical psychology at the University of Oxford and coauthor of *The Mindful Way Through Depression*

"Wilson and DuFrene have provided therapists with the clearest understanding of ACT and mindfulness that I have encountered. They explain the basic theory of emotions and human learning in simple, clear, and understandable prose. Also, I found this book rich in philosophical insights concerning the human condition. Their models of assessment and intervention flow from this basic knowledge and philosophy. This work will help all therapists see a new way to understand and assess their clients' suffering and potential for improving their lives. They will also learn to construction treatment plans to make such a transition."

— **Raymond DiGiuseppe, Ph.D., ABPP**, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology at St. John's University

"This book provides the clearest description I've seen of how understanding both mindfulness and behavior analysis contributes to effective therapy. It also provides unique, creative, and powerful exercises to help therapists cultivate mindful awareness of their interactions with their clients to create life-changing conversations."

— **Ruth A. Baer**, professor of psychology at the University of Kentucky

"In this book Wilson, an internationally respected therapist, provides an outstanding and innovative overview of new trends in behavior therapy and mindfulness and shares his insights into the complexities of what happens when we try to use our own mind to heal the minds of others. Beautifully written, clear and bristling with wisdoms from a very experienced therapist, this gem of a book will be a pleasure to read and a source for much reflection and learning."

— **Paul Gilbert**, author of *Overcoming Depression* and *The Compassionate Mind*

"There is tremendous change occurring in our collective thinking regarding empirically supported interventions. *Mindfulness for Two* portends the direction of this change, where the scientist, therapist and client are motivated and affected by the same set of principles. Mindfulness in general and ACT in particular apply to both the client and the therapist, and Wilson and DuFrene are insightful, emotionally honest, and pragmatic. This is a refreshing and timely contribution to therapy process."

— **Thomas J. Dishion, Ph.D.**, director of the Child and Family Center and professor of psychology and school psychology at the University of Oregon

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EXCERPT: THINGS MIGHT GO TERRIBLY, HORRIBLY WRONG

KELLY G. WILSON, PH.D., AND TROY DUFRENE

ONE TUESDAY MORNING IN 2001, A WINE SALESMAN WAS GETTING READY FOR WORK IN HIS BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, APARTMENT.

After showering and shaving, he put on an ill-fitting pin-striped suit, scuffed black loafers, and a blue tie that, he noted with alarm, had picked up a grease stain at lunch the day before. Because he worked in the city of San Francisco and the traffic from Berkeley into the city could sometimes be bad, he was in the habit of getting up early to avoid the worst of it. His girlfriend, with her more congenial commute, could afford an extra hour of sleep and was still in bed.

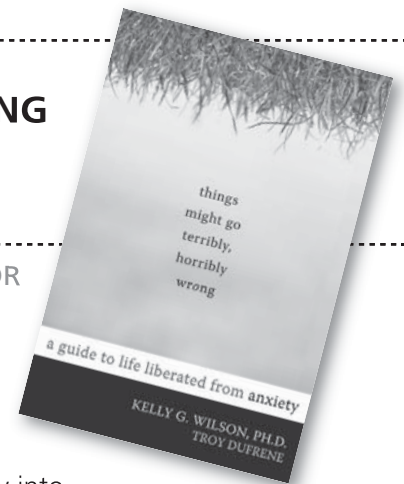
The wine salesman, in his own estimation, just wasn't well-suited to his job. He wasn't the kind of person who could show up on a sales call, make a pitch, and then either take an order or leave empty handed without a care. For him, each rejection felt personal. Every "no" stung a little more than the last. He was ill-equipped to deal with the inevitable humiliation that bruised him each time the answer to "How many can I get you?" was "None today, thanks."

As he brushed his teeth, he rolled over in his head the names and faces of the San Francisco liquor-store owners who might reject him later in the day. As he did, he had trouble focusing on any one of them. It was as if they all started to share one face.

If they didn't buy, he would fall behind on his quotas, and that would mean more than just lost commission. He wasn't certain where he stood with his boss and his boss's boss. He had only been on the job for half a year. So far he had consistently hit all of his numbers, but each month felt like a greater struggle. From time to time, he got encouraging voice mails from the area manager, and he had even been commended for performance at the last sales meeting. But it was just a matter of time. If his bosses really knew how hard he had to push to make his quotas or how close he invariably came to failure in the last days of each month, they would turn him out onto the streets without a second thought.

And for the last couple of weeks, his superiors had been condemningly silent. The main office had gone quiet. What could that mean? It would be one thing if they were angry with him, if they badgered him about his numbers—but this silent treatment was just too much. On Monday, the day before, the prospect of being rejected one more time had been more than he could handle. He had gone to his first appointment, parked the car six blocks away, and walked to the liquor store's side door. He even put his hand on the knob but couldn't turn it. He circled the block a couple of times, sweating, his heart pounding in his chest. But when he went back to the door, once again he found he couldn't open it and walk inside.

So he left. He drove up to Pacific Heights and sat for six straight hours in his parked car, staring out at Alcatraz, feeling like he was in his own, personal prison. Every two or three minutes, he dialed the number to his voice mail, punched in his password, and waited to hear—what? The condemning voice of his customer, demanding to know why he hadn't shown up?



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(continued from page 4)

The strained yet contained voice of the area manager, calling him into the office for a little chat? Instead, he heard nothing. The computerized female voice on the other end of the line told him the one thing he dreaded most of all: “You have no new voice mail messages.”

Between calls to his voice mail, his phone never rang and his pager never went off. He couldn’t shake the feeling that something was going on out there and that he didn’t have a clue what it was. And that’s when he noticed that every few heartbeats, there was a little flutter in his chest, a missed beat.

How long could this go on? He knew in his head that he could do this job—or, at least, he could do the job if he could get rid of this constant feeling that—what? That he would be fired? Would be made to look like a fool? Wouldn’t be able to pay his rent? He really didn’t even know which bothered him more.

The salesman had snapped out of his rumination when he felt a sharp twinge and then tasted blood in his mouth. It had taken him a moment to realize that, while he had been obsessing about the day before, he had been biting his nails and had finally chewed his thumbnail down to the quick. He checked his watch to see that it was already a quarter to eight. Damn it! There would already be a huge backup at the toll plaza on the bridge.

Now, he tore around the house, gathering up his things. He picked up his briefcase, car keys, and a half-eaten piece of toast and turned toward the front door. Before he could put his hand on the doorknob, his girlfriend rushed from the bedroom and called out to him.

“Turn on the news,” she stammered. “There’s been a massive terrorist attack in New York.”

1. Are you the panicked wine salesman whose story is told in the opening chapter of ***Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong***?
2. What lesson does this story teach us?
3. It’s a big leap from wine salesman to psychology writer. Can you tell us a little about your journey and how you met Dr. Kelly Wilson and became involved with acceptance and commitment therapy?
4. Has learning about acceptance and commitment therapy changed your life? How?
5. Unlike most self-help books ***Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong*** is a fun read, beginning with the title. Was it important to you to inject some levity into the book? Why?

Interview
Questions for
Troy DuFrene

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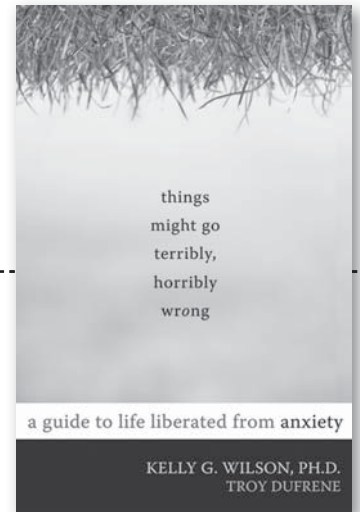
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Interview
Questions for
Kelly Wilson

About Anxiety

1. Why do human beings feel anxiety?
2. What is the story of “The Bear and The Blueberries”? What does the story illustrate?
3. Is anxiety ever a positive thing?

About Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

1. You are coauthor of the landmark book *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*, which set the foundation for this new model of psychotherapy. Can you explain for a lay audience what acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is and what makes it different from other forms of psychotherapy?
2. What makes ACT effective for treating anxiety? What other conditions can be treated with ACT?
3. What will readers learn from ***Things Might Go Terribly, Horribly Wrong?***

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