

"Jenny's book is Absolutely Astoundingly Awesome"
Birgitta Lindgren from Getinge, Sweden (in the book).

"This book describes everything so well and I feel so much better after having read it, and I don't feel alone anymore."
Anders Andersson (in the book).

"You write so well and vividly, so I can see our encounters for my eyes again, and long for them so very much!"
Bella Bengtsson (in the book).



Jenny Nylén has since her childhood suffered from exaggerated anxiety without understanding why. 2014 she consulted a psychiatric clinic and got the diagnose **GAD**, Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

She has met many with the same problem and has been able to understand and to offer empathy when they have shared their worrying and unreasonable anxiety.

Always About Anxiety is a biography with factual material that gives examples from everyday life, together with advice on how to reach a much more harmonious life. It is the hope of the author that the reader recognizing him- or herself in this shall understand that there is help available.

Jenn also wishes to point at many positive traits of the GAD person, like empathy, an analytical and imaginative mind, and creativity. In short: gifts for becoming a happier person!



PsykosyntesForum

GAD



Always About Anxiety - Jenny Nylén

Always About Anxiety

About the diagnose GAD
– a personal story
about anxiety.

Jenny Nylén

SAMPLE

**ALWAYS
ABOUT
ANXIETY**

ALWAYS ABOUT ANXIETY

JENNY NYLÉN



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Foreword

MY NAME IS JENNY NYLÉN and I have worked both as a Careers Officer and as an upper-secondary school teacher in Psychology and Social Sciences for the last 30 years. Despite suffering from dyslexia, I have attained top grades in higher education. I have also been nominated as the best supervisor for trainee teachers in Halland (a county in southern Sweden). I love taking control and I am a speedy and efficient organizer. There is nothing needing to wait to be done – I do everything immediately. At the time, I regarded these personal traits as positive only, but I now understand for the first time in my 50-odd years, that it was about anxiety and control, and these are not traits that allow a person to live in peace and harmony. Thus, I have written this book about the worry and anxiety that I have carried with me throughout my life.

I have always been an anxious person, even though I have never had any reason to be that way. Anxiety and catastrophic thoughts, as well as an enormous need to be in control, have governed my life since I was very young. Two years ago, I sought professional help and was diagnosed with GAD

(General Anxiety Disorder). Those who suffer from GAD, and suffer you really do, have issues with daily worry and experience difficulties in trying to control how they feel. “What if-thoughts” continuously replace each other, which often means that your body is on tenterhooks. When I began my treatment with medicines and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), I worried over approximately 100 different things every day. Nowadays, I am down to about five issues of concern per day. My days have become so much more pleasurable.

During my entire time employed as a psychology teacher, I had never heard anything about the existence of GAD. It was never mentioned in any of the many course books I have used in my work as a teacher. Concepts such as anxiety and panic attacks were described, but nothing at all about people who worry about everything without any reason whatsoever for doing so.

My book is about how I was as a person, and how my life was like two years ago, and how I now feel after my treatment. The text is written with some healthy self-irony and I also describe personal encounters with interesting characters. It is not meant to be a factual study book, but more like

biographical material mixed with descriptive explanations.

The book is meant to be for those who worry themselves about everything and anything, who suffer from continual anxiety, even though the thoughts may be completely hypothetical. Or even for those of you who know someone close to you having these types of behaviors. The aim of the book is recognition, and my goal is for you, the reader, to know that there is help available. Quite simply, it is so completely unnecessary to worry yourself over everything. To no avail.

You will, hopefully, reach the insight that when you have received help to change your thought processes, you can achieve a much more enjoyable life. I am convinced that there are a great number of people out there who are exactly as I was, and who can find help by reading my story.

Chapter 1

UNNECESSARY WORRY - To what use?

AFTER A NIGHT OF TROUBLED SLEEP, after finally managing to fall asleep at 3.30 am, I awaken drowsily at 10.15 am on a Saturday morning. My thoughts immediately go to my children (soon to be 30 years old). How are they? Are they happy? Are they alive and well? Must send a text message and check. I enter both my children's names into my iPhone and ask the question: is everything OK? Thoughts swirl around in my head, what did they do last night, it was a Friday, so they were most probably out late? Maybe something has happened? Shouldn't someone have called? While I wait for an answer from my children, I log on to the newspaper websites for Aftonbladet and Expressen. Are there any news about accidents, assaults, or murder? Help, there is!!! Must check more, whether it happened in Stockholm to which both my son and daughter have moved to study. Yes!!!! Must check the gender and age of those

involved and in which area. The center of Mörby, it says, they couldn't have been there yesterday – right? Must check further on the police website to see if anything else happened last night. Thank goodness - it was a man in his forties, known by the police. So, none of my children, PHEW! But why didn't they respond to my text messages? Could something not mentioned in the newspapers have happened? Assault or rape? Oh my God! They have not answered and it has been more than ten minutes since I sent the messages, I thought.

Something must have happened! But what? My anxiety grows stronger with every minute passing without an answer from either of the children. The feeling is unbearable, I can't focus on anything else. I remain in bed and wait, holding the telephone. I continue to Google different news websites to see if any other horrible events had occurred during the night. But of course! You can check to see if they have logged in on Facebook and written something. I log in to Facebook and I see that my daughter had been at an event with her medical student friends. She wrote yesterday at 11.24 pm, so she was alive then in any case. I hope she wrote that after she had come home. My son had not written anything, apart from his last comment on Monday from the hedge fund he

works at after finishing his studies at the School of Economics in Stockholm. Help! It feels as if something has happened. They should have answered!

The time is now 10.30 am. They ought to be up and awake, they are both so virtuous in everything they do, so they can't just be slumbering in bed. I clasp my hands and pray to God that nothing has happened to my children, and I also include in my other nearest and dearest in my prayers. No one important is allowed be forgotten and, for safety's sake so that God does not think that I am being egoistic, I include the population of the world in my prayer, that nothing horrible has happened to anybody. Time goes by, and my level of anxiety is now a ten on a ten scale. I hear my telephone "pling", my heart is now in my throat, please let it be a positive confirmation. It is my daughter who writes: "Everything is OK, just a bit tired, can't talk right now, are you OK? Kiss". PHEW!!! One child is alive, anyway. I answer quickly: "Everything's great" and click on the red heart emoji.

The children are not, absolutely not, to learn how panicky I am, as I do not wish to burden them with this. But what could have happened to my son? Has he not seemed to be a bit down lately? Stressed and

a bit more irritated than usual? I think that if he just answers, so that I know everything is fine, so that I can focus on something else. There is so much to attend to today, so many decisions to make, and it is important that everything works out well and that no mistakes are made. I remain where I am lying, sweating on my bed, unable to do anything else than to wait for a sign of life from my son. At 11.05 am, my phone plings again. It's my son who says: "everything is OK, been training at the gym". And I reply: "Great here as well" and send the red heart emoji. My anxiety begins to subside and is now down to a seven. Both are alive, but how many horrible things cannot still happen in the future?



SO, LOOKING BACK ON THIS, I can see that there was actually nothing going on to worry about. When I underwent therapy, I was assigned to write down everything which worried me. I then was asked to separate out which were actual worries, and which were hypothetical, i.e. something which only existed in my fantasy. What I learned was to continuously reflect on the cause of my worry. Has anything specific actually happened? If so: is it really something to worry about? Or is it only a catastrophic thought which exists only in my fantasy, which has made my thoughts rush off to

create an infinite number of different scenarios of different catastrophic situations which could occur. The strategy of categorizing the level of worry between 1 and 10 was something I learned during my cognitive therapy. In doing this, it became quite clear that what I was in most cases worried about and which got my level of anxiety to rise, was something which was not based on reality. In reality, really traumatic events seldom occur in life. And just think about the unbelievable amount of negative energy used for no benefit at all. Because you need to realize that you cannot affect what will happen by worrying. My therapist said to me: OK, you are satisfied if your children answer the phone, and that everything is OK with them. But, how do you know that everything is still fine after five minutes? In that case, you will have to check on them every five minutes to be sure. What do you think they will feel about that? He furthermore proposed that I should inform them that I am not going to be in contact with them as often as I have been, but instead to try to allow them to get in contact with me a couple of times per week. And that I should only call them on the telephone if I have some specific reason to talk to them – not just to check if “everything is OK”. In the beginning, when I was trying to break my habit

of sending a text message every day to check to see how they were, my level of anxiety was up to a 10. But, slowly but surely, the level of anxiety began to go down. Nothing had happened, even though I hadn't checked. Conclusion: I cannot influence anything with my continual controlling behavior by telephone calls and sending text messages. And that one definitely cannot continually cling to 30-year old youngsters without making life really difficult for them.

Chapter 2

AVOIDING CATASTROPHE— to choose correctly

I ROLL OUT OF BED and I go out into the kitchen to start the coffee maker for two cups of coffee. I open the fridge and contemplate a long moment as to what to eat for breakfast. Shall I have yoghurt or a cheese sandwich, or maybe just an egg? An egg ought to be the best for my figure, but I have been just so troubled the entire morning, so maybe one ought to indulge oneself with a few cheese sandwiches. It is just so much tastier and should make me feel much happier and this I really deserve, having had so many worries. Dieting will just have to wait until tomorrow. Tonight, I am I going to dine with my best friend whom I have known since we were teenagers. But what shall I eat? What tastes best? What will give me the most value for my money? Best to check the menu before I leave, so that I don't order the wrong thing and regret it later on. The entire visit to the restaurant can go the wrong way. First, I am going

to eat my breakfast and celebrate that my children are safe and well, at least for the moment, and I clasp my hands together to pray once again for them.

After two quick cups of coffee, and five heavily-laden cheese sandwiches, my anxiety begins to rise again. Why do I stuff myself with food so much when I am already too fat? I am never going to lose enough weight to the summer party with my old friends who I have known since my adolescence, at this rate. Best to turn down the invitation! Want them to remember me as a cute girl and not as a fat old lady. Either I decline the invitation immediately, or I begin dieting on Monday. Whichever it will be, I will decide on Monday, I simply can't manage to think about this at the moment.

So, soon it will be time for dinner, I need to check the online menu to see what kind of food the restaurant - which my friend has chosen – has to offer. Oh, how expensive! What should I order so that I don't leave hungry, feel content, and don't have to pay too much? It has to give me value for my money, otherwise I will just suffer from massive amounts of anxiety. The menu at the lovely, small Italian restaurant does not have so

many dishes to choose from. And no pizza, which would have been the safest bet. It tastes good, you become full, and it does not cost an arm and a leg. There are also pasta dishes, but the cheapest costs 165 kronor and is vegetarian. There are also meat and fish dishes, but they cost from 250 kronor and up. Damn! I will have to choose pasta, otherwise it will be too expensive and meat does not agree with me, anyway. And pasta, which is so easy to prepare yourself and is so cheap, they shouldn't price that too high.

But, what if the portions are small, as they normally are in posh restaurants, and then I'll still be hungry. To pay nearly 200 kronor and not be content, my anxiety begins to push inside my chest. Must ask for extra pasta so that I will be content. I will simply have to ask for a large portion of the vegetarian pasta and a glass of water, which should cost just 165 kronor. Or, should I propose a completely different restaurant with better prices, which has pizza and only costs 100 kronor and, in addition, become satisfied. Or what? It will be seen as silly and rude, when it was she who came up with the idea for us to meet and have dinner and some "girl talk". It will probably be fine! Anyway, it's going to be great to catch up!



SO MUCH TIME have I not spent in vain, dedicated to dilly-dallying between everything possible. My brain goes into overdrive to invent and analyze all possible alternatives which exist. Just in order to ensure that the result of the decision will be as good as possible. But quite often, I am not completely happy anyway, even though I have dedicated so many hours thinking to-and-fro. And for what benefit, really? My therapist gave me advice as to this particular predicament as well, to try to be considerably more impulsive. Choose quickly, and maybe become either really satisfied or unsatisfied. Most of all, I should not think so much to and fro, but instead first think, "What is the worst scenario that could happen if I choose wrongly, for example at the restaurant? Is it going to be a catastrophe? Will I break down? Or maybe I would have been just as unhappy if I had dedicated many hours in mulling it over in my thoughts. Many different things can happen which you do not have any control over. What about if the food I had decided on after careful deliberation is sold out when I arrive at the restaurant? Regardless of how much unnecessary time and energy I spend, things can go wrong anyway. Basically, one has to learn to accept the situation

instead of being dissatisfied with the food, learn to enjoy the pleasant company or the beautiful décor. It is necessary to develop positive thoughts in your heavily-burdened brain. Are you not the boss of your brain after all? Or what? If not, it is time to take command!