

3 Steps to Worrying Less

Everybody worries. Grown-ups do it and kids do it, too. But what should you **do** about it? Whether your worries are big or small, you can take these 3 steps:

1. Try to figure out what you're worried about.
2. Think about ways to make the situation better.
3. Ask for help.

1. Figure it out.

Sometimes, you will know exactly what you're worried about. Other times, you might not know exactly what's bugging you. For instance, you might be worried about a teacher who seems mean. But maybe what's really bothering you is that you're having trouble with math. If you get some help with math, that teacher might seem just fine.

Some problems, like family problems, are big and have a lot of parts. That can make it tough to zero in what the problem is or to pick one part of the problem to try and solve. But being able to focus on your problem – or at least part of it – is the first step to taking action. If you're having trouble figuring out what worries you, skip to Step 3 and get some help from a parent or another person you trust.

2. Think of ways to make it better.

There is almost always something you can do to help you feel less worried. Sitting there worrying is no fun and it probably won't solve your problem. But switching to an action mode can help you feel more hopeful.

Grades at school are often a top worry for kids. If that's your concern, ask yourself these questions:

- Why are grades important? What do they mean to me?
- How do I study? Do I review my notes even when there isn't a test the next day? Do I have a good place to do my homework? Have I tried different ways of studying, such as rewriting notes, using flashcards, and working with a study buddy?

If your worry is about a fight you had with a friend, you might write down all the actions you could take – from writing the person a note to inviting your friend over for a game of basketball. Should you apologize for whatever happened between the two of you?

Once you have a list of possible actions, you can select the one you think is most likely to get your friendship back on track.

But what if you can't think of anything to do to make your particular problem better? Then it's time to jump to Step 3 (it's the next step anyway) and ask someone for help.

3. Ask for help.

Worrying can make you feel lonely. When you are worried, it can help to find someone to talk to. Sometimes people say, "Why should I bother? He/she can't do anything about it." But here are 2 reasons to give it a shot anyway:

1. You don't know for sure that no one can help until you share your feelings and let the person try to help.
2. Just telling someone what's bothering you can make you feel a little better. Afterward, you're not alone with your worries and whomever you told (parent, sister, brother, friend, counselor) is now thinking about how to help you.

A Final Word About Worry

Did you know worry is not all bad? If you weren't worried (at least a little) about that test, you might not study for it. And if you weren't worried about getting sunburned, you might not wear your sunscreen.

But some kids worry so much that it keeps them from doing the stuff they need and want to do. If that sounds like you, you know what to do by now: Turn to good old Step 3 and ask someone for help.

Visit KidsHealth.org for more information on this and other children's health topics.

Important Note: All information provided is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your child's doctor.