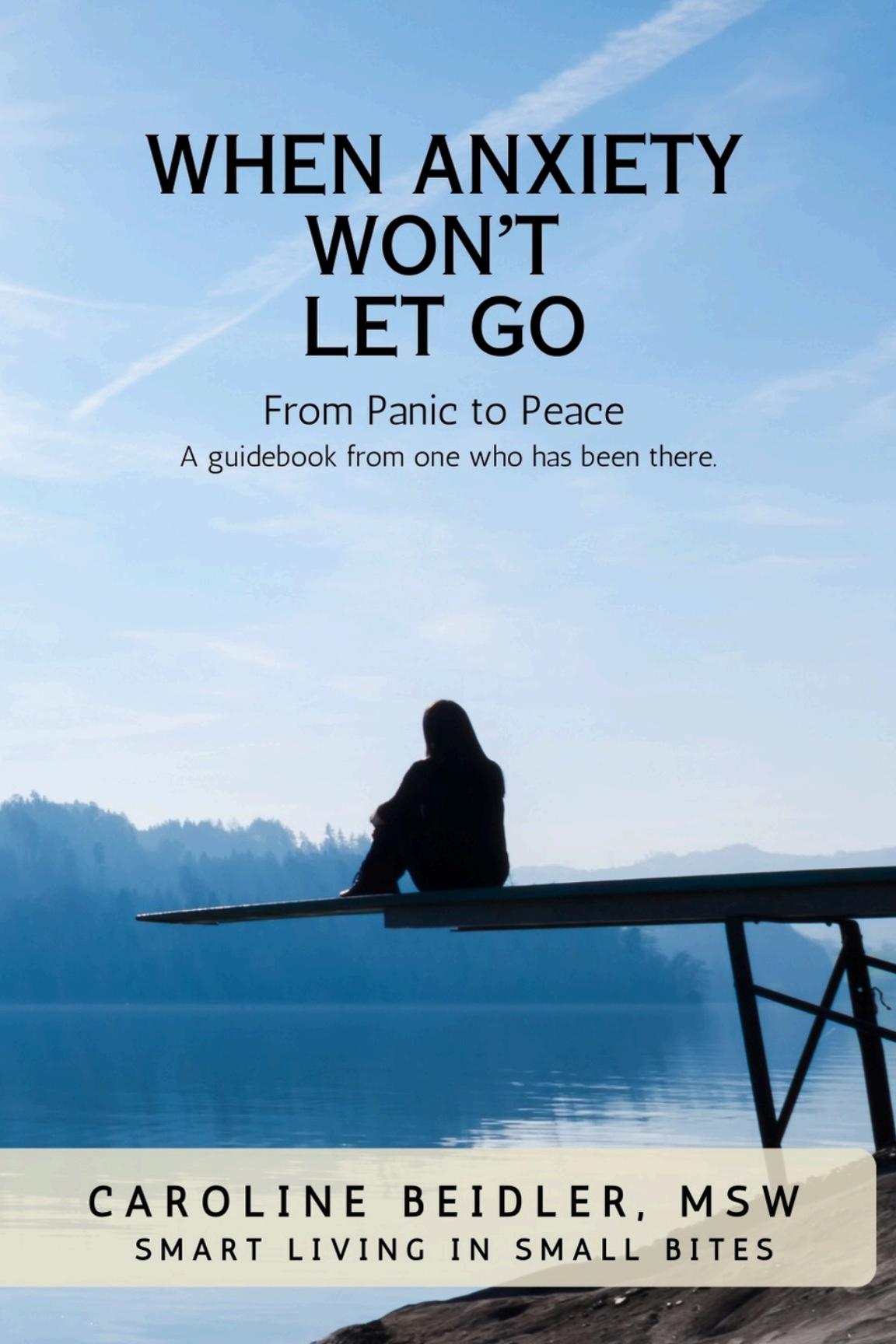


# WHEN ANXIETY WON'T LET GO

From Panic to Peace

A guidebook from one who has been there.

A photograph showing a person from behind, sitting on a long, narrow dock or pier. The person is silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky. They are looking out over a calm lake. In the distance, there are forested hills or mountains. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative.

CAROLINE BEIDLER, MSW  
SMART LIVING IN SMALL BITES

To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

# When Anxiety Won't Let Go

C A R O L I N E B E I D L E R ,  
M S W

SMART LIVING IN SMALL BITES

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This book is written by the author to share her life experience with the sole purpose of providing insight, encouragement, and hope. The information provided in this book is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute professional counseling or treatment.

Use this QR code for extras, including a free  
printable companion journal, additional  
resources on anxiety, and more.



# *Acknowledgments*

This is my most favorite part to write in any book. It's a time to sit and contemplate gratitude. It is also a chance to humbly acknowledge all of the many hands that are involved in the crafting of a book, however big or small, weighty or humorous.

To my husband, who chooses to walk alongside me during every season, from the challenging ones to the peaceful ones.

To the ladies of Grit and Grace Life, especially Darlene, Ashley, Allison, and Tess: You all are amazing. Thank you for your vision for this project, your grace in the revision process, and your heart for women. God works in all of you mightily.

Thank you to my recovery family and my church family who are one and the same these days. Without you, I'd be untethered and disconnected, and this is never a good look on me.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Lindsey, who walked alongside me during a challenging bout of anxiety in 2020. You helped me find myself again.

And finally, to you, sweet reader. Thank you for joining me on this journey. You are so worth every second of the work. As my friends in recovery like to say, "Don't give up before the miracle happens."



# Dear Reader

Welcome. However you are showing up today, I want you to know I am so glad you are here. I believe (because I've experienced it) that sometimes we are guided to something because we need to be. This book is here for you in this moment, right now, for a reason. And I am here, too.

As a woman in recovery from all sorts of things, like mental health challenges, addiction, ice cream, and binge-watching "Yellowstone" (because I am also in recovery from cowboys) and who is also an author, social worker, and recovery expert, I know firsthand how debilitating a struggle can be—especially a mental health challenge like anxiety.

For me, it's been an uphill climb to learn how to live with a free mind and to keep it free. I've learned some things along the way that I'd love to share with you, and most importantly, I've learned a few of the secrets to smart living that you will learn as you work your way through this guide. In these pages, you will find an interactive experience, space to share your own thoughts, and more.

You may be short on time (as a mom of littles, so am I!). You may be hesitant to address anxiety in your own life, and you may even question if a book like this is for you. I'd like to encourage you to

push through the doubt, trust the process, and believe that you and your well-being are worth it. Because you are so very worth it, dear friend.

With hope for your journey,

*Caroline*

# *My Story*

When I've had an anxiety attack in the past, it felt something like this:

Tunnel vision.

Heart out of rhythm.

Mouth drying out.

Hands and feet going numb.

Mind set on one thing: I am going to die.

We are going to die.

This is never going to end.

I remember my first hot yoga class—someone let out a long sigh. The heat and my current season of life (stress-filled graduate school), led me to run out of the room. At a full sprint to grab my bag, I didn't even make eye contact with the fit, young yogi who was looking very concerned behind the counter asking, “Are you OK?”

Don't stop.

Get. Out. Of. There. Fast.

Next stop: Target. My line of thinking at the time: *What's better for a panic attack than shopping?*

I made it to the parking ramp, opened my door and sat there and breathed.

Breathe.

Breathe.

Do I need to call 911?

I almost called 911.

In my purse, I had the emergency bottle of anti-anxiety medication they can prescribe to someone who says, “I am in addiction recovery; please do not give me anything addictive.” Though I recognize I can make pretty much anything addictive. Ten to 15 minutes later, I can breathe.

Breathe.

Breathe.

Again. Slow. Purposeful.

## *This Can Be Cured, Right?*

After this incident in my early 30s and years of struggling with anxiety (and what I didn't know at the time was generalized anxiety disorder), I started seeing a therapist again regularly. I started taking medication. I prayed. I read my Bible. I went to a small group. I was even in recovery for addiction (this is a topic for another day). I did all the things I thought were going to cure me—or at least make the anxiety less debilitating. There were even people (well-meaning people) in my life who said things like:

“You just need to pray more.”

“You need to trust God more.”

“You are living in fear, not faith.”

But what I heard was, “You are the problem.” And from this, I inferred that I am the only one who can fix this.

## *Still Not Working*

So, I did all the things and then more. More therapy. More medication. More prayer. And yet, more anxiety as the world felt like it started turning in on itself at the beginning of 2020.

Here's an example: We stepped out of church smiling, ready to make Sunday ours, but as soon as we opened the thick oak doors and our faces touched the air, I knew.

Something was on fire.

I looked over to the mountain ridges and there was an eerie, hazy smoke that rested like watercolor paint in the gray sky.

“Cover your mouths and noses with your shirts,” I told my children.  
“Let’s hurry to the van.”

They rushed, and I called my husband.

“Have you been outside? Can you smell the smoke?” I asked.

Calling my husband is like a check and balance for me. Is this real? Sometimes I need him to reassure me that it is and I am not losing it.

Over the phone, I hear the back porch door open and the dog bark, and then, “Oh my God,” he says after a few seconds. “Fire.”

Our small, eastern Tennessee town was surrounded by fire on all sides. One hundred-acre fire here, 500-acre fire there. All county firefighters were at the scene. Since Saturday.

How had we not heard about this? I called some friends, and they were oblivious, too.

Why is no one telling us the world is on fire?

I looked around and noticed the birds were gone.

The rest of the author's story has been intentionally removed. To read more, [the entire book is available on Amazon.](#)



*“Anxiety isn’t a sin. It’s an emotion. It’s what you do with the feeling of anxiety that leads you to healthy or unhealthy places.”*

— Debra Fileta, M.A., LPC

# Your Story

*Every person's story is nuanced. Yet, we share a common hurt and need. Telling our own story—even if it's just for ourselves to read—is an important step toward hope and healing. This is a space where you can share how anxiety has shown up in your own life. List examples of what you've experienced or perhaps a couple of memorable times that have stuck with you.*



# *Problems to Face*

I'm going to put my "recovery expert" hat on for a moment and share some things I've learned about anxiety.

Anxiety can stem from your physical health and hormonal changes, or it can be a part of a response to trauma and stress due to an underlying mental health condition. Whatever your "why," know you aren't alone. Anxiety is a real issue for many women today. It's helpful to explore the underlying issues and then seek solutions. It can also be helpful to listen to another person's experience and reflect on your own story. After reading each of the following examples from my story, note the similarities and differences from your experiences. What thoughts, questions, and/or feelings arise as you read?

## Low Self-Esteem and Self-Worth

As I've vulnerably shared in these pages, anxiety has led to me feeling not good enough. I've let anxiety decide how I see myself and how I determine my intrinsic worth.

*Has anxiety caused you to think less of yourself?*

# Strained Relationships

Mental health challenges, like anxiety, can cause stress in our lives, and it's not surprising that this can spill into our relationships. When I called my husband about the wildfires, he was (and is) thankfully healthy enough to know how to respond. He listens and then asks if I'd like advice, support, or just an ear to hear me. It's taken several years for both of us to practice how to communicate and how to show up for one another. Anxiety has caused me to withdraw from relationships and isolate because I've felt ashamed of being anxious and afraid to ask for help and talk to anyone about what I was experiencing.

*How has anxiety impacted your relationships?*

The rest of the problems faced and the steps taken have been intentionally removed. To read more, [the entire book is available on Amazon.](#)

# HAS LIFE STOPPED BECAUSE YOUR ANXIETY WON'T?

Are you facing a unique challenge? Maybe it feels too complicated or hard to handle on your own. Do you wish you could talk to someone who understands? Someone who's made it through, could walk with you, and lead you toward hope?

In this book, you will find that woman.

- *Read her story—a story like yours.*
- *Discover the problems she faced and the steps she took.*
- *Find courage through her confidence and hope.*
- *Pen your own story and struggles on the pages provided.*
- *Take comfort in realizing you don't have to walk alone.*

If you feel like your anxiety follows you like a shadow each day, robbing you of healthy relationships, self-worth, promising opportunities and more, please know you aren't alone. Author Caroline Beidler, MSW, takes you on a transformative exploration through her own struggle with anxiety and the many ways she learned to flip the script on the challenges anxiety presents.

In *When Anxiety Won't Let Go*, Caroline shares how therapy became the gateway to embracing vulnerability and its power in weaving relationships closer together. Her battle with low self-esteem became a catalyst to release anxious thoughts to God. Among several other detailed insights, Caroline's clever approach to taking back control over her life will empower you to do the same. You'll learn how to identify your strength and shift your perspective to uncover a fulfilling life beyond anxiety's clutches.

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