

Hope and Healing for Those Struggling with Anxiety

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | February 29, 2024



Anxiety is to the mind what pain is to the body—it is a signal that something is wrong.

If you experience pain somewhere in your body, your first thought is not, “I have a pain disorder and, therefore, I need pain medication.” No, your first thought is, “What’s wrong?”

Pain causes one to evaluate the *cause* of the pain—is it a thorn, a cavity, a blister, a fracture, a sprain, an abrasion, a cramp, a heart attack, or something else? Pain is designed to signal us when something isn’t functioning as it should so that we can address the problem quickly, remove the offending source, and prevent more serious injury. And when the cause of the pain is addressed and healing takes place, the pain resolves.

Anxiety serves the same purpose; it alerts us that something is wrong so that we can address the underlying problem, minimize injury, and experience healing. And just as pain can have an almost infinite number of causes, so can anxiety. Causes of anxiety can be physiological—such as hyperthyroidism; relational—a divorce or breakup; existential—the death of a loved one; psychological—negative patterns of thinking, such as false beliefs like “I’m no good; no one will ever love me;” emotional—dysfunctional attachments; spiritual—unresolved guilt and shame or failure to

trust God with the unknown (future, outcomes, etc.); situational—pending punishment or objective threats; conditioned responses—learned reactions from previous anxiety-provoking experiences and unresolved trauma.

Anxiety, like pain, not only alerts us that something is wrong, but it also motivates us to action, to do something to resolve the anxiety. With physical pain, the most common initial reaction is to seek to identify the cause and resolve it, but with anxiety, people often take another path. Instead of standing firm, tolerating the anxiety, and seeking to identify and resolve its source, far too often, people seek *only* symptom relief—through medication, alcohol, marijuana, drugs, comfort foods, entertainment, pleasure-seeking of various kinds, thrill-seeking, offloading the anxiety onto others, comfort in the arms of others, denial and distortion, hyper-scrupulosity, religiosity, the pursuit of control (especially over others), rule-keeping, and more.

The choice to medicate away anxiety instead of resolving its core cause has been markedly worsened by the corporation of medicine (healthcare as a for-profit industry) and the influence of big pharma, which has led to a distorted philosophy that psychological, relational, spiritual, and existential issues can be effectively treated with a pill. This has created a generation of people on drugs to manage symptoms of anxiety rather than recognizing the anxiety as an adaptive signal intended to motivate them to address the underlying cause and resolve it, and thereby not only heal the problem but also gain mental and emotional coping skills, to mature and develop through overcoming and resolving various life problems.

The Bible teaches,

We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3, 4 NIV84).

Not only do millions seek to avoid the cause of their anxiety, but far too many healthcare practitioners have been trained by a misguided medical education system—not only misguided by the for-profit motive, but also by the godless evolutionary philosophy that misinterprets the meaning of most things, denies the existence of God, thereby cutting people off from spiritual and biblical solutions, which magnifies the anxiety and leaves people with the false belief that the only option is pharmaceutical—to diagnose people struggling with anxiety with a disorder and then prescribe a medication to treat the symptom of anxiety rather than seeking to identify and understand the cause of the anxiety and resolve it.

In other words, modern medicine teaches healthcare practitioners to see anxiety as a disorder in itself rather than a symptom of something else.

But this would be like treating a pneumonia patient who has fever, cough, and chills, with aspirin, a cough suppressant, and a blanket without ever treating the infection. Or it would be like treating someone with a cavity with pain medicine but never filling the cavity.

Yes, when people are in physical pain, there is a righteous use of pain medication. We can be thankful the dentist uses Novocain *while he fills the cavity!* But if the dentist only gave medicine to relieve the pain, the intervention would *cause* more damage by preventing the patient from realizing a pathological process was spreading, thereby delaying the identification and resolution of the offending cause.

Likewise, with anxiety, there are many times when medication is necessary to reduce the anxiety enough for the patient to be able to identify and address the cause. But when we label the symptom of anxiety as the disease and, instead of seeking to address its cause, we seek *only* to relieve the symptom (through alcohol, marijuana, food, pleasure-seeking, pharmaceuticals, etc.), the pathology causing the anxiety worsens and, rather than helping, we contribute to the dysfunction and worsening of the overall course.

The approach to anxiety that seeks *only* to relieve the symptoms interferes with development, maturity of character, autonomy, and self-sufficiency. People do not learn how to cope with the challenges of life and, when confronted with intense emotions of anxiety, instead of possessing the mental and emotional strength, skill, and ability to stand firm, work through the emotions, identify the cause, and make adaptive, intelligent, reasonable, and effective decisions, they seek “safe spaces” where they can avoid the feelings and pretend they are healthy.

Genuine healing requires we deal with reality—what is true, what is actually happening; thus, if we want to help people with anxiety, we must go beyond the symptom to identify the cause and seek to eliminate it. This is what we do at [Honey Lake Clinic](#).

Honey Lake Clinic is a holistic residential treatment center in which we help people identify and resolve the underlying causes of their anxiety. We treat the whole person, mind, body, and spirit, with proven, reality-based interventions that help people experience restoration to wellness—to harmony with the laws of health, the protocols upon which life is built to exist and operate

So if you or someone you love is struggling with unremitting anxiety that is interfering with life and undermining health, if you have struggled to find solutions that bring healing, and you would like an intensive, Christ-centered holistic treatment program, consider [Honey Lake Clinic](#) as a therapeutic option.

The next time you experience anxiety, step back and ask, “What is the cause? What is the anxiety trying to alert me to? What is the problem that I need to address for the anxiety to go away?” Is it physical, psychological, relational, spiritual, or situational? And then seek God, His wisdom, methods, and principles, and pursue a path designed to resolve the cause, not just relieve the symptom.