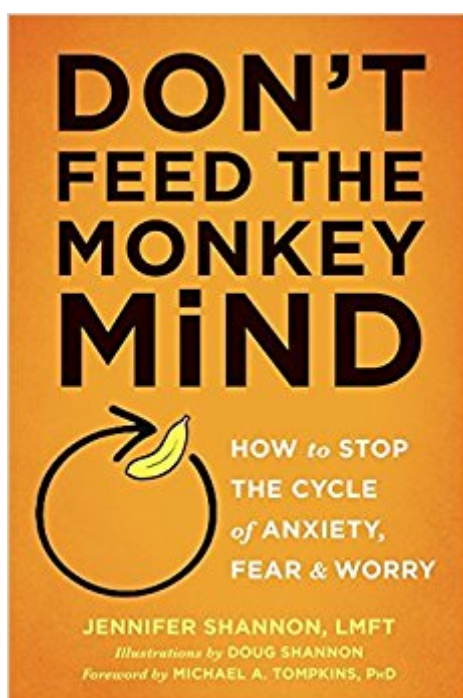


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# Don't Feed The Monkey Mind: How To Stop The Cycle Of Anxiety, Fear, And Worry



## Synopsis

The very things we do to control anxiety can make anxiety worse. This unique guide offers a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)-based approach to help you recognize the constant chatter of your anxious “monkey mind,” stop feeding anxious thoughts, and find the personal peace you crave. Ancient sages compared the human mind to a monkey: constantly chattering, hopping from branch to branch—endlessly moving from fear to safety. If you are one of the millions of people whose life is affected by anxiety, you are familiar with this process. Unfortunately, you can’t switch off the “monkey mind,” but you can stop feeding the monkey—or stop rewarding it by avoiding the things you fear. Written by psychotherapist Jennifer Shannon, this book shows you how to stop anxious thoughts from taking over using proven-effective cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and mindfulness techniques, as well as fun illustrations. By following the exercises in this book, you’ll learn to identify your own anxious thoughts, question those thoughts, and uncover the core fears at play. Once you stop feeding the monkey, there are no limits to how expansive your life can feel. This book will show you how anxiety can only continue as long as you try to avoid it. And, paradoxically, only by seeking out and confronting the things that make you anxious can you reverse the cycle that keeps your fears alive.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“If you are ready to turn the tables on your anxiety, you can find no better book than Don’t Feed the Monkey Mind. Jennifer Shannon will help you turn away from the enticing

tactics of fearful worry and teach you how to return to the life you love.

•Reid Wilson, PhD, author of *Stopping the Noise in Your Head* “This book is a gem for people seeking to tame runaway anxiety and upset. Jennifer Shannon takes the simple metaphor of the monkey mind and fleshes it out with wisdom and simple steps that anyone can follow. Here, in plain language, is a comprehensive set of concrete steps to let your anxiety run its course and then fade. Jennifer Shannon has blended the best of cognitive behavioral methods and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) to produce a great contribution to the self-help literature. Here you can learn to return your energy and attention back to your voyage through life, rather than the worries and fears that have hijacked your focus. Professional psychotherapists will also find it useful. I highly recommend it!

•David Carbonell, PhD, Chicago-based psychologist specializing in treating fears and phobias; author of *Panic Attacks Workbook* and *The Worry Trick*; and “coach at [www.anxietycoach.com](http://www.anxietycoach.com) “Don’t Feed the Monkey Mind is clear and easy to understand. The book will teach you simple and powerful strategies to harness fear and worry. Jennifer Shannon teaches you how to transform your life by taking the monkey out of your mind.

•Dennis Greenberger, PhD, coauthor of *Mind Over Mood* “Don’t Feed the Monkey Mind begins with a well-written synopsis of basic attitudes and mental habits that perpetuate anxiety. The book follows with a set of clear, concise changes in mind-set and behavioral strategies to overcome anxiety at its roots. The monkey mind concept is an apt, original contribution. Examples of points provided by the author as well as references to her personal story help make the book accessible to readers of all kinds.

•Edmund J. Bourne, PhD, author of *The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook* and *Coping with Anxiety*

Jennifer Shannon, LMFT, is author of *The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook for Teens*, *The Anxiety Survival Guide for Teens*, and cofounder of the Santa Rosa Center for Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy in Santa Rosa, CA. She is a diplomate of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. Doug Shannon is a freelance cartoonist who resides in Santa Rosa, CA. Foreword writer Michael A. Tompkins, PhD, is founding partner of the San Francisco Bay Area Center for Cognitive Therapy, diplomate of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy, and assistant clinical professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He is author and coauthor of five books, including *OCD and Digging Out*.

Jennifer Shannon’s superbly humorous and insightful book was just what I needed during an especially anxiety-riddled family visit I experienced. The three assumptions kicked in automatically

("I must be 100% certain. I must not make mistakes. I am responsible for everyone happiness and safety") and I was exhausted and upset when my family finally left. Then I reread the chapters on "Purpose and Plan," "Lowering the Stakes," and "Practicing Praise" and immediately felt better. Now I have a plan for the next family-gathering: I'll keep "Don't Feed the Monkey Mind" by my bedside and read one of the helpful tips each evening so that I don't continue feeding my own little mental monkey. I love this book! And the delightful cartoons always put a smile on my face :-). Thank you, Jennifer Shannon!

Great book and a quick read. I have many monkeys to tame and this book shows me how. I highly recommend it.

I've struggled with anxiety for 10+ years, been on medication, regular visits to a therapist and I can say that none of that has been as effective to me as this book. Jennifer Shannon was inside my head throughout the entirety of this book, I often caught myself saying things out loud in disbelief at how much I could relate. Not only could I relate, but her way of changing your thinking was something I feel as though could actually help me on a long term basis. It's also a great read for anyone with loved ones who have anxiety, really helps you understand the struggles.

Daughter loves the book... says "author was inside her head!", which is good. She is using some of what she learned already with satisfaction. I want to read it next!

Sometimes we are so disconnected from nature living in concrete cities, surrounded by artificial artifacts that we forget that we are part of it and that our character, brain and biology are closely related and are the product of evolution. So that we share with other species an instinct for survival, but it has not been programmed for modern civilized life, then this mechanism makes many misperceptions of what can be possible threats, which keeps us in constant anxiety, fear, concern and stress. The author describes in a very clear way how it works, what triggers and what habits feed this way of survival that she names the Monkey mind, since this component of our brain "It just gets a little wild and overreactive sometimes, like a monkey". So when this hypervigilant mechanism is activated no matter how intelligent you are all your perception is distorted by fear and it sequesters our mind. One of the explanations that shed more light to understand many of my reactions, including my emotional motives in decision making, is what is referred to as the monkey mid-set: Intolerance of uncertainty, Perfectionism and Over-responsibility. It is surprising that we

continue to think that we are rational beings when everything really revolves around emotional motivations, feeling safe, feeling accepted and part of a tribe, not making mistakes not to be judged negatively, etc. Rationality implies our ability to justify those emotional motivations; Plan and have future strategies to anticipate emotional conflicts. This simple script is programmed to drive survival at all costs. It works exceedingly well for this purpose, but it leaves us feeling stress and unpleasantness much of the time. And we strive a bit much to make decisions, to make the right choices, to control all the steps to follow, overplan things, we spend a lot of time worried, wanting to make others happy. From this monkey mindset many problems arise that fill us with anxiety and fear, affect our self-esteem, our concentration to achieve goals, overworking, depression, addiction, obsessive compulsive tendencies, among others. To live more relaxed, enjoy the moment, raise our self esteem, live purposefully, reach our goals and manage our monkey mind Jennifer Shannon provides us with the "Expansion Strategies". She explains how to integrate this new mind-set and how to make this expansive thinking a life experience. The monkey mind will continue to be part of us, but these strategies teach us to choose between remaining stressed and upset, or taking it as an opportunity for expansion, and claiming to live the moment in a new way. My gratitude to the Publisher and NetGalley for allowing me to review the book

Such a helpful, clever, easy-to-read resource for those of us who suffer from anxiety. Jennifer Shannon has such a great writing style and the illustrations playfully bring the concepts to life. This is a go-to, accessible resource that really can help you understand your anxiety and stop the constant cycle of worry that keeps you trapped and frustrated. With this resource you can actually stop feeding the monkey mind of anxiety and make space for all of the other thoughts and feelings that want to be noticed, too.

This book helps me to feel empowered and allows me to see my anxiety as a little monkey, instead of a monster which my mind can sometimes try and trick me to believe. Jennifer's books are easy to read, are full of playful and humorous illustrations, while also proving to be very effective in treating a range of anxiety disorders. For me, this book has been helpful to understand that my intolerance of uncertainty, perfectionism, and over responsibility are actually manifestations of my anxiety, and when I keep being motivated by those things, I'm actually "feeding my monkey." To live a more expansive, fuller life, I am learning to identify when my monkey mind is activated and talking to me, and how to quiet that chatter.

Don't Feed the Monkey Mind: How to Stop the Cycle of Anxiety, Fear, and Worry by Jennifer Shannon is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in mid-March. While keeping her own anxiety and panic attacks under control, Shannon has treated others with fear, worry, and anxiety as a therapist for the past twenty years. She links it to the idea (and utterly cute, yet sad sketches) of 'monkey mind' or circling, seemingly ever-present thoughts of vile premonition, non-perfection, general threat, and concerns over personal & interpersonal safety. Only through reactivity, counteracting and challenging anxiety as it comes, and strategically keeping yourself busy, occupied, and motivated can one really quiet the monkey mind; overall, this book had a very direct way of speaking to me (and had me mentally yelling out "Truth!" in response to some of its statements) and I took so much relief and hope from it, too.

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