



Attacking Anxiety

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shawn Johnson is Lead Pastor of Red Rocks Church, Denver CO.

The Nutshell

Introduction: I Need a Miracle

Have you ever had such bad anxiety or depression that you wondered if you could keep going? That's where I was. This book is about my journey from that place to where I am today.

1. Live Free

This book is about learning to bridge the gap between being *set free* and actually being able to *live free*. Statistically speaking, there's a good chance you or someone you know deals with anxiety or depression.

2. You Are Not Crazy

Today I'm experiencing joy and freedom at levels I wouldn't have even dreamed possible. The starting point for dealing with anxiety and depression is *knowing*: (1) You are not crazy. (2) You are not alone. (3) This will end.

3. You Are Not Alone

One of the reasons mental illness is so dangerous is because it tends to isolate us. Anxiety and depression feed us the lie that we are the only ones struggling. We become convinced that no one will ever understand.

4. This Will End

I am so thankful I never did anything stupid when my emotions were lying to me that the world would be better off without me. Our God restores our lives, and he uses the trials we've been through. Your story is not over.

5. Fighting

I realized it's important to know who you're fighting. You're not fighting anxiety; you're not fighting depression; you're not fighting hopelessness. You are fighting Satan. The enemy. So, it's time to fight.

6. Using Worship as a Weapon

It's time to begin battling for the freedom Jesus has given you, and one of the best ways to fight for your peace, joy, purpose, and freedom is to use this weapon called worship.

7. Praying Like a Warrior

What would I tell someone who is feeling absolutely overwhelmed with anxiety right now? Put on some worship music. Start praising and start praying. And as you do, talk to God real raw and honest. Don't hold back.

8. Remembering to Attack Back

Write out a list of all the victories you've seen God help you win in your life. Then start remembering what God promised you. Third, write out all the things that are weighing you down, and compare that list with the other two.

9. Assembling an Army

If my breakdown on the highway taught me anything, it's that I am not strong enough to get through life on my own. Anxiety is a battle we can win, but it's not a battle we can win on our own.

10. Pretending You're Okay

Hitting rock bottom forces us to stop the show. We realize we aren't strong enough, or smart enough to overcome anxiety or depression on our own. It reveals what needs to change in our lives and get desperate enough to do it.

11. Holding On to Unforgiveness

Every one of us has pain in our past, and unless we face it and forgive it, it will continue to fuel our anxiety and depression. Sometimes to move forward, we first have to go back and heal from past pain.

12. Performing for the Critics

When I listened to the critics, my anxiety skyrocketed. When I listened to my Creator, the result was peace, joy, and confidence. You just have to remind yourself which voice you are going to listen to.

13. Comparing Your Calling

The more we focus on our own calling, the less we feel the need to compare. Your job is to be who you are and do what you are here to do. Remind yourself, *I can celebrate the callings of others, but I will walk in mine.*

14. God Is with You

No matter how bad your anxiety or depression is, when we know our all-powerful Father has our backs, it changes everything. Suddenly this battle becomes a battle you can win. Not because you're strong enough but because your God is.

15. God is Working

Get in the habit of preaching to yourself when you feel like you are losing ground and that God has stopped working in your life. I can look back on my situation in the rearview mirror of my life and see that God was doing more miracles than I could've imagined.

16. God Has a Plan

When anxiety and depression attack, they try to convince us to ignore God's truths. But truth isn't impacted by our circumstances. Sometimes we need to put aside our feelings and stand on God's permanent truths! *Just because you can't see what God is up to doesn't mean he doesn't have a plan.*

Conclusion: Your Time to Live is Now!

One of the best decisions I made after returning home was to find an amazing counselor to meet with once a week. I felt healthier and stronger than I'd ever thought I'd be. I still did (and still do) have bad days. But if you apply the principles in this book, you are getting *healthier* every day.

Appendix: Panic Attack Survival Guide

If you or your loved one is currently having a panic attack, putting together a long-term plan for freedom is probably not your top priority. Once things calm down, you can talk about winning the war, but first, you need to win the battle that is right in front of you.

I'm going to give you five things to do if you are having a panic attack and five things to do if you are trying to help a loved one through a panic attack.

For Yourself

The first thing you have to understand about panic attacks is that they happen in your mind and body. The body goes into fight or flight, and the mind spins faster and faster.

Step 1: Slow Your Breathing on Purpose.

I make my exhale slightly longer than my inhale.

Step 2: Change Your Scenery.

Go outside. Head to the gym. Pull over and get out of your car.

Step 3: Take Your Mind Somewhere Else.

If you can take your mind anywhere else, you'll stop feeling panic. Play a game on your phone. Read a book. My go-to is gratitude. I start telling God about all the things I'm grateful for.

Step 4: Stop Fighting.

When you attempt to fight off a panic attack, all you do is dig yourself deeper. So, *make friends* with it. "I understand you're here right now. I'm not happy about it, but I also know you're going to leave soon."

Step 5: Use Your Imagination.

Picture your panic as clouds in the sky slowly moving toward the horizon. Or as a train slowly passing you by. Tell yourself the anxiety you're not fighting against has decided to slowly leave, and then you're going to continue your day.

For a Loved one

How do you help a loved one through a panic attack? That's a skill we all should have. Because odds are, at some point in your life, someone you love will go through a panic attack. Here are five things you can do to help.

Step 1: Be Present.

Simply being there with them is of the utmost importance. The only thing worse than having a panic attack is having a panic attack by yourself. I call it *The Ministry of Presence*.

Step 2: Don't Pretend to Understand What You Don't Understand.

Don't give straight answers or quick-fix solutions that, in your mind, make sense. Because I promise you, that's not what they need. You don't have to know what they're going through to support them.

Step 3: Create a Safe and Judgment-Free Space.

Shame is one of the hidden enemies that will try to destroy your loved one during their attack. Let them know it's okay to struggle. Let them know panic is normal and it's not going to last forever. Let them know it's safe to express their feelings. They'll need to hear this over and over again.

Step 4: Remind.

There are three things they need to know: (1) They are not crazy. (2) They are not alone. (3) This will end. Repeat these three phrases over and over again. The CDC tells us that almost half of all Americans will struggle with something like this.

Step 5: Keep Showing Up.

Your presence is more valuable than you know. Your willingness to be present in the middle of your loved one's struggle can be a catalyst to helping them find more health, wholeness, and freedom than they ever thought possible.