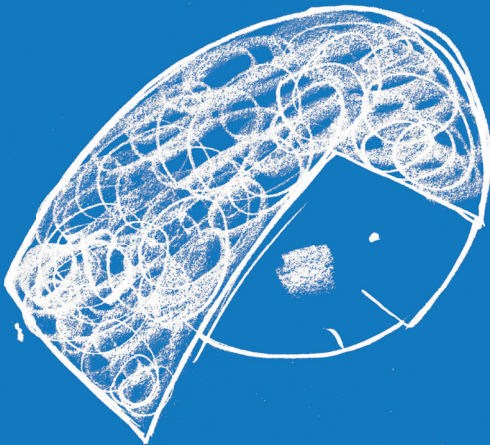


THE 'JUST WORRYING' LABELLING TECHNIQUE

(OR 'SAYING HELLO TO THE WORRY BUT DON'T STOP TO CHAT')

It is often helpful to learn the difference between worrying and helpful problem solving. Worrying involves repetitive thinking, with our thoughts going around in circles. When we worry, anxiety often sneaks in and our mind starts doing a 'dance' around and around with worry and anxiety, but without coming up with any solutions or help. This then makes us worry even more, which leads us to think that we need to think harder and longer about the thing we're worried about, and then we worry even more; and on and on it goes....



The 'Just Worrying technique' technique simply involves you labelling worry (that means, giving it a name and describing it) as 'just worrying' and then bringing your attention back to your breath or to simply change the subject of your thinking.

Every time you catch yourself worrying you just label it again and change the subject. It doesn't matter if you do it 10 times in one minute or if you only realize you have been worrying after a period of 2 hours and then use the technique. The important thing is that you use the technique when you realize that you are worrying.

This technique involves no criticism or anger at yourself, just simple non-judgemental labelling of the thoughts you're having. (Describing what you see, rather than getting involved with it). Therefore it is important that you do not change the label from 'just worrying' to 'don't worry'! This technique is very powerful and most people find that their worrying thoughts quieten down almost totally within a few days. Then they usually start worrying about a week later because they have forgotten about the technique through lack of need to use it. At that point a reminder of the technique is usually enough.

The same technique can be used with other troublesome, spiralling thoughts, using labels such as "just doubting" ("Did I turn the cooker off?") or "just criticizing" ("I'm so stupid!"). This is not about running away from the scary thoughts. Rather it is the non-judgemental labelling, like putting a sticky label on the thought and giving it a name, which is encapsulated in the word "just".

