

Conquering Anxiety. Expert's Seven Proven Steps to Freedom

Psychotherapist and anxiety management expert, Pauline McKinnon welcomes Beyond Blue's current initiative to raise awareness of anxiety in our society. With over thirty years experience, the Kew based therapist is one of Australia's most successful practitioners in the area of anxiety reduction.

"It is timely that everyone in our community understands how prevalent anxiety is amongst every age group, gender or socio-economic background. It lies hidden behind forced smiles, small talk and frenetic life styles, all seemingly normal" Pauline says. She adds, "Those suffering with the crippling symptoms of anxiety know that they are only half-living at best, with detrimental effects to their family, personal relationships and professional lives."

Pauline knows what it's like to be living with anxiety. For eight years she suffered with agoraphobia, an acute form of anxiety. It was only when she discovered *Stillness Meditation* that she was able to dissolve her anxiety and reclaim her peace of mind, returning to a fulfilling and rewarding life. That was over thirty years ago and since then Pauline has helped thousands of others find similar relief through Stillness Meditation Therapy (SMT) – a uniquely Australian approach to meditation, founded by the renowned Melbourne psychiatrist Dr Ainslie Meares, specifically developed for natural and powerful anxiety relief.

"Recognising that one is suffering from anxiety is certainly a crucial first step" Pauline said. "But recognising it and being able to move beyond it, is another thing". Pauline teaches sufferers to get there, regardless of the source of their anxiety, by teaching them to rest the mind – based on Dr Meares' theory – *of atavistic regression* - which enables the body's own healing mechanism to be activated. This particular form of meditation is not related to any spiritual, religious or cultural influence and it can be easily incorporated into one's life.

"Meditation has long been recognised as an effective treatment for anxiety and numerous clinical studies continue to support this," Pauline said.

For those suffering from anxiety, Pauline recommends following these seven steps as a starting point out of anxiety:

1. Understand the mechanics of anxiety
2. Commit to a reputable form of therapeutic meditation
3. Learn to reduce nervous tension
4. Share your feelings with a trusted other
5. Learn to be positive, not negative
6. Stop fighting against fear
7. Stay in the present moment

Pauline McKinnon's book *In Stillness Conquer Fear*(1983) is her own story of overcoming anxiety through SMT which pioneered today's public awareness of anxiety disorders. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the book's publication as well as thirty years of her practice, The Stillness Meditation Therapy Centre, in Melbourne (Kew). Pauline's latest book is *Living Calm in a Busy World*. She is currently President of ATMA (Australian Teachers of Meditation Association).

- Pauline will be conducting a workshop *Mastering Anxiety. Eliminate Fear and Recover Ease in Your Daily Life*, on Saturday, May 11th (10 am -4 pm) Kew Library (The Phyllis Hore Room) Cnr. Cotham Road & Civic Drive, Kew. VIC. (Melways Ref: 45 / DC)

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