

It's true: Women worry more than men. A new book tells them why and how they can stop.



Hiltebrand Studio 2005

Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D.

Picture a worrywart and it's not usually a man that comes to mind. Not surprising when you consider the facts:

- 2.6 million women suffer from generalized anxiety disorder alone, and worry is a key part of this;
- Women are twice as likely as men to develop an anxiety disorder;
- One study tracked anxiety in children and found that by the time girls reached adolescence they had *six times* the rate of generalized anxiety disorder than boys;
- Anxiety disorders are the number one mental health problem among women, according to the National Institutes of Mental Health;
- Some researchers theorize that because women have greater negative affectivity—the general tendency to experience negative emotions—they are more vulnerable to anxiety disorders.

Women Who Worry Too Much: How to Stop Worry & Anxiety from Ruining Relationships, Work & Fun is the first-ever book to take on women's unique tendency to worry. Using the latest research, author and psychologist Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D., explains current theories about why women worry more and offers cutting-edge solutions to keep worry from taking over their lives. Here's just some of what she discusses.

Fight-or-flight vs. tend-and-befriend. Both women and men experience the fight-or-flight response when faced with a stressful situation. The difference is that in women certain hormones become active when a stressor arises and these hormones downregulate or dampen the effects of the fight-or-flight response. That's when the tend-and-befriend response surfaces. Instead of fighting or fleeing, a woman's drive during stress is to tend to her children and befriend others for the security of group protection. Importantly, this natural tend-and-befriend response may reinforce avoidant ways of coping with perceived threats, which can ultimately reinforce anxiety and the perception of threat.

What if (insert catastrophe here) happens to me or my kids? In the post-9/11 era you can worry yourself into believing that once-unimaginable tragedies are almost imminent. For some women, worry offers an imaginary measure of control over future dangers. "...worry becomes an attempt to make the future more certain. If only they could foresee and prevent each of life's tragedies, then maybe they would make it through life without emotional pain, grief, or loss," says Hazlett-Stevens. Of course, the truth is that worrying about future tragedies doesn't ward them off; it only makes the present all the more difficult. Hazlett-Stevens offers a step-by-step plan for realistically assessing risk and keeping worry about the future from poisoning the present.

"This is the clearest, most articulate, and best organized presentation of help for worry and generalized anxiety I've seen. —Edmund J. Bourne, Ph.D., author of the best-selling *The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook*

NEXT: Cutting-edge techniques for relieving women's most common worries...

**FOR AN INTERVIEW REQUEST OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Lorna Garano, 510-652-0215, x107, lorna@newharbinger.com**

**Women Who Worry Too Much: How to Stop Worry & Anxiety from Ruining Relationships, Work, & Fun
by Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D., Published in September 2005
New Harbinger Publications, ISBN: 1-57224-412-7, \$13.95, 181 pages
800-748-6273, www.newharbinger.com**

The latest, research-proven techniques for ending the most common types of worry. Hazlett-Stevens shows women how to train the latest, research-proven techniques on their most common worries, which include worry about work, relationships, and their children. Here's just a few of these new techniques.

- **Mindfulness skills:** Hazlett-Stevens shows you how eating mindfully, breathing mindfully, and going about every day life mindfully can allay worry;
- **Avoiding avoidance:** Counterintuitive as it seems, research has shown that avoiding fears actually enhances them. Hazlett-Stevens shows you how free yourself from the avoidance that fuels anxiety;
- **Identifying hidden moments to relax:** "Everyday contains dozens of hidden moments to relax," says Hazlett-Stevens. She shows you how to recognize and use them to keep worry at bay.

About Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D.



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HOLLY HAZLETT-STEVENS, PH.D., is an assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Reno. She has conducted psychological research in the areas of worry, anxiety disorders, and relaxation for the past 10 years, resulting in the publication of over 20 articles and book chapters. She is the coauthor of *New Directions in Progressive Relaxation Training*. Hazlett-Stevens has been listed in *Who's Who in the World*, *Who's Who of American Women*, and *Who's Who in Social Sciences and Higher Education*. From 1999-2001, Hazlett-Stevens was a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles under the mentorship of Dr. Michelle Craske. There she received training in cognitive behavioral treatment for panic disorder, coordinated panic disorder intervention research projects, and continued her own program of anxiety and worry research.

Suggested Interview Questions for Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D.

1. When most people imagine a worrywart, they think of a woman. In *Women Who Worry Too Much*, you discuss some of the latest theories about why women do—in fact—worry more than men. What are a few of these?
2. You say that when it comes to chronic worry, the nature vs. nurture paradigm is problematic. Why?
3. What's the difference between worry and anxiety?
4. What are some of the most common worries among women?
5. What's the tend-and-befriend response?

"This is the best book I have seen on ways to deal with chronic worry..."

—Martin M. Antony, Ph.D., ABPP, director of the Anxiety Treatment and Research Centre at St. Joseph's Healthcare

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6. A lot of people would say that we live in a dangerous and unstable world and that worrying is just an unavoidable, if unpleasant, fact of life. What would you say to this?
7. Why is it so important to monitor your worry triggers?
8. You recommend a series of mindfulness skills in *Women Who Worry Too Much*. What is mindfulness and how can it help a worrier?
9. How can chronic worry impact physical health?
10. In the post-9/11 era many of us have begun to worry about something that before that tragedy never crossed our minds: terrorist attacks. What would you say to someone who's worried obsessively about the possibility of herself or her loved ones being a victim of this kind of catastrophe?

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