

Table of Contents

[Acknowledgments, 3](#)

[Introduction, 4](#)

[The Four-Letter Word: FEAR, 9](#)

[The Tragedy in Your Head: Anxiety & Freaking](#)

[Out, 26](#)

[Doubt = Anxiety, 38](#)

[Focus on Self = Anxiety, 52](#)

[Distraction = Anxiety, 66](#)

[Pride = Anxiety \(Part 1\), 81](#)

[Pride = Anxiety \(Part 2\), 97](#)

[Conclusion, 111](#)

[Meet the Author, 113](#)

[Blogs Mandy Recommends, 116](#)

The Anxious Mom

The Anxious Mom

eBook format was developed using blog posts from
a series that originally appeared on the blog

Suburban Stereotype

Copyright © 2015 by Mandy Pagano

Cover design by Mandy Pagano

Image from Canva.com

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Mandy Pagano at

mandyp@suburbanstereotype.com

Acknowledgments

What a fun and amazing experience it has been to weave together my thoughts and all that God has taught me about anxiety over the past year. I'm thankful to a Lord who is patient with me and who gently guides me to His Truth.

I am grateful to my husband and kids, who love me even through my anxiety, to friends who are quick to offer encouragement and prayer when I need it, and to the brave souls who read and edited *The Anxious Mom* (Ginny Hannan, Alison Templin, and Kate Motaung.)

May this eBook be a blessing to all who read it and lead them closer to Christ.

Introduction

I could count on both of my hands...and both of the hands on every person on this planet...how many times I've felt anxious.

It's grown over the past year or so to a point that I knew I had to make a change or I was headed to a breakdown.

God's really been working on my heart. He's been bringing things to my attention and putting them slowly in my path for a while, but lately it has been at break-neck speed.

I have learned so much about fear and anxiety.

The Anxious Mom

A big part of what I've learned is how common anxiety is among us. And most surprisingly, how common it is in women.

Many of us worry about our kids to the point of distraction. Of course, you'd never know that just from looking at us or even from having a casual conversation with us.

No, we're very careful to keep those "crazy" feelings tucked away while we're in public.

We hide behind the illusion of a smiling face, a full social calendar, and Christian buzz words like "blessed" and "faith."

It's usually not until the sun goes down, and the house sits still and quiet, that we allow those

The Anxious Mom

feelings to slowly crawl up our throats and threaten to spill out of us in heaving sobs. Our chests clench and the thoughts that run through our heads are worse than any horror movie we've ever seen.

Even though the details of our thoughts might be different, the feeling is all the same: a sense of being out-of-control. It's a nameless, faceless, unsubstantiated fear about our children's or loved one's safety and well-being.

For so long I have merely held the horror down and kept it at bay. But now...God is getting me ready to look the beast in the eye.

I'm taking this on.

The Anxious Mom

I'm going to look right at it and walk right through it.

I'm scared. Which is almost funny if you think about it: I'm afraid to face my fear...of fear.

But I have to. I need healing and I feel like I need to get these things I'm learning down on paper (so to speak) so someone else may benefit.

For the next several chapters, I'll share with you the posts I wrote about my struggle with anxiety (they appeared on my blog [Suburban Stereotype](#)). Bear with me. Basically, I'll be lying on the "couch" and you'll be the proverbial fly on the wall.

The Anxious Mom

Father, please guide us as we embark on this journey. Please open our eyes and hearts to Your Truths. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Four-Letter Word: F E A R

After posting the introduction on my blog, by the response I received through comments and emails, I could tell that anxiety was an issue that many struggled with. I believe bringing more awareness to and having honest conversations about anxiety can only help us all. I've learned SO MUCH the past several months. I hope this is a help to you if you also struggle with anxiety.

F E A R

What is your stronghold?

What is it that makes you feel like you have plummeted 5 million feet below sea level, with a weight around your ankle and no air tank? What causes your heart to beat too fast and anxious thoughts to race through your mind? What grips you like a bully holding down your arms?

For me, I struggle with a few things.

But the worst, by far, is *fear*.

F.E.A.R.

There's an actual feeling I associate with fear. It's an oppressive, smothering sensation when fear is at its worst.

The Anxious Mom

My fear surrounds harm coming to my kids or myself.

Not only do I stress about common scenarios like one of them falling off the monkey bars or getting hit with a rogue baseball, but I plan ahead with my worry.

Driving sometimes is an exercise in deep breaths and reciting scripture because I wonder if "today" is the day we will be hit head-on by an out-of-control semi or if a construction truck will have neglected to tie down its metal tubes and one will fly off and crash through our windshield. Or, what if someone fails to stop at a red light and I'm T-boned? What if I don't see the train coming? What if the rusty supports on the bridge decide to give way right as

The Anxious Mom

I'm crossing? How will I possibly release all of the kids in time from their seat belts/car seats and swim them all to safety?

And when we make it home safely, I have other things that clutter my mind and take my breath away.

Like how Evangelical Christians are now being considered hate groups. I wonder if that verse in the Bible where Jesus says, "*But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say*" (Matthew 10:19) will become a reality in my lifetime.

Do you see?

The Anxious Mom

It is exhausting being in my head.

Exhausting and unnecessary. And unproductive.

Deuteronomy 31:6: *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

I used to think that verse was God shushing me and stroking my hair while he calmly whispered to me. But then I read something that rocked my world, and not in a mother-holding-her-sleeping-baby kind of "rocked."

No, this was in a meteor-the-size-of-Texas kind.

The Anxious Mom

Joshua 1:9 says "*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*"

My eyes were opened. It's God asking, "Have I not COMMANDED you..."

Commanded you.

This was God saying, "I am not asking you, nor am I suggesting to you, but I am DEMANDING that you not fear." (Mandy paraphrase)

Demanding with authority.

The Anxious Mom

Look at the following definitions for Command:

directing authoritatively, to demand or receive as one's due, to have or exercise direct authority, to dominate as if from an elevated place...

So, yeah....God isn't cooing in our ears, "Shhhh, darlin'. Everything's gonna be okay." (Said with a slight southern drawl.)

No! He is pointing in a "Uncle Sam wants YOU!" manner and TELLING us we are not allowed to fear.

Not. Allowed.

We have been commanded not to fear.

The Anxious Mom

So, no longer can I look at God's directive as merely for my own good, but as a direct order with which I must comply.

I learned some interesting things while reading [Lysa TerKeurst's book, *Unglued*](#). In it, she explained how our bodies react physiologically to fear. Our fight or flight response kicks in and actually stimulates parts of our brain that focus on getting us out of whatever the situation is that is causing the fear or anxiety.

That reaction actually keeps the brain from thinking logically. Therefore, we are not able to think clearly or make wise decisions.

God certainly does not want us making poor decisions. He wants us thinking logically.

The Anxious Mom

So if we allow fear to consume us, if we focus on that anxiety or those things that make us afraid, it interferes with making wise decisions.

Look at 1 Peter 1:13: "*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" NASB.

That word 'prepare' in the beginning literally means to "gird".

What in blue blazes does "gird" mean?

I'm glad you asked. I looked it up. It means this:

Gird:

1. to encircle or bind with a belt or band.

2. to surround; enclose; hem in.

The Anxious Mom

3. to prepare (oneself) for action: He girded himself for the trial ahead.

Peter was telling us to hem in or prepare our minds. How can I possibly prepare my mind or hem in my thoughts when I am allowing fear and anxiety to consume me? How can I expect to make wise choices in the face of frantic thinking?

The short answer is, I can't.

And neither can you.

And that is why God commands us to stop worrying, to stop being afraid. Does He love us and want to keep us from needlessly working ourselves into a lather?

The Anxious Mom

Yes, of course.

BUT...I don't believe that is His main objective when He tells us over 300 times in His Word not to be afraid and not to worry.

I believe it is also because we get in the way of His divine plan when we focus on ourselves and on the things we think we have to worry about.

I liken it to my own experience with my kids. So often, my kids are afraid of something because they are unsure: unsure of how it will really feel or how it will turn out, etc. I know that they have nothing to be afraid of, and I tell them that. While they trust me, they are still afraid because they don't want to experience something that is uncomfortable or

The Anxious Mom

painful. So they expend all kinds of worrying, fretting, fearing, crying, snotting, tantrum-ing, and the like on something that has not happened or may never happen. As a parent, I get frustrated. I wish they would just TRUST ME!

Sound familiar?

I imagine God looking at me thinking the exact same thing.

He tells us to TRUST HIM. He's got this. No matter what it is...sickness, financial worries, relationship struggles, death of a loved one, job troubles, politics...He's got this.

Even the safety and well-being of my children.

The Anxious Mom

Let's go back to 1 Peter 1:13 and look at something else: "keeping sober in spirit." Most of us associate being sober with not being intoxicated or *drunk*. But when I looked up the word 'sober'

I found more than that:

1. not intoxicated or drunk.
2. habitually temperate, especially in the use of liquor.
3. quiet or sedate in demeanor, as persons.
4. marked by seriousness, gravity, solemnity, etc., as of demeanor, speech, etc.: a sober occasion.

Do you see QUIET and SEDATE in demeanor???

I don't know about you, but when I am afraid of something, I am HARDLY quiet and sedate.

The Anxious Mom

I think---*I think*---that my true fear comes from doubting that God really has this.

Ask me: Do I believe He created the world and everything in it in six actual days and rested on the seventh?

Yep.

Did He form man and woman in His likeness?

Yep.

Did He part the Red Sea?

Yep.

The Anxious Mom

Did He flood the entire earth and everyone on it,
and save Noah and his family and two of every kind
of animal?

Yep.

Did He send His only Son to earth to die on a cross,
allow Him to be beaten and crucified to save our
sins and then raise Him again on the third day?

Yep.

Did He create me and know me intimately while I
was still in my mother's womb? Does He know
my every thought and the number of hairs on my
head?

Yep.

The Anxious Mom

Will He be with me every step of the way, and does He have the absolute best in mind for my children?

Um...I'll get back to you.

So while I believe my fear to be about harm coming to my children, I am beginning to realize it's really 1) my doubt in God's promise to be with me every step of the way, all of my life and 2) Satan's attempt to oppress me. He can't have my soul, but he certainly can try to oppress me and make my life miserable here on Earth. He can distract me from God's promise and derail my train of thought so that I am getting in the way of God's plan.

And when I realize both of those things, it infuriates me.

The Anxious Mom

I don't want to give Satan a foothold.

And I surely don't want to disobey a directive from God.

So I will recite Joshua 1:9 and 1 Peter 1:13. I will write them and post them around my house. I will save them as a screensaver to my phone.

And you are welcome to join me if you also struggle with fear. Let's pray for courage and wisdom. God gives abundantly to all who ask (James 1:5.)

And together we can combat this anxiety with God's Word.

The Tragedy in Your Head:

Anxiety & Freaking Out

You wave goodbye one more time before turning to leave. Your daughter smiles and waves frantically before hopping up the bus steps and skipping to her seat. You feel the familiar clutch in your chest. Your eyes fill with tears. As you watch the bus drive down the street, you fight the almost suffocating urge to break down into a full-on sob right there at the bus stop. You're sure that's the last time you will see her. In the span of seconds, you imagine every tragedy possible that could befall her that day: the horrible head-on collision with a tractor trailer that leaves carnage in its wake, the careless driver in the parking lot who sees your daughter running into school a moment too late, the crazed gunman who breaks into the school building ...it all plays out in

your head with vivid detail. Your rational side tells you that you are being ridiculous, but there's another part of you that defies all logic and cannot stop the onslaught of anxiety.

As parents, we have all come to understand that having children is the most fulfilling and yet the most daunting task we have ever taken on. With it comes certain stresses that include having our “hearts walking on the outside” of ourselves. I never understood that phrase until I became a mother.

From the moment that child is placed in your arms, you are single-handedly responsible for his well-being. Every need is yours to meet and the urge to protect and nurture is absolute and urgent. I have

The Anxious Mom

heard it referred to as the “Mama Bear” instinct.

You know in an instant that you would exchange your life for theirs if the situation ever warranted it.

Unfortunately, some of us have fallen prey to taking that a step further. Not only would we exchange our lives for our children if necessary, but we invent scenes in our minds where we manufacture the very thing we fear most: losing our children. Why do we do this? It’s not as if we want that to happen. In fact, we want the exact opposite.

There have been too many times when I’ve watched a scene play out in my head in colors too vivid and details too exact. It’s usually quick, although it feels like a lifetime.

The Anxious Mom

To give you an idea of how this happens to me, one night after I hit “publish” on my first post in this series on anxiety, my 4 year-old son woke up, and I ran upstairs to put him back in bed. The moment I tucked him in and kissed his head, I was bombarded with the awful feeling that tonight could be the last time I kiss him goodnight. My mind started asking, *“What if there’s a fire tonight and he doesn’t survive?”* I was shaken, but I knew that it was just my anxiety flaring up.

While I am far from “cured,” I have at least made progress. I can now tell myself in the midst of an anxiety attack, where I feel like the sky is falling and a loved one’s death is imminent, that it’s only an episode, and I can’t rely on my feelings at that

moment. This isn't easy and some episodes are harder than others.

Anxiety, for me, is a very dark, foreboding, feeling that rushes over me. I feel like doomsday is just around the corner. If my children are going somewhere with my husband, I find myself thinking, *"I'm never going to see them again. I'll miss them so much. My life will be ruined if anything happens to them. What if this is it? What if today is the day?"* And then I start freaking out thinking *"What if this is a premonition?"*

There's this internal argument. One side of me knows that this is a moment in time that will pass. The other side feels like I have to cling to this very

The Anxious Mom

moment for fear that it will be gone...and so will my children.

I used to beat myself up about it. I feared I was crazy. I was able to keep the lid on, but I could always feel it just below the surface, simmering.

One night it dawned on me: Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane hours before He was to be taken, beaten, and crucified. He was visibly disturbed. He was so shaken, in fact, some may even say so *anxious*, that He sweat blood. Knowing that even Jesus was anxious about something gave me peace.

But here are a couple of differences:

The Anxious Mom

Jesus was anxious about something He *knew* was going to happen.

I am typically anxious about something that I *think* is going to happen.

Jesus begged God to take the responsibility from Him.

I beg God to spare my children and keep them safe.

And here's the meat of it...

Jesus said, "Not My will but Yours be done."

I say, "Please don't do that to me, Lord. I'll give you anything you want...just not that."

The Anxious Mom

Once I realized I was doing this--because I think I did it subconsciously--I was able to see that I was offering conditional submission and faith to God. I was raising one hand in the air and shouting *"I'm a sold-out believer, Lord! Anything for You! Use me, Lord!"* and with the other hand, I was hiding my children behind me, out of view from God.

Here is where things can get tricky. I think it is so important to understand that I don't believe God is a God who arbitrarily "takes" things from us. I do not believe God is a God whose ego is so big that if we don't bow to His authority, He will always and heavy-handedly "see to it" that we do.

“But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” Psalm 86:15.

I am also not going to profess to understand God's ways. *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD”* (Isaiah 55:8).

God can and He DOES do anything He wants. I may not fully understand all the whys or hows, but He does. HOWEVER, having said all that, I don't believe God to be heartless and cold. I believe He cares deeply about my heart and about my pain.

I've heard it said before that God is a gentleman and He will not force Himself on anyone. He extends an

The Anxious Mom

invitation and awaits our acceptance. He pursues those He loves, but allows us the option of choosing. I will get into this more later, but understanding that God is a lover who pursues us and who knows us intimately is critical in understanding how to combat anxiety.

Read and take to heart these verses. Even if you've read them a 100 times before, read them again with fresh eyes:

"It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone." Ephesians 1:11, MSG

The Anxious Mom

"Jesus said, 'Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you?'"

Luke 9:24-25, MSG

"When my heart whispered, 'Seek God,' my whole being replied, 'I'm seeking him!'" (Psalm 27:8, MSG)

*"Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray, Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens **when Christ***

displaces worry at the center of your life."

(Philippians 4: 6-7, MSG, emphasis mine).

We're just beginning to scratch the surface of God's love for us and how it plays into curbing anxiety. I can't wait to take you further on this journey!

Doubt = Anxiety

I almost fell out of my seat at church.

God has this amazing little habit of speaking to me in themes and "coincidences" and yesterday, He hit me with a big one.

I had recently written on my friend [Ginny's blog](#) about Fear. To recap, in Joshua 1:9, God says, *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

Remember, I wrote about how that is not just God telling us to resist fear for our own sake, but also because it's frustrating to God when we doubt Him.

The Anxious Mom

Fear interrupts His plan and keeps us from thinking logically and fulfilling what He has for us.

Whether or not we like to admit it, fearing is doubting God. Whether it's doubting His honesty that He will protect us, doubting His ability to protect us, or doubting if He will protect us in the way that we want...it's still doubt. We're wavering.

My pastor drove it home that day in church when he shared with us verses from Isaiah 48:17-18. He said something that stuck with me as he was reading those verses. He said, "You can almost hear God lamenting with His people."

The Anxious Mom

Please read these verses. I am one who often skims over scripture in posts because they are familiar, but these verses are what sent me reeling.

"This is what the Lord says--your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

*I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, **your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before me.**"*

Did you see that?

The Anxious Mom

God says in Joshua that He commanded us to not worry.

Then in Isaiah, he reminds us that because we did not follow His command, we have no peace.

This has been, by far, the hardest Truth for me to grasp: my anxiety--my fear--is a direct result of my doubt, my faithlessness (or wavering faith.)

I find myself uttering the same words the man in Mark 9:24 did when he said, *"I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

I'm there! I'm constantly crying out that prayer to God. I am double-minded and it drives me crazy. And that day in church and reading Isaiah 48, I realize it drives God crazy, too.

The Anxious Mom

Please don't misunderstand what I am saying. I am not, by any stretch of the imagination, proclaiming that all you have to do is "believe" and everything is perfect. I realize there are different levels of anxiety and different triggers. Many people require medical attention. Many require therapy and intervention.

I do believe that God can do anything and heal anyone of any affliction. And while He most certainly can and has used miraculous, supernatural, immediate methods by which to do so, I also believe that sometimes He does that using ordinary, everyday people like doctors and therapists. Maybe to bring about a revival in someone else or to make His strength perfect in someone else's weakness.

Also...I think it could be easy to read this and take away that if you are a "better Christian" you will not have anxiety.

That is not what I am saying and could not be further from the truth.

The Bible is very clear that we cannot do anything to achieve perfection (Romans 3:23), or even come close. If that were the case, Christ would not have had to die on the cross (John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21).

We are flawed human beings and we are all flawed in unique ways, but one way many of us have in common is in being anxious.

The Anxious Mom

I am anxious when I fear for my children's safety. I am anxious because I don't want them to experience pain. And if I'm being truthful here, because I don't want to experience pain.

Most people don't.

But, a very ugly and hard truth is that we are not on this planet to be shielded from pain. We are not guaranteed a painless life. God does promise us in Jeremiah 29:11 that He has plans to prosper us and not to harm us, and He says that to our children as well, but I don't believe that He always means that in earthly terms. Sometimes we will experience things that are allowed in order to fulfill His purpose and/or to refine us or our children.

The Anxious Mom

Here's where I go back to not always understanding God's purpose and I want to fight Him tooth and nail. We are called to take up our cross. Matthew 16:24 shows Jesus telling His disciples *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

And when I really think about these words, I realize that Jesus said these things knowing what He was going to face. He knew that He was literally going to take up a cross and be beaten, suffer and be humiliated.

And die.

The Anxious Mom

He isn't asking us to take a walk in the park with Him. He's asking us to be willing to go through everything He did.

And then, as I fret and worry about whether or not something is going to happen to my children, and I beg God to spare them, the following verse, also from Matthew, echoes in my mind,

"For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" Matthew 16:25.

Of note? He says whoever wants to save his life will lose it.

He doesn't say whoever *wants* to lose his life...

The Anxious Mom

We don't have to want to suffer, and we don't have to like it.

But we do have to be willing to follow Jesus at any cost.

And not in our own strength.

God tells us He's got this. He is the One who will get us through.

2 Corinthians 12:9: *"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."*

The Anxious Mom

This isn't going to happen easily and it may not happen overnight.

And the thing is...as I struggle with letting go, I have told myself something that I don't know to be true. I have convinced myself that if I say to God, "Okay, God...whatever it takes! Use me! Not my will but Yours be done!"

That He will take my kids.

While I don't know that to be true, I also don't know it to be *not* true.

But I do know that God wants me to trust Him--to trust that He has me in His hand even when things

The Anxious Mom

are ugly and that someday, even with tragedy, it will be okay, and I'll understand.

And He wants me to stop focusing my energy on something that may never come to be and grieving something that has not happened.

We all have weaknesses, some more difficult than others.

Anxiety happens to be one of mine, and it's a doozy!

But Christ is refining me in this. My feet are being held to the fire and I am being pushed deeper into the Word for understanding and peace.

I pray for all of us that we can continue to put one foot in front of the other and walk next to God as He handles the real heavy stuff, as He tells us to trust Him and to Believe Him--even if it doesn't all make sense and even when it may not be what we would choose.

Father, please wrap Your arms around all of us who suffer with anxiety and worry and fear. You know we aren't perfect, and You know that as flawed people, we fall short so often. But please help us overcome this often debilitating infliction. Please grant us Your peace and please fill our hearts with trust and faith. Please help us to meditate on the verses that tell us how much You love us and that You have our good in mind. Please release us from this fear that keeps us from

The Anxious Mom

focusing on whole-heartedly serving You. I pray that You will be with every single person who reads this post, that they will feel Your presence, that they will seek You to calm their anxious thoughts, and that they will lean on You when they feel hopeless, panicked and fearful. In Jesus name, Amen.

Focus on Self = Anxiety

I was vacuuming and I had a thought that stopped me.

While I was mindlessly running the sweeper over the carpet, I was thinking--as usual--about my struggle with anxiety and that awful feeling that takes over from time to time without warning.

THAT agitation and uncomfortable feeling that makes me feel like I can't sit still, like I can't close my eyes for fear of what may happen when I'm asleep and unguarded. THAT feeling that something bad is going to happen and "the other shoe is going to drop,"--THAT regret that I anticipate should something happen to my kids before I tell them one more time that I love them.

And then I remembered something I'm learning in James 4:8: "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*"

The Message version shows a great picture of how we should be when we are feeling at our absolute lowest with anxiety:

"Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet."

And as I was absent-mindedly vacuuming up dust bunnies, it hit me: How much time must I spend on worry and being anxious? How much focus do I give to those negative parts of my life? How much closer would I be to overcoming this struggle if I stopped adding fuel to the fire?

Is it really as simple as focusing on God?

Worry = stress = worry = doubt = worry = stress =
worry = doubt = worry....

You get the idea.

Have you heard the phrase "Starve the beast"?

Maybe in a political sense you have, but there is so
much truth to those three little words.

Even think about feeding animals or birds. What
happens when you consistently give them food?
They grow to expect it and come back asking for
more!

The Anxious Mom

What we feed will grow and come back asking for more.

It's the same for our anxious thoughts.

Again...let me stop right here and remind you that I understand there are times when professional help is in order. If you ever think about hurting yourself or someone else, you need to seek professional attention immediately. There is no shame in seeking help. A list of resources can be found [HERE](#).

Go with me here...

What would happen if we gave more time and brain space to thinking about God and less to thinking about all that worries us?

What if we took these verses to heart?

"Because you have satisfied me, God, I promise to do everything you say. [Remember God's command not to worry?] I beg you from the bottom of my heart; smile, be gracious to me just as you promised.

When I took a long careful look at your ways, I got back on my feet on the trail you blazed.

I was up at once, I didn't drag my feet, was quick to follow your orders. The wicked hemmed me in-- there was no way out - but not for a minute did I forget your plan for me.

The Anxious Mom

I get up in the middle of the night to thank you; your decisions are so right, so true--I can't wait till morning!

I'm a friend and companion of all who fear you, of those committed to living by your rules.

Your love, God, fills the earth!

Train me to live by your counsel." (Psalm 119: 57-64, MSG)

I have spent too many nights lying awake worrying when I should have been counting my blessings and thanking God.

The Anxious Mom

What if I purposely set out to openly thank God for His blessings?

What if I consciously trained my thoughts on Him and His ways and trusting Him rather than worrying about what might happen?

What if I poured the love He has given me into someone else?

What if I stopped focusing so much on me and started focusing more on Him?

Something Beth Moore said has stayed with me for quite a while.

She said (and I paraphrase) **even those who think bad things about themselves constantly are still constantly thinking about themselves.**

Isn't that the truth?!

She may have meant it more in the regard of women who disparage themselves, but I think the same thing could be said about anxiety and worry.

I think it's time to start being purposeful with what we are taking in, what we are putting out, and what we allow in the prime real estate of our minds.

How many blessings are we missing out on because we are paralyzed with fear and cannot take a step?

The Anxious Mom

How many opportunities to minister to others are we missing because we are wrapped up in ourselves and our worries and fears?

I almost don't want to know how many opportunities have been missed because I simply did not trust God enough not to worry.

Yet I am starting to allow myself the thought that my anxiety may never fully go away.

Paul prayed in 2 Corinthians 12:

"Because of the extravagance of those revelations, and so I wouldn't get a big head, I was given the gift of a handicap to keep me in constant touch with my limitations. Satan's angel did his best to get me

The Anxious Mom

*down; what he in fact did was push me to my knees.
No danger then of walking around high and mighty!
At first I didn't think of it as a gift, and begged God
to take it remove it. Three times I did that, and then
he told me,*

My grace is enough; it's all you need.

My strength comes into its own in your weakness.

*Once I heard that I was glad to let it happen. I quit
focusing on the handicap and began appreciating
the gift. It was a case of Christ's strength moving in
my weakness. Now I take limitations in stride, and
with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down
to size--abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I
just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get,
the stronger I become." (v 1-12, MSG)*

The Anxious Mom

No one expects us to walk around literally cheering that we struggle with anxiety. But God is expecting us to draw near to Him and rely on Him to get us through it.

I'm finding that in my weakest moments, when it's hardest to believe or trust or draw near to God, that's when I grow the most, and that's when He reveals Himself to be worthy of my trust.

God can and will be there for us. We just have to step forward in faith.

"The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see." (Hebrews 11:1-2a).

The Anxious Mom

It's our handle on what we can't see.

Anxiety, by my definition, is my fear of what I can't see. What I think might be. What I am unsure of.

What I am afraid will happen.

And right here, God is telling me to be faithful. To trust. To believe in Him.

"Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you." Deuteronomy 31:6

Let's pray about that together:

The Anxious Mom

Father, it is SO HARD to trust and believe when everything inside us is frantic and scrambled and unsure. You are not a God of confusion, but a God of order, so we must realize these feelings are not from You. Your feelings are of peace that passes understanding, even in the midst of a huge storm.

Father, anxiety and worry is like a pest that slowly eats away at us. Every moment spent in worry is another moment taken from You. It's another moment we are not believing in and trusting You and Your Word. This saddens You, but You are also merciful and You love us. You are so willing and eager to give us rest and peace...help us to know how to receive that. Please calm our anxious thoughts and guide us to You and Your security.

The Anxious Mom

Thank You that You never let us down or leave us.

In Jesus's name, Amen.

Distraction = Anxiety

I am practically BURSTING to share with you what I learned just recently.

If I could paste the Beth Moore video from her study RIGHT HERE I would.

Except that's illegal.

So, instead, if you have the opportunity, go [HERE](#) and purchase the video for Session 6. Even if you have not followed along with the rest of the study, this video is AMAZING, it can stand alone, and it's only \$4.99!

By now, it is NO SECRET that I struggle with fear and anxiety. At least, it isn't if you've read any of

The Anxious Mom

my posts in The Anxious Mom Series or if you have read any other of the preceding chapters.

It felt like Beth Moore looked right through my laptop screen and spoke directly to me.

So today, consider my words as being a message directly to you...you the one who struggles with fear and uncertainty and anxiety.

If you have your Bible, please open to Philippians 4:6-7. If you don't have a Bible, it's posted below or you can look online at Biblegateway.org.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the

peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Look at the Message version too:

"Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praise shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life."

If you're like me, you have read and re-read those verses until your eyes glaze, and they almost lose their meaning.

The Anxious Mom

But, let's look at it the way Beth Moore presented it...

When Jesus was tempted by Satan, how did Jesus make Satan run away?

By speaking the Word of God to Satan.

There is power in speaking the Word of God out loud!

Why does God want us to pray to Him when He knows everything we're thinking, everything we're going through? I mean, He can read our minds!

God can, but Satan can't.

Beth pointed out that there is power in speaking God's Word out loud so that those in the Heavenly realms can hear you. Satan hears you.

And what he is hearing is our prayers of thanksgiving. Our praise. Our reaffirmation that God is sovereign and that He is Lord. Those verses say to pray when we are anxious and offer thanksgiving. That opened my eyes. Instead of just praying, like I usually do:

"Father, please remove this anxiety from me. Please keep my children safe. Please make me more like You..."

I need to be listing out all that I am thankful for and all that God has done for me.

The Anxious Mom

I think it's for many reasons.

Not only is it offering God the praise He rightfully deserves, but it is also, again, reaffirming that He is sovereign and He is my Lord.

Also...it reminds me of all the times God has delivered. It puts in the forefront of my mind all the times I have been fearful or unsure or even unsuspecting, yet God has come through. And that He is trustworthy.

It's as much for us as it is to glorify God and to shame Satan.

Beth also drove this home...

The Anxious Mom

Look at Phil 4:6 again...

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in **everything...**"*

God tells us to pray about everything.

Everything. And do it out loud!

And look at this verse from Daniel:

*"And when Daniel was lifted from the [lion's] den, no wound was found on him, **because he had trusted in His God.**"* (Daniel 6:23b, emphasis mine).

Look also at verse 27 of the same chapter:

The Anxious Mom

"He [God] rescues and He saves."

2 Timothy 4:18:

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His Heavenly Kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

I believe that anxiety is a part of spiritual warfare and is a way Satan attacks us and tries to derail our focus from our ministry (and we all have a ministry) and from honoring, trusting, and glorifying God.

Look with me at 1 John 4: 16b, 18.

THIS BLOWS MY MIND!

The Anxious Mom

"God is love...There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." (NIV)

*"God is love...There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life--fear of death, fear of judgment--is one not yet fully formed in love."
(MSG)*

Satan operates using fear and shame and guilt. God operates using love and forgiveness and grace. When those feelings of fear and anxiety rise up and threaten to take our very sanity, our joy, we need to recognize that those are methods Satan uses. Not God. We need to speak out loud to God,

The Anxious Mom

offering Him praise and thanksgiving, recounting--
out loud--all the ways He has provided for us, been
there for us, blessed us.

Let's not be like Peter when he took a few steps on
water, while watching Jesus, and when the feelings
of fear stepped in, took his eyes off the Lord and got
distracted, and sunk.

But if we *are* like Peter, and we find ourselves
sinking and focusing on the fear rather than God,
let's at least reach out for Jesus, like Peter did, and
grab His hand for all we are worth. Let's grab it and
cling to it as He lifts us back into the boat.

(Matthew 14:22-36).

The Anxious Mom

These next two parts grab my heart and make me so excited and so thankful for Jesus being who He is:

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water, they started freaking out (v 26). Verse 27 makes me tear up, "*But Jesus was quick to comfort them, "Take courage! It's me. Don't be afraid."*"

Jesus didn't wait until they said the "magic words" or roll His eyes at them annoyed.

He was quick to comfort them.

Peter felt so good, he hopped out of the boat and started walking to Jesus on the water.

The Anxious Mom

But he started to panic and sink because he got distracted, took his eyes off Jesus, and let fear take over. Yet, look at what he did next. He cried out, "*Master, save me!*"

How many times have we cried out in the midst of our misery, in the midst of an anxiety attack, in the midst of thinking something bad is going to happen?

You know what happened?

"Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, '*Faint-heart, what got into you?*'" (Matthew 14:30b-31)

The Anxious Mom

What is your lion's den? What boat are you
struggling to step out of?

Mine is anxiety and worry and fear that something
will happen to my kids.

Will I be lifted out with no wound, because I trusted
God to protect me, or will I be eaten alive by my
own wavering faith and fear?

Or will I lift up my hand to Jesus and take a hold of
it with all that I am and all that I have?

Jesus is asking all of us, "*Faint-heart, what got into
you?*"

The Anxious Mom

It's not an accident those words were recorded for us to read. God is meticulous. He intended for us to read about the disciples' fear and how Jesus was quick to offer support and to remove that fear.

He is offering that to us as well.

Father, first of all we praise You for being all that You are...perfect, kind, loving, just, gracious, and merciful. We admire the beauty of the world You created. We thank you for all the blessings You have given us, some that we don't even recognize. Thank You, Father, for Your unfailing love and Your quickness to reach out Your hand to us. Please don't let us hesitate even a moment longer to reach out to You. Please let us feel You grabbing our

The Anxious Mom

hand and saying that You're here for us. Please help us keep our eyes fixed firmly on You and not on the waves and storms of life. We need You. We love You. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen.

Pride = Anxiety (Part 1)

"I trust you, God...but..."

I've said that so many times. There have been slight variations, but it's always the same idea: I prayed to God for something and told Him how I trusted Him...but still worried He wouldn't come through.

Or...worried He wouldn't come through the way I wanted Him to.

I've come across two stories recently that tie together so beautifully with this theme.

First is Jacob and Esau.

The Anxious Mom

I was at a women's retreat that taught the story of Jacob & Esau. It's an "oldie but a goodie," and so many have heard it.

But there is SO MUCH that I had never seen in those chapters before.

If you struggle with anxiety, I hope you'll get the same things out of them that I have. They've been a huge comfort and wake up call.

Jacob and Esau were twins. When they were born, Esau was born first with Jacob holding onto his brother Esau's foot. He was named "Jacob" which means "He grasps the heel or he deceives." Perhaps where we get the phrase today of "he was pulling my leg" to infer someone was telling a lie.

The Anxious Mom

For his entire life, Jacob was angry that Esau was the oldest son, and therefore received the father's blessing. Jacob (and his mother) put together a scheme to trick the father (Isaac) into giving Jacob the blessing, thus stealing it from his brother Esau.

Jacob was obsessed with receiving his father's blessing. He was so obsessed, that he hatched a plan to deceive his father, and once Esau found out, he set out to kill Jacob after their father died. Their mother sent Jacob away for his own safety, where he lived with his uncle for 20 years.

And I thought I had family drama.

It wasn't until those 20 years later that he was traveling back home and heard that Esau was

coming after him with 400 men. Esau intended to settle the score. Apparently, two decades had done nothing to dampen his anger.

It's in the next few hours--the hours between Jacob finding out Esau was coming after him and when he and his brother finally meet face-to-face-- that I learned more about myself and my anxiety than I ever could have imagined I would.

During that time away, Jacob had been very successful and had plenty. The blessing his father had given him, even though it was given under false pretenses and not meant for Jacob, was still over Jacob. Coming home, Jacob had much in the way of animals, family, and servants.

The Anxious Mom

As Jacob got word that Esau was coming for him...with an army and full of pent-up rage from the past 20 years...

"In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups..." Genesis 32:7

In great fear and distress.

The Message version says:

"Jacob was scared. Very scared. Panicked, he divided his people..."

He was terrified. That night, he prayed to God reminding Him how He had promised to prosper

The Anxious Mom

Jacob and make his descendants "like the sand in the sea".

After he prayed, he tried to sleep. And apparently, the night got the better of him with too much time to simmer and think.

Instead of resting in the promises of God, the very promises he just recounted to the Lord Himself, Jacob hatched a plan.

In his plan, he divided up over 500 of his best animals as a peace offering to Esau. He divided his family up in a certain way and rehearsed with them what to say when they encountered Esau's men. Some may call this a bribe...and I think I will.

He's got this.

He knows God has promised to protect him, but just in case...

And then he stays back at camp after sending all of his livestock and his wives and maidservants ahead of him.

It's there that Jacob wrestles with the angel of God. From out of nowhere, out of the dark, Jacob is attacked and wrestled with this angel all night.

"When the man [the angel] saw that he could not overpower him [Jacob], he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man."

Then the man demanded that Jacob let him go.

I think in that moment, it became clear to Jacob that this wasn't an ordinary man. He realized that the man he had been wrestling with all night had the power to kill him in one touch.

Jacob demands the man's blessing.

And the angel does the craziest thing...he asks Jacob what his name is.

Now, stop with me here and realize something...

If this man is an angel...and I think Jacob was quickly brought up to speed with that

information...why is he asking Jacob what his name is? Surely, he had some idea who he was?

The next few lines tell us:

"'Jacob', he answered.

Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'"

You see, Jacob--this man who for his whole life had counterfeited everything about himself, even going so far as to steal his brother's identity and blessing, who was even named "Deceiver," had finally come face-to-face with reality.

He wrestled with that angel until the angel forced him to admit who he really was.

No pretenses. No counterfeiting. No lies.

Just truth.

It wasn't until that point, when Jacob was at his lowest physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, that he was able to acknowledge before God who he really was.

Because the angel had wrenched his hip out of the socket, Jacob had a limp. I'm sure every step was excruciating.

The next part of this story shows Jacob's family still separated out in a methodical manner.

The Anxious Mom

But Jacob is at the front.

As he sees his brother coming on the horizon with his 400 men, he walks on ahead...and he bows before his brother along the way 7 times.

He bows.

And he bows.

And he bows.

And he bows.

And he bows.

And he bows.

The Anxious Mom

And he bows.

Each step like a knife through his hip.

Each labored movement as he lowers himself to the ground and struggles to stand back up reminding him of the wrestling match he had with the angel.

Each searing pain met with gritted teeth and a determination that he knew now who he really was.

And who he wasn't.

And do you know what happened?

Verse 4 of Genesis 32 says,

"But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept."

Jacob then presented the gifts he had prepared to Esau.

And it's when I read those words that I realize I am Jacob.

I often take matters into my own hands when I don't trust God to handle it or to fulfill His promises.

When I don't like the path I see myself on, I change course to something I want instead of going the way I'm meant.

The Anxious Mom

When I fear that things aren't going my way, I pray to God for His protection and guidance with one breath and devise my own plan with the other.

Like Jacob, when I get wind that trouble is headed my direction, I want to trust God, but I doubt God's sincerity or willingness to follow-through.

I forget or set aside His sovereignty in favor of my comfort and peace of mind.

But, like Jacob, in an effort to feel more secure, I step outside of trusting God, and that's when I lose all comfort and peace of mind.

When I try to be someone I'm not...in many cases, that's God...I lose my real identity.

The Anxious Mom

When I go the way God wants me to go...like Jacob finally did when he walked ahead of everyone else...that's when I find the greatest courage and peace, even in the midst of pain.

We may not wrestle with an actual angel, but how many of us wrestle God in our minds? How many of us refuse to let God tell the story and direct the show, and acknowledging before Him who we really are?

And, more importantly, who God really is.

How many of us don't trust God to really protect us and be there for us and prosper us?

The Anxious Mom

I am raising my hand and waving it frantically in the air!

I don't.

But here I come, limping, ready to give this gift to God. The gift of control--or the illusion that I have it.

I'm ready to give it back and tell him I am Jacob.

In that moment, when I fully acknowledge who I am before God, He will tell me who I have become.

I am Israel. Because I have wrestled with man and God.

Pride = Anxiety (Part 2)

In the last chapter, I shared about Jacob & Esau and how reading that story with fresh eyes helped me see how it relates to my anxiety.

One Sunday I was floored by reading the story of Naaman in church.

Seriously, it blows me away when something from the Old Testament relates so closely to my life.

Naaman is found in the book of 2 Kings, chapter 5.

Naaman was a Man's Man. He was a highly decorated soldier.

The Bible says:

"Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but..."

And the next part overshadows all the medals of honor, all the glorious battle wins, and all the accolades from superiors.

"...he had leprosy."

Leprosy is a horrible disease. It can cause, among many things, loss of feeling in hands and feet, fingers and toes, softened bones that break very easily, the nose bone to degenerate and detach from the face, and open, running sores. Naaman, the

mighty warrior, knew this was what lay ahead for him.

His wife's servant girl suggested that he go see Elisha, a prophet of God, to be healed.

So, Naaman got a letter of recommendation from the king of Aram and traveled to see Elisha.

When Naaman got to Elisha's door, Elisha sent a messenger to tell Naaman what to do to be healed: Go strip naked and dip in the Jordan River seven times.

That's it. Easy Peazy.

To say Naaman was ticked is an under-statement.

The Anxious Mom

Verse 11 says, *"But Naaman went away angry..."*

The Message version gives a better visual:

"Naaman lost his temper. He turned on his heel saying, 'I thought he'd personally come out and meet me, call on the name of God, wave his hand over the diseased spot, and get rid of the disease.

The Damascus River, Abana and Pharpar are cleaner by far than any of the rivers in Israel. Why not bathe in them? I'd at least get clean.' He stomped off, mad as a hornet." (Verses 11-12)

The NIV finishes verse 12 with, "So he turned and went off in a rage."

Lost his temper...

The Anxious Mom

Stomped off...

Mad as a hornet...

Went off in a rage...

This sounds too familiar. I am embarrassed to admit how many times I've stomped off like a toddler, angry that things didn't go the way I wanted them to.

He was so angry and walking at such a pace that his servants had to rush after him. Verse 13 says, "*But his servants caught up with him and said, 'Father, if the prophet had asked you to do something hard and heroic, wouldn't you have done it? So why not this simple 'wash and be clean'?'*"

Bam!

Did that hit you between the eyes like it did me?

Naaman was used to entire cities falling at his feet
in battle.

He had accolades by the truck-load from superiors
and noble persons.

His knee bowed to only one man on the planet and
that was the king of Aram.

There was no battle he hadn't conquered.

So, when Elisha could not even be bothered to come
see this great man, Naaman was offended.

When Elisha dared to suggest this warring giant dip himself in one of the filthiest rivers around...Naaman was incensed.

Naaman even said, *"I thought he'd personally come out and meet me, call on the name of God, wave his hand over the diseased spot, and get rid of the disease."*

You see, Naaman had a plan. He had a preconceived notion about how this was all going to go down.

In his mind, Elisha would be wooed in his presence, like everyone else always was, and fall all over himself to heal Naaman. According to Naaman's

plan, Elisha would majestically wave his hand over Naaman, say a prayer, and voila! All better.

Instead, Elisha zeroed right in, bulls-eye, on Naaman's pride, which was massive.

Being required to strip naked, removing his royal clothing and battle armor, and dip in a filthy river not once or twice, but seven times...unthinkable.

And humiliating.

His servants brought up a great point, though (and I wonder if they did so nervously). They pointed out that Naaman would have gladly done something "hard" or maybe something "showy" to be healed.

The Anxious Mom

Something that exemplified Naaman's strength and prowess.

But the idea of stripping down and completely humbling himself was too much.

Anybody feeling this with me?

Finally, after his servants appealed to him, he went down to the Jordan River and stripped naked. He walked into the water and dipped himself seven times.

And he was healed.

His life was transformed in an instant.

The Anxious Mom

His once broken, oozing skin was *"restored and became clean like that of a young boy"* (verse 14b).

I am so much like Naaman.

I worry and pray and beg for healing, but when God tells me what to do, I fight Him.

I say, *"No, Lord, Not that. Heal me this way!"*

"Don't make me strip down and humble myself in your sight and in man's sight, Lord. Don't let me look weak and frail, Lord."

But, like Naaman now and like Jacob in the last chapter, God requires that we humble ourselves. He tells us to strip ourselves of any pretense and any

The Anxious Mom

false bravado, any strength that comes from ourselves.

"My grace is sufficient for you," says the Lord, "My power is made perfect in weakness."

What is holding you back today?

What causes you anger or anxiety or resentment?

Is there anything you're holding onto because you want to do it your way?

I am learning that when I give up my desire for control, that's when I feel most at peace and most confident.

The Anxious Mom

If I don't know where I'm going, be sure I will
follow the guy with the map.

Jesus has the map.

He's telling us that He's got this.

Whatever it is we're afraid of: loss, harm, sickness,
injury, pain, humility...

We will never feel peace until we hand over control
of the outcome to Him.

Pray with me?

*Father, too often, we are so stuck in wanting to do
things our own way. Please forgive us for doubting
You. Please forgive us for going off the trail You*

have already blazed for us. Please give us confidence and trust in You. I pray that You will give peace and comfort to those going through loss. I pray that You will consume them with Your presence and Your peace. I pray that You will give them assurance that even though they don't know where they are going--or maybe even where they are--that You do. Letting go and letting You lead is the only way to arrive. Thank You so much for caring for us and for understanding that we, as humans, are so limited with our trust and understanding at times. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Anxious Mom

*Are you struggling with anxiety, worry or fear?

Please feel free to reach out to me by email mandyp {at} suburbanstereotype {dot} com. I struggle with anxiety so badly, but as I have written this series, it has alleviated so much. God is teaching me that He is the answer for my anxiety.

Sometimes professional intervention is necessary.

There is no shame in seeking help. Click [HERE](#) for a list of resources.

Conclusion

It's been almost exactly a year since I began attacking the subject of my own anxiety and combing through God's Word to see what His thoughts were on the subject. While I would be lying to say I'm "cured," I can confidently tell you that my baseless fear and rampant, debilitating anxiety now has an underscore of a faith I didn't understand before.

I still experience anxiety. It's not as often as it used to be, but it's still there. I find my anxious feelings come mostly at night, but also in the face of new situations or situations that I have little control over.

Now, when I feel an episode coming on, I can go to that place inside where I rely on God's promise to

The Anxious Mom

never leave me or forsake me and trust that He will take care of me no matter what happens. In the moment during an attack, I feel like I'm hanging onto those promises with a slippery thread of hope, but I remind myself that God's Word tells me that *He is holding onto me.*

*“For I am the Lord your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear;
I will help you” (Isaiah 41:13).*

Meet the Author



Mandy Pagano lives with her husband Joe and their six children in a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She homeschools her four oldest, freelances in graphic design and virtual assisting, acts as the Coordinator of her local MOPS group, teaches preschoolers at church, and has blogged her heart out for the past five years at [Suburban Stereotype](#).

The Anxious Mom

Mandy began a women's online ministry in 2012 and continues to reach women all over the world with six other fabulous ladies at [Deliberate Women](#). It is their goal to live a life of faith in God with purpose and diligence.

Find them on Facebook [HERE](#).

Find them on Twitter [HERE](#).

Find them on Pinterest [HERE](#).

Through her love of the Lord, her desire to reach women everywhere with His love, and her passion to share with them that they have purpose and value, Mandy co-planned the first ever women's conference at her church ([Journey By Grace](#)) in October of 2014. The What's Your Story? Women's Conference welcomed over 100 women for a 2-day experience of finding and receiving

God's love, grace, and forgiveness. Because it was so well-received, Mandy is again co-planning the second annual conference for October 2015:

Invitation to be Authentic. (Find more information about the conference [HERE](#).)

Mandy continues to pursue God's very best for herself and is amazed at how He continues to challenge and grow her and use such a cracked vessel as herself for His glory.

Connect with Mandy on Social Media:

Facebook [HERE](#).

Twitter [HERE](#).

Instagram [HERE](#).

Pinterest [HERE](#).

Google+ [HERE](#).

Read more of Mandy's writings [HERE](#).

Blogs Mandy Recommends

[Deliberate Women](#)

[Joy from Grace](#)

[About Midnight](#)

[Overcomer Outreach](#)

[Ungrind Webzine](#)

[Natalie Snapp](#)

[Women Living Well](#)

[The Time-Warp Wife](#)

[Comfy in the Kitchen](#)

[A Walk in Faith](#)

