

CALM
for moms

Book Study Guide

by Denise Marek

**Worry Less in
Four Simple Steps**

CALM for Moms: Book Study Guide by Denise Marek

Welcome!

This Book Study Guide is a great way to help facilitate group discussion or to deepen your own learning experience. Use it in your book club, parenting groups, or on your own to enhance independent study.

Discuss *CALM for Moms*

- *CALM for Moms* contains your complete four-step process to transform worry into inner peace. What are the four steps?
 - What was your biggest “ah-ha” moment or takeaway from the book? Why was that particular takeaway meaningful to you?
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Part One: Challenge Your Assumptions

- In the introduction to *Part One: Challenge Your Assumptions*, you learn that *negative assumptions create worry*. Identify and list any negative assumptions that are causing you to worry.
- In Chapter 1, Denise shares a story about a time when she thought there was an intruder in her home. Her body’s stress response gave her the clarity and strength to dive into action to protect her children. In what ways have you experienced the stress response showing up in your body? How did that feel? Think of some stressful situations – where you haven’t been in physical danger – where you could have used Denise’s strategy of taking a deep breath, bringing your attention to the present moment, and saying, “I am safe. I am not in physical danger”. If you have been able to try this already, what was the outcome?

- Chapter 2 explains how to challenge your assumptions by differentiating between fact and opinion. Take some time to reflect on something you've been worrying about lately. What assumptions are you making regarding that concern? Are your assumptions based on facts? In other words, do you have *proof* that the story you've been telling yourself is true? Think of some other, more positive, interpretations or explanations about that same worry to feel more at peace and list them here.
- In Chapter 3, you discover four culprits behind negative assumptions. Think of a time when you may have felt worried or stressed when you were actually hungry, angry, lonely, or tired. Of the suggestions outlined, which strategies could you use moving forward to take care of your needs and HALT your worries?
- Chapter 4 outlines a case study in which a student of Denise's *CALM Online* training course (www.calm-online.teachable.com) used the strategy of "rating the probability" to help her move out of panic mode at the beginning of the pandemic. Think of something you've been worrying about in your life and rate the probability of that worrisome thing actually happening on a scale of 1 to 10. Describe how doing this exercise made you feel. Were you able to reduce your anxiety after using a different perspective?
- In Chapter 5, Denise writes, "*What-if thinking sinks you and present-moment thinking pulls you through.*" How does focusing on the present moment work to make you feel more calm? List some things you can focus on when you're feeling worried that may bring your attention back to the present moment.
- In Chapter 6, you learn that worry is often generated by the scary stories we tell ourselves. Think of a scary story you've been telling yourself that has created worry in your life. To re-write that story, list some positive assumptions you can make to answer the question: *What else could it be?*

Part Two: Act to Control the Controllable

- In *Part Two: Act to Control the Controllable*, Denise writes, "*When you feel worry brewing, instead of sitting there stewing, get up and start doing.*" Why do you think that taking action is important? If your worry is prompting you to take action, which actions could you start with?

- In Chapter 7, Denise shares her personal experience with depression and overcoming her reluctance to talk about it. Is there something you've been hiding or covering up because you were worried what other people might think of you if they knew? Name one person you trust enough to tell and then, on a scale of 1 to 10, rate how relieved you might feel sharing this information with that person. What benefits could result by telling someone else?
- Chapter 8 outlines three of the most common emotional roadblocks that stop people from taking action (fear of rejection, worrying about what other people think, and fear of criticism), and the remedies for overcoming those obstacles. Consider whether any of these roadblocks are preventing you from taking action, or what *else* might be stopping you from moving forward. Share a time you took action in the presence of fear and discovered that what you were afraid of wasn't as bad as you had imagined.
- Have you implemented any of the "Do-Able Dozen for Mama Bear's Self-Care" outlined in Chapter 9? If so, which ones have you found most helpful? Which ones will you try next?
- In Chapter 10, Denise writes, "*Knowing your values can ease the overwhelm of parenting decisions, personal decisions, and even big life-altering decisions. Your values act as a compass, quickly directing you to conclusions with less stress and worry.*" Before reading this chapter, had you given much thought to your values? Review the list of values outlined in the chapter and list your personal top ten. If you could narrow your list of ten values even further, which ones would you consider to be your top three core values? (For a printable list of nearly four hundred values, visit www.denisemarek.com/valueslist.)

Part Three: Let Go of the Uncontrollable

- In *Part Three: Let Go of the Uncontrollable*, Denise shares a poem titled *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. In your experience, what happens when you worry about yesterday and tomorrow? In what ways could living "but one day at a time" create more calm in your life?
- Chapter 12 is about letting go through forgiveness. Who do you need to forgive and how would you benefit from forgiving that person? If you completed the "forgiveness

statement” outlined in the chapter, how did completing it make you feel? Alternatively, if you were unable to complete that statement, is there a reason why?

- Letting go of guilt is the subject of Chapter 13. Think back to a time when you experienced “mom-guilt” and consider how that feeling developed. What are the six recommendations to help you move from feeling guilty to feeling guilt-free outlined in this chapter? Which of these six do you find most helpful and why?
- Chapter 14 is about letting go of judgment. Denise writes, *“Mom-shaming is criticizing (or even degrading) other moms for making parenting choices different than our own.”* Have you experienced mom-shaming? Where was it coming from? When reading the list of “Do’s and Don’ts” to ensure you become part of the solution and not part of the problem, which one(s) resonated with you? What would you add to this list of do’s and don’ts?
- In Chapter 15, you read about letting go of perfectionism. Do you consider yourself a perfectionist? How did you feel reading that we bond with others through our imperfections and shortcomings? Do you think knowing this will help you to connect more with others moving forward? If yes, how? If not, why?
- Letting go of fear is the central theme of Chapter 16. To reinforce the message of choosing faith over fear, this chapter includes a game called *I Spy*. Which of the three prompts did you answer when playing this game? What responses did you come up with to the prompt? How did it make you feel?

Part Four: Master Your Mind

- In the introduction to *Part Four: Master Your Mind*, Denise writes, *“negative and unhealthy patterns of thought can be broken, no matter how deeply entrenched. You can build new, healthy thought patterns that lead to less worry and greater inner peace. You can literally renew your mind!”* How would changing your thinking change your life?
- In Chapter 17, you learn how to override negative thoughts to create positive outcomes. Denise writes, *“What’s one negative thing you’ve been saying about yourself? Override it. Ask yourself, ‘Is it true? Is it fact? Is it helpful?’ Write a positive declaration to replace it—and post this positive thought where you’ll see it regularly.”* What is your

positive declaration? Where did you post it? If you didn't post it, when will you commit to following through on this strategy so that you can begin to override negative thinking?

- Chapter 18 outlines how to take control of your thoughts using “The Five-Point Path.” What are the five points? Why are they important? In this chapter, you read a case study about a student of Denise’s *CALM Online* course (www.calm-online.teachable.com) who used the five-point path to deal with a concern that was keeping her mind in a constant state of stress. What was the main thought creating a logjam in this student’s thinking? Could you relate to her story?
- In Chapter 19, you learn how to stop self-sabotaging and end emotional suffering. Reflect on any unhealthy coping strategies you might be currently using in order to deal with stress and worry. What are your biggest parenting triggers? Can you see yourself following the eight-action sequence outlined in this chapter *before* reacting to these triggers? Have you printed out the one-page summary of this sequence (www.denisemarek.com/endemotionalsuffering)? If yes, where did you post it? If not, when will you commit to printing it out and positing it where you’ll see it regularly?
- Chapter 20 outlines how to use the power of your voice to restore inner peace. What does “tame your tongue” mean? What negative phrases do you habitually say out loud? What are some positive “I am” statements you could say out loud instead?

Part Five: Put It All Together

- In the introduction to *Part Five: Put It All Together*, the entire CALM process is put together, in one place, to provide you with your own personal at-a-glance template for worry-free living. Have you used these Transformation Tracking Sheets to help you move from worry to inner peace? What were the results? Can you commit to using them moving forward to break the worry habit and feel more at peace in your parenting experience and in life?

Time to Celebrate!

Congratulations! You did it! You've successfully completed the proven four-step CALM process to transform worry into inner peace. Using the steps that you've learned in *CALM for Moms* will help you to be a happier, more present, and less stressed parent. It will help you raise children who will grow up to be happier, more present, and less stressed too! You're playing a major part in ending the worry cycle in your own life, in your family, and in the world. That's a big deal! What you've accomplished in completing this book is significant! Take time to celebrate. What are some fun ways you could celebrate what you've just accomplished here? When will you do this?

Keep Moving Forward

Would you like to keep moving forward on replacing the habit of worry with a lasting sense of calm? Then come and join Denise in her free online training classes! Visit www.denisemarek.com for more information or send an email operator@denisemarek.com to request the link to the next available class schedule.

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