

SOUL SYSTEMATIC[®]

*Simple program to
help with feelings of Anxiety,
Panic Attacks, Depression,
and General Stress.*



*Healing is a matter of time,
but it is sometimes also
a matter of opportunity.
- Hippocrates*

STEVE JAMES WATSON

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Preface

The primary purpose of this book is to describe my experience with chronic anxiety, deep depression and panic attacks. This is something that had plagued my life for well over a decade, and had made my life extremely difficult to live. I know from extensive experience that these mental disorders are very debilitating, and are often painfully hard to overcome. However, I do feel very strongly that these issues can be overcome with the right methods in place, and you will be well again. I believe these mental disorders are challenges thrown towards us and are like a test of our resolve.

The methods, philosophy and inspiration in this book really helped me in my recovery from these mental disorders. It has been a guiding light for me and has caused a dramatic shift in my emotional state of being, and has also changed me as a person in a very positive and uplifting way. The biggest revelation for me was waking up and realising that the only way to overcome my problems was for me to rise up and take control. Because once you realise you have control, everything starts to come together and amazing things can emerge from that realisation.

As the author, I believe very strongly in holistic approaches to these issues, and that profound healing can take time. This book comes straight from my heart, and from the suffering I once had in my

lifetime. I approach these issues using multiple solutions, because, at this point in my experience, one solution on its own will not always be effective. The only way I managed my recovery was to change the way I approach life and how best to cope. However, it will need some effort to apply the methods I discuss, but I feel that once you grasp the ideology behind it, you will realise that it actually makes a lot of sense.

On a very deep level, I feel very sad within my soul that millions of people around the world have to endure the suffering I have had to go through. It's very easy for someone to tell you "I have been there; I feel your pain", but for me, I feel it's utterly unnecessary for so many to be suffering so badly, and this shouldn't be happening. What we need is the proper support and help, not only to recover from our problems, but even more importantly to prevent the cause in the first place.

I hope it will inspire you, as it did me, to make empowering changes to your life and to create a new chapter.

Introduction

As a child, everything was pretty normal. I had a fairly happy childhood as things go. No signs of worry, fear or anxiousness. In fact, I didn't have a care in the world; it was just like gliding on an open ocean, full of happiness and joy. Of course, most could relate to what I am saying. When you're a child, you have nothing to worry about; that's the adult's job to do that. When you're a child, the innocence, the sweetness and the passion are so natural. It's as if, when you were born into this reality, you were made of that material of wonder and you just carried it through with you as a gift. At this point it seems a shame we have to grow up, especially when things are so fun and worry-free.

After childhood, the next phase of my life was becoming a teenager. There has always been a stereotype of what becoming a teenager is about, and it isn't too far off the truth. This is when things started to become very difficult for me and the problems began to surface. I often wonder if, when you become a teenager, someone flicks a switch and you suddenly become full of fear of life and everything else around you. It's as if you wake up from a happy dream and suddenly realise where you really are; it's not a pleasant feeling, I can tell you. My troubles really began when I hit 18. After that, I started to have the onset of fear come over me like a wave. What happened was I started to get a feeling of panic in public places, but it was not

present all the time; it was just a sudden attack out of the blue.

I actually went through a period when I not only continued to get panic attacks, but also suffered low self-esteem and had a feeling of people watching me. It was the worst feeling you could have, and it was very hard for me, because I would be asked out publicly for social gatherings and I often didn't want to go. I felt reluctant to attend, because of the fear of a panic attack. I never knew when it would strike and it was very hard to control, or indeed stop. Despite the fear of the attacks, I decided to do some socializing, going out drinking with people, and this is when it became really hard for me. I remember sitting in a bar, and someone ordered me a drink. So far everything had been fine - until I lifted the bottle. My hand just started shaking, and I thought I was going to drop it. At that point I just stopped and put the bottle down. I actually never got to have a drink, because I was so nervous about holding it.

It was a very embarrassing moment, because I thought someone might have noticed my panic episode, and all I wanted to do was just leave and run away to hide from the fear. Only someone who's been through this will wholeheartedly understand how debilitating this panic condition really is, and how it can wreck your life and stop you from trying to be normal like everyone else. After numerous panic attacks, I decided to see a local therapist to help cure me. It was the very first time I had ever met a therapist, and at first I felt the process was a bit strange - almost alien, actually.

The things she was telling me to do were just strange and at the time I kind of felt “Is this going to help?” It was a very frustrating time for me. After the therapy I was none the wiser, still feeling my panic was there and that no resolution had occurred. Years afterwards, the panic continued on and off as before, and it never seemed to leave my poor soul. I just accepted at the time that I was going to have to live with the burden and simply try to carry on, which was all I could do. During the periods of panic attacks, I also suffered with depression in my life. Depression became a major part of my panic attacks, making me feel completely worthless and out of place.

My panic attacks and depression carried on now and again into my late 20's. In my early 30's I suffered my first anxiety attack. At this point, from memory it's hard to put a finger on how or when it really started, only that it did start and it hit me like a ten-ton train. I actually woke up one morning and just had the terrible feeling of extreme anxiousness throughout my whole body. The thing that had me in most fear was the racing heart; I felt so wound up and out of control. Even though I felt awful, I decided to venture into work and sit at my desk, which was hard bearing in mind how I was feeling that morning. As the day went on, I began to feel my symptoms worsen. I started to feel sick in the stomach and my heart was racing. I told my work colleagues I needed to leave quickly, as I just couldn't handle the feeling any more, so I left and drove myself home. The anxiety never stopped; it just kept on coming. I had a constant racing heartbeat and I just couldn't slow it down.

These anxiety episodes had continued for weeks, and I was in and out of work constantly. At the time, I felt that I needed to work, even though I was feeling so anxious. I was afraid I would lose my job if I didn't go in each day. So I decided to head to A&E in desperation to find out what was wrong. Just to make something clear, at this point I didn't actually know what was wrong or what I was suffering with at all. After all, this was my first anxiety attack, and I didn't really understand what was going on. When I arrived at the hospital, it wasn't long until I was seen, and I had to lie down on a bed so they could run some tests. After the test was done, I had to wait a while, lying on the bed with my heart racing at a million miles an hour. The doctor came back with the results. They had done the usual tests: blood pressure, blood sample and heart rate. They told me they couldn't find anything wrong. I had a clean bill of health, except that my heart rate was a little high, that was all.

It was a relief to discover nothing serious was wrong, only that my heart was racing a little faster than normal. The thing is, though, no-one at the A&E could tell me what was wrong. They just said "You're fit to leave us now." So, feeling no better than before, and very confused, I left to go home. I was asking myself "Why? What is happening to me?" I was in a total state of confusion and desperation. I just didn't know what I was experiencing.

So, day after day, my anxiety continued to haunt me. I never really went anywhere. I just mainly stayed at home and buried my head. In

my mind, I just wished it would leave me alone and let me be a normal human being again. After weeks of suffering, my anxiety levels did, amazingly, start to drop and become less extreme. I actually got to the point where I was feeling so much better that I booked a flight to America to go away for three weeks. Compared to where I was before, this was a revelation to me, I can tell you. Only there was a slight problem: even though I was feeling much better, in my head I felt as if my anxiety might return, and I was really worried about going on holiday. I thought if I went, it might return, maybe even worse than before.

Another issue to add to that worry was my fear of flying. I really don't like planes much. I kind of see travelling by plane as like being strapped into a rocket with wings attached; you probably get my drift on this one. So, not only was I worried about my anxiety returning, it was the 7-hour journey too. In the end everything actually went fine. I managed to get on the plane and my anxiety didn't seem to manifest itself at all. Having been in America for a week, everything seemed to be going fine. I hadn't had any sign of my anxiety, and I was fairly happy at that point. It wasn't until I was walking round a shopping mall that I suddenly felt my heart skip a beat, and a big one too; I really felt it. I stood, a bit shocked, and I thought "Oh God, please don't tell me this is happening again." I was very upset, because I thought that I had overcome my problem, but clearly I hadn't completely. Fortunately, that was the only occurrence, and afterwards everything seemed good again.

I actually continued to progress without any real problems with anxiety; maybe general stress, but obviously that's quite normal. For a few years, I was back to normal again, with no signs of anxiety, and it wasn't until a year later that it returned with a vengeance. Things took a drastic turn for me; after years of being married, my partner and I separated. It was at this point that my life went into a complete downward spiral and almost into oblivion. Months after the split, I was in pretty high spirits. I felt good about myself even though I'd lost my partner. Until, one day, I began to become severely depressed. I started to really miss this person I loved and didn't know what to do. I was literally sitting at home with my head in my hands, rocking about in pain; I felt hopeless and completely lost. I actually felt as if someone had stolen my soul. I really felt dead inside and very numb from my mindset.

My deep depression lasted for many months. I just didn't seem to be getting any better. Unfortunately, my depression led to thoughts of self harm, and I actually thought about taking my life because I really felt so lost and worthless. These thoughts continued over a period of time, and I managed to seek professional help. I went to see a doctor who specialized in mental health, especially depression. At first I thought it might help; at least talking to someone about my problems might help uplift my mood. I paid numerous visits to the same doctor, and eventually she suggested going on antidepressants. Now at this point, most people would have taken the tablets with both hands, but not me, I'm afraid. Why? Well, I have never believed in tablets,

especially those coming from the pharmaceutical industry. I haven't liked the side-effects of tablets, and that's why I rejected taking anything for my depression.

It was a very tough period in my life. I went back to work and tried to carry on as normal. But for a while, something was missing; I just didn't feel myself. Gradually, over time, things started to look a little brighter for me. My depression was much better; in fact, I was feeling pretty much back to my normal self. Everything was running quite swimmingly, until one day I was told I was going to be laid off from work.

At first, it was a bit of a shock. I had been at the company for at least three years, so I didn't really want to leave. But really, I wasn't entirely happy at my work place either, so I actually felt afterwards maybe it was a good thing. Luckily I got a fairly decent payoff from the company, allowing me time to try and find another job. At first I was pretty relaxed, feeling confident I would find another job fairly quickly. I'm quite experienced in what I do, and I really thought I would be working again reasonably soon. Unfortunately, I went for month after month without any job. In fact, I was finding it hard to get interviews at the time. Of course, my stress levels began to rise as time went on without any sign of work.

With all this going through my head, my worst fear came back to haunt me again. My anxiety returned - but not immediately. It began

with a feeling of nausea in my stomach, which lasted for a number of days. It did actually come and go, but it never really went away. Well, unfortunately, the worst was yet to come, and my anxiety came back with a vengeance, like nothing before. This time, it was worse than the first attack, and I had a feeling of nausea, which was horrible, to say the least, plus the racing heart rate once again. However, other things started happening. I was experiencing sharp pains all over my body, primarily around my feet, legs, back and chest.

During my anxiety, I actually had a number of very bad nights; in fact, for some reason at night I felt even worse than during the day. But there was one particular night that was the worst of them all. I remember getting ready for bed, and at that point I was feeling pretty awful. I thought I was going to get hardly any sleep that night. Well, I began to lie down, and suddenly I started to feel really sick in my stomach, with my heart racing nineteen to the dozen. I actually recall lying there, thinking to myself "This is it; I think I am going to die this time." I was feeling so unwell in myself that I just couldn't see me getting through the night, to be honest. I started to think how I would miss my family and friends. I didn't want to go because I felt surely it wasn't my time yet. Well, an hour or so afterwards, incredibly, I started to feel better and the feelings had worn off. After that horrible night, I woke up one morning and continued to get the same symptoms as before.

It's important to note that my anxiety, panic attacks and depression continued on and off. I found it was so easy to fall into the same feelings as before, and it continued to be the bane of my life. It wasn't until a short time afterwards that I started researching and finding techniques, especially for mental health, that finally began to help me through my recovery.

The Route to Recovery

After a decade of being plagued with anxiety, panic attacks and depression, I finally discovered the only sensible solution that would relieve my symptoms. I actually woke up one day and realised that the sure-fire solution was indeed myself, and that I needed to take drastic action. This was my biggest wake-up call, and it empowered me once I had a plan of what I was going to do. However, I knew it wasn't going to be easy and would be a real challenge. Firstly, my plan would require many changes in my lifestyle, and after years of having the same old routines, it proved to be an actual challenge for me.

My route to recovery was inspired by all kinds of methods I discovered and applied during my period of suffering with mental health issues. My recovery was based on holistic methods only, with no drugs or therapy required. I decided to try and resolve my problems myself, rather than pass them over to someone else, and it's this very philosophy that got me back to full wellness again. The Soul Systematic Program, revealed later in this book, is the primary key to overcoming these mental disorders. From my experience of suffering with these problems, it has never been a speedy recovery. It doesn't matter whether it's anxiety, panic attacks or depression; all of these mental health issues can take time to overcome.

For example, when suffering with anxiety it took me over a month to finally get rid of the anxious feeling and be myself again. Furthermore, my experience with depression also took me a month or so to overcome, but again, I did overcome it and feel better than ever. But as you will discover later on in this book, it will require some changes to your lifestyle and an effort on your part.

I started to implement many changes to my life in order to relieve my symptoms. At this point, my plan was to do things that would help me cope and recover as quickly as possible. The first things that came to mind were family and friends. I decided to surround myself with them as much as I possibly could. It's very important to do this as it will help you recover more quickly and also give you a distraction from your negative feelings and symptoms. I also began to take time out more and make time to listen to uplifting music to boost my mood and relax myself.

As I began making more changes, I started to get more confident and do the things I would normally do. Whether it was driving, shopping or seeing family and friends, I just forced myself to live my life as normal. Obviously, I was doing all this while I was still suffering, but the key was that I kept on going despite the bad feelings I had, and that helped me so much. Right now, I can tell you the worst thing you could do is shut yourself away and hide. This will not help and will only cause a delay in your recovery. Another important aspect in my recovery was something extremely simple, and that was walking. I

found walking a life saver, and it has literally transformed my life in so many ways. Obviously, walking is a great exercise to do, but it is also very relaxing, especially when done in the right locations. Walking will become a very important part of the program, as I will discuss later on.

Of course, altering your diet is another obvious solution that is often mentioned. I do believe moving to a healthier diet will certainly help recovery. I didn't make drastic changes to my diet - not at first, anyway - I just made small changes. Most people will find it hard to make drastic diet changes, so starting small is best. After all these alterations, I noticed my anxiety, depression and panic began to dwindle. They no longer had power over me, because I was the one who had the power. The key to recovery is not "coping", it's "control". In order to recover you need to be in control, so that it's not in control of you. These mental disorders feed on fear, they feed on lack of self control; that's why the symptoms can be very nasty. For myself, I just took back control and allowed my body to recover in good time.

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