

EXCERPT



The Anxiety Field Guide
Healthy Habits for Long-Term Healing

April 26, 2022 | \$17, 184 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0345-9

Anxiety is one of the most pressing mental health issues of our day. In this hope-filled and practical resource, pastor Jason Cusick shares his own journey with anxiety and offers expertise, practical guidance, and empathy. Addressing both the psychological and spiritual aspects of anxiety, this handbook gives simple instructions for developing healthy habits for long-term progress.

We All Have Anxiety

We all have anxiety. Anxiety is our automatic response to a perceived threat. Whether we're on a first date, have a big assignment at work or school, we're walking in a dark area alone at night, or someone around us might be sick and contagious, our brain sends our body signals to be alert, be aware, be prepared—to be anxious!

Anxiety can be mental (giving us messages to believe), emotional (triggering feelings), and physiological (causing changes in our body). It's not always bad. Anxiety is a good gift from God intended for our safety. We need it! But what if we feel anxious when there is no real threat? What if the threat is gone and we're still anxious? That's when anxiety is bad.

Our anxiety is wrongly awakened all the time! We live in a culture that is more than happy to trigger our anxiety. Our twenty-four-hour news cycles, quick-fix approaches to life and faith, and a host of self-soothing alternatives keep us disconnected from the life of trust, peace, and healthy risk taking that God intends for us.

You're reading this book because you or someone you love is struggling with anxiety. Maybe you feel restless, worried, or preoccupied with concerns most days. You battle unrealistic expectations of yourself. You fear being embarrassed, criticized, or judged by others. You're uncomfortable in everyday interactions with other people. You are not as assertive as you want to be. Or worse.

Maybe you have intrusive thoughts, unwanted feelings, and intense fear about specific situations or objects. You've had some terrible experiences in your past and are now flooded with thoughts and feelings you don't understand. Maybe you have learned to address your fears by engaging in certain rituals that make you feel less anxious, but now you're dependent on those rituals. Or you might be experiencing panic attacks, sudden and overwhelming feelings of anxiety that have interfered with your life.

Does any of this sound familiar? If so, you are not alone.

We all have anxiety, but we can learn to live rich and meaningful lives without being controlled by it. That's what this book is all about.

When I went through personal counseling, I took copious notes. I read articles, listened to podcasts, spoke with other professionals, and read great books on the subject. As I found things that resonated with me, I made notes in my phone, so they were always with me. This became like my own personal field guide. This book is made up of what was most

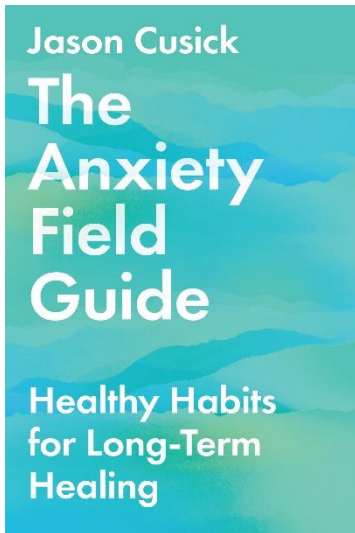


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Jason Cusick is lead pastor at Journey of Faith, a multi-campus church in Southern California. He was previously the pastor of care ministries, overseeing grief, recovery, crisis, and counseling ministries, and has also worked as a board-certified hospital chaplain.

helpful to me on my own path to more healthy habits. Here's how I recommend you use this book:

Read one section at a time, in order. This book is divided into thirty short sections, designed for you to read one section per day to help you learn and practice skills you'll need. Try to resist the urge to read more than one section at a time or skip ahead, because each section builds on the next. But the goal is not to fly through it in thirty days, but develop healthy habits, so . . .

Practice what you are learning. Each section has action steps. These are important. Unlike some forms of counseling, freedom from anxiety is based in what's called a cognitive-behavioral approach. This simply means that our thinking should lead to changes in behavior. We learn by doing. I provide different kinds of action steps to try.

Take your time and go back if you need to. The book has thirty sections, but don't feel like you have to get through this book in thirty days. If you feel like you need to stay in a section for a while or revisit a section that resonated with you, do it! You might even feel anxiety while reading. That may be because you are bumping up against some important growth points. Don't give up.

Also, you'll notice that the book is designed to integrate anxiety treatment principles and the Bible. If you've had negative or painful experiences with God, religion, or faith, hang in there with me. I've been there too. Whether you are already a follower of Jesus, are coming back to God after a time of being away, or are just looking into faith, my hope is that you'll experience this book as an invitation to a new life with God.

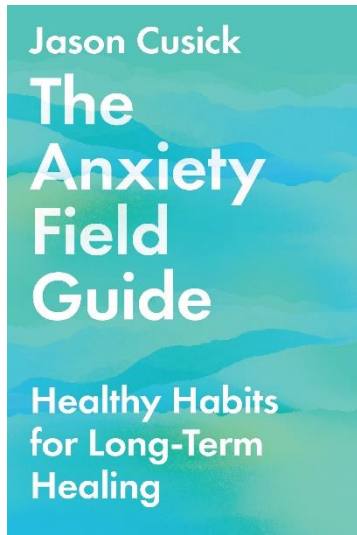
—Adapted from the introduction



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ENDORSEMENTS



The Anxiety Field Guide *Healthy Habits for Long-Term Healing*

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“Jason is no stranger to the anxiety that can be so gripping. He brings heart, wisdom, and experience to these pages. The journey he takes you on is both practical and profound, leading to deep freedom.”

—Carey Nieuwhof, author, podcaster, and speaker

A Book More Vital Now Than Ever

“Those with anxiety, fear, and obsessive thinking often feel so much shame. But we now know that our brains can be retrained and rewired. We can stop blaming ourselves and get healthy! Jason combines his own experience with basic insights on how self-directed neuroplasticity can help you change your brain and find new freedom. Illuminating, practical, and surprisingly entertaining, *The Anxiety Field Guide* will help you take back control of your life.”

—**Jeffrey Schwartz**, research psychiatrist and author of *You Are Not Your Brain*

“We are living in times of unprecedented anxiety, and my friend has masterfully crafted this work to help us all. Jason is a trusted voice in the wilderness. Read this book and find much-needed encouragement and help.”

—**Brady Boyd**, pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs and author of *Addicted to Busy*

“Anxiety can be debilitating. Liberation from it can be hard—and often takes time. *The Anxiety Field Guide* is a focused and practical discussion on how to get away from anxiety that recognizes it versus ending it. It teaches you how to cope with anxiety in healthy ways, including how faith can help you along the way. Take time with this book and it will help you be less anxious with the Lord at your side.”

—**Darrell L. Bock**, executive director for cultural engagement at Dallas Theological Seminary

“Anxiety is a crippling state of mind that can separate us from intimacy with God and others. What Jason does so beautifully is give us tools to overcome anxiety without being dismissive, because he’s struggled with it as well. You or someone you know faces anxiety regularly—this book is more vital now than ever.”

—**Dallas Jenkins**, creator of *The Chosen*



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