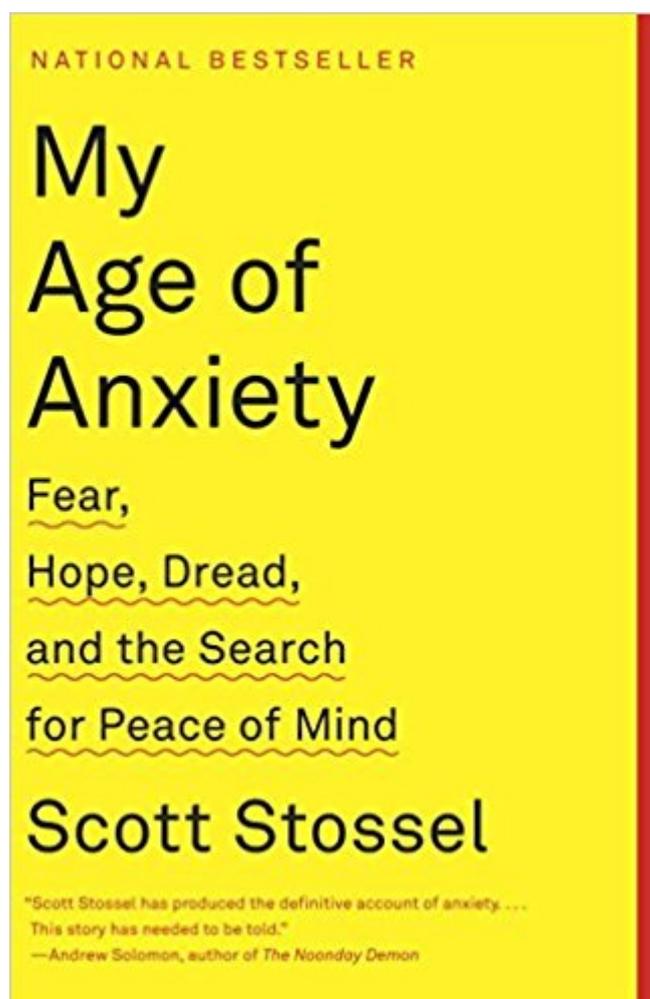


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# My Age Of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, And The Search For Peace Of Mind



## Synopsis

A Washington Post Notable Book A Seattle Times Best Book of the Year Drawing on his own longstanding battle with anxiety, Scott Stossel presents a moving and revelatory account of a condition that affects some 40 million Americans. Stossel offers an intimate and authoritative history of efforts by scientists, philosophers, and writers to understand anxiety. We discover the well-known who have struggled with the condition, as well as the afflicted generations of Stossel's own family. Revealing anxiety's myriad manifestations and the anguish it causes, he also surveys the countless psychotherapies, medications, and often outlandish treatments that have been developed to relieve it. Stossel vividly depicts anxiety's human toll—its crippling impact, its devastating power to paralyze. He also explores how individual sufferers—including himself—have managed and controlled symptoms. By turns erudite and compassionate, amusing and inspirational, *My Age of Anxiety* is the essential account of a pervasive and too often misunderstood affliction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

You do not have to be one of the 40 million Americans\* with an anxiety disorder to appreciate Scott Stossel's *My Age of Anxiety*. Whether or not a reader believes anxiety is worthy of a prized DSM slot and a handshake from Big Pharma, chances are we've all felt its claws at times. Anxiety and stress do seem to be the current Modern Human Condition. (\* Source: NIMH dot NIH dot GOV, using US Census data) Stossel combines survey and memoir so engagingly that I occasionally forgot the topic was how unmanageable anxiety had made his life. I like that his presence throughout the book is not intrusive, or worse, pitiable. He does not overwhelm with dry history and

there is no hard lobby for a cause or a position. There is humor and authentic humanity here; most importantly, there is also hope. In the first few pages, Stossel shares that he has known anxiety since the age of 2. Has anything worked? Surprisingly, no, or at least not for any length of time. And in the last pages, he admits that writing this book is in part self-therapy. In between these auspicious pages Stossel covers: ~ ~ ~ the definitive nature of the beast (Is it an illness? A disorder? A conditioned response?)

There are three kinds of anxious people.\* People like professional athletes, actors, and politicians who are subject to public scrutiny. No surprise that some of them suffer massive attacks of intestinal butterflies. If you're a reader who revels in behind-the-scenes secrets about famous people, you will enjoy the lengthy anecdotes describing the angst that's affected famous figures throughout history.\* People who live in a modern world filled with deadlines, competition, and a constant fear of not quite measuring up. It's an "age of anxiety" for all, and the fact that big pharma has capitalized on our collective stress is part of the story.\* People like Scott and me. Until I read this book, I had never encountered anyone who was as anxious as I am, and it was uncanny how many ways his life paralleled mine, including the early onset, the wedding near-meltdown, the cornucopia of phobias, even the childhood bedtime ritual that entailed reciting the same reassuring speech to my mom every night. I don't know how compelling I would have found AofA if I didn't fit into that last category, but cruising through his gallery of phobias made me feel validated if not vindicated. Scott and I part ways when it comes to managing anxiety, fear, hope, and dread. Maybe it's an east coast-west coast thing, but in this part of the world, "benzodiazepine" is usually followed by the word "addiction." My idea of bliss is a bottle of lorazepam in my pocket, but doctors are loath to hand out prescriptions, and after enduring the humiliation of begging for just enough meds to get through specific occasions (like the aforementioned wedding), I've gravitated to more natural remedies. Not as effective, but more politically correct.

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