

The *Vaporize Your Problems* Book Series
Little Books with Big Solutions

VAPORIZE
YOUR
ANXIETY

Without Drugs or Therapy

TOM STONE

How to use this book

This book will provide you with tools and techniques you can start using *today* that will liberate you from the grip of anxiety, without the use of drugs or traditional therapy. My experience guiding many hundreds of people with these techniques has demonstrated that relief from anxiety and worry can occur within minutes of learning and using them. Although they are probably very different from anything you've experienced before, they are quite easy to learn. And as you'll see, once you begin practicing them, a whole new world will open up to you, allowing you to experience more joy, fulfillment, and success than you ever thought possible.

You see, when powerful emotional problems are literally vaporized, it becomes possible, perhaps for the first time in your life, to step away from your suffering. This is a profound experience because many of us are so completely identified with our suffering. When you're free of it, you become present for life's greatest gift: the true experience of who and what you really are. You'll suddenly find that you don't spend time *questioning* who you are any more, so much as *experiencing* who you are. You'll find that you have access to the one thing that makes true happiness and productivity possible. It's the thing we're all after, and it's the one thing that for many of us seems so out of reach: *Peace of Mind*.

Now, I understand that these are big promises, and I need to emphasize that just *reading* this book will not free you from worry and anxiety. You'll need to put the techniques into *practice* and you'll need to *remember to use them*. But when you do this, you'll find that you've gone beyond putting a band-aid on your anxiety. You will have actually *resolved* the problems at their core, so if anxiety rears its ugly head again you'll know just how to resolve it quickly and thoroughly. What I've found time after time is that anyone can be freed from anxiety when they use these tools consistently and diligently.

Part I of *Vaporize Your Anxiety* is a discussion of the various theories and research that form the foundation of the techniques we use. Those of you who have not had any familiarity with my work should be sure to read this section. I cover all the relevant information you'll need to understand how you're going to proceed.

Part II of the book is a practical guide, giving you exercises and instructions so you can begin to Vaporize Your Anxiety right away.

Note: Undoubtedly, some readers of this book will already be familiar with my work from my other books and from the many seminars I teach every year. These readers may wish to skip directly to Part II of the book, where I speak specifically about the techniques used for vaporizing your anxiety. However, since the material in Part I is the cornerstone of my approach, it would be beneficial to everyone, regardless of their experience, to read Part I in its entirety. This is particularly so because I have not, in my previous work, addressed the issue of anxiety in depth, as I have done here.

To Your Health and Well-being,
Tom

chapter 1

Facing the Challenge of Anxiety

The Scope of the Problem

According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA), an estimated 40 million Americans over the age of 18 suffer from an anxiety disorder.¹ Anxiety disorders are therefore the most common mental illness in the U.S., with over 18% of the adult U.S. population affected. That means that one in seven adults in the U.S. are struggling with anxiety on an ongoing basis. Further, approximately one third of American adults will have at least one anxiety or panic attack in their lifetimes. This startling data reveals that anxiety is the most prevalent emotional disorder in the U.S.—more common even than alcohol abuse or depression.

According to “The Economic Burden of Anxiety Disorders,” a study commissioned by the ADAA and based on data gathered by the association and published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, anxiety disorders cost the U.S. more than \$42 billion a year—almost one third of the \$148 billion total mental health bill for the U.S. More than \$22.8 billion of those costs are associated with the repeated use of healthcare services, as those with anxiety disorders seek relief for symptoms that mimic physical illnesses. Indeed, people with an anxiety disorder are three-to-five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than non-sufferers.²

1 <http://www.adaa.org/AboutADAA/PressRoom/Stats&Facts.asp>

2 *ibid*

These figures make it clear that we are in the midst of a mental health crisis. Worse, for all our supposed medical sophistication, we don't even seem to be making a dent in the problem. We self-medicate, we seek therapists, and yet we stay anxious. What can be done?

What is Anxiety, Really?

While there are many theories about anxiety and how to deal with it, I take a very simple approach based on practical, experiential wisdom. Although this book endeavors to offer penetrating and valuable insights into why humans tend to develop anxiety, my main interest is offering you techniques that will help to rapidly and thoroughly resolve this widespread problem.

This work looks beyond a strictly biochemical or genetic point of view and considers instead that the experience of anxiety occurs as the result of being stuck at the outer edges of fear—afraid, in a sense, of the deeper, overwhelming energy of fear—without proper tools or training to resolve it. When this happens, fear continues to be held in the body without resolution. Anxiety is simply our body's attempt to avoid being overwhelmed by fear; it keeps us from having to face the true epicenter of our emotion. This “coping strategy” (that is, trying to avoid being overwhelmed by the energy of the fear) is the best we can do, so we stay stuck in an eternal, anxious dance around the outer edges of fear.

The reason we reach this state is that we haven't learned to effectively resolve intense emotions and traumas. Our early childhood conditioning compounds the problem, and while not everyone experiences problems with anxiety, this underlying conditioning does appear to be pretty universal. And as you will see from reading Chapter 4 on the ACE Study, the severity of the conditioning can determine why some people have problems with anxiety and others don't.

Human Software Engineering

The insights and techniques taught in this book were developed as a part of an emerging field called Human Software Engineering™, which is based on the idea that humans are a lot like computers. After all, we created computers to automate certain human tasks, so it makes sense that in many ways, they behave like we do. And as computers become more sophisticated, they become more and more like us. What is interesting is that we can learn some very useful things about ourselves by thinking about how computers work. As it turns out, terms like “software,” “hardware,” “virus,” and “bugs” all are surprisingly effective for describing both what’s going on with us, and how to improve it.

It is true, of course, that computers are much less complicated than we are. In fact, any researcher in the field of neuroscience will tell you that the human brain is infinitely more complex than even the biggest most complex computer on earth. So our capacity to research, create and understand the most complex computers is by no means a substitute for the study of the brain (a field that’s still in its infancy, really). But on a metaphorical level, thinking about computers can give us a great deal of insight into how we work.

Really, a computer is just a device that does two things: it receives requests and it responds to them. So for example, when you open up your email account and you hit “get new mail,” you’re just making a request to the computer, and the computer responds by putting all your new emails into your inbox. Obviously, it’s a little more complicated than that, but in the simplest terms, “request then response” is all that’s really ever happening in your computer, or even when you’re using the Internet.

Now, when your computer is running an old version of an operating system or a particular software program, or if there’s a bug in the system somewhere, communication breaks down. The flaw prevents the computer from responding correctly, or in some cases the system

somewhere, communication breaks down. The flaw prevents the computer from responding correctly, or in some cases, from responding at all. For example, you might double click on a document to try to open it, but if you don't have the software program the document was created with, or if your old operating system can't support the program, your computer won't give you any response (except maybe "I can't give you a response," i.e., "Program Not Found").

If you do have the program, but there happens to be a bug somewhere in the document or in your software program, you might open it up and see a bunch of gobbledygook. Have you ever opened up a web page or a document and seen a bunch of squares and slashes and circles? Your computer is giving you a response—it's just the wrong one.

Much like computers, humans have "bugs" too. For some people, these bugs cause procrastination or anger, or even addictive behaviors. And for many others, they cause anxiety and anxiety-related emotional problems. Think about this for a moment: scroll through your daily life and stop to think about your "problems." If you're like most people, you probably have a handful of problems that keep coming up, over and over. Maybe it's having the nerve to speak your mind to superiors at work, or to your spouse. Maybe it's eating certain foods you know aren't good for you. Maybe it's something as simple as being lazy about flossing!

If you think about it, you will realize that in each case, what's happening is that you're making a request—"Could you please talk to your boss about how ridiculously low your salary is?"—but you're getting either no response ("Sorry, didn't hear you. I think I'll go get a cup of coffee and then go back to my desk"), or you're getting the wrong response entirely (you go talk to your boss, but when you open your mouth, what comes out is something like "I love your new suit! Oh, and by the way, I'm really enjoying that new project. Okay, see you later!") And you walk dejectedly back to your desk.)

Another metaphor that is very helpful in the context of Human Software Engineering is that of the old operating system that won't allow you to run newer, more sophisticated programs. You may have had the experience of getting some great new software for your computer, only to find out that you can't actually use it unless you upgrade your operating system. Much in the same way, you can spend lots of time learning new techniques and strategies and philosophies for improving your life in one way or another, but if you're still stuck inside all the old conditioning from your childhood (that is, your old operating system), none of those techniques will ever really work in the long term. You'll end up with a shelf full of books you've diligently read, and all the same problems you had when your bookshelf was empty.

The tools in this book, as well as the exclusive audio recordings we've made available for you at www.VaporizeYourAnxiety.com, will teach you how to literally "debug" your "inner human software," "upgrade" your "operating system," and in the process, quickly reduce and very likely eliminate your anxiety completely. As I said earlier, however, to have true success with these techniques, it is very important to learn them thoroughly and to remember to use them regularly. I can't stress this enough. Please read this book from start to finish, and take the time to stop and practice when indicated. Practice lots and lots. Once you start to get a feel for the techniques, you'll find yourself doing them almost effortlessly.

In this book, you're going to learn to do some things that are in many cases the exact opposite of what you've been deeply conditioned to do. But the truth is, they are really quite natural and anyone can easily learn to do them, even though they may seem strange and unfamiliar at first. And besides, if you have come to the realization that what you've been doing up until now hasn't gotten rid of your anxiety, it's safe to assume that something "really different" is *exactly* what you need.

There is one other thing I would like to mention here. If you've been experiencing anxiety for a long time, the idea that you can eliminate it

quickly and completely might sound a bit unreal. In fact, it might be enough to trigger anxiety about whether or not this could possibly be true, because it sounds like such an outrageous claim. But so many people have been successful with vaporizing their anxiety using these techniques that I feel compelled to share these great breakthroughs with everyone who suffers unnecessarily from anxiety. I sincerely hope that you will apply these techniques consistently so that you too can vaporize your anxiety and be free to live as you wish.

At several points in the book, there will be exercises for you to practice. Because the techniques are experiential rather than intellectual, doing the exercises is very important. If you'd like to get some help with this, we have many highly trained coaches who can guide you through the process over the phone. In fact, it is a testament to the power of these techniques that many of these coaches began as clients of mine. They were so impressed with the results they achieved personally that they became coaches themselves, so they could help others overcome their obstacles in life. You can learn more about our coaches at **www.VaporizeYourAnxiety.com/coaches.html**

To further help you along the path to Vaporizing Your Anxiety, we have set up a wonderful resources area at the Vaporize Your Anxiety website. Here you'll find audio and video recordings as well as many links that will help you get the most out of the book. Just visit **www.VaporizeYourAnxiety.com/resources.html**