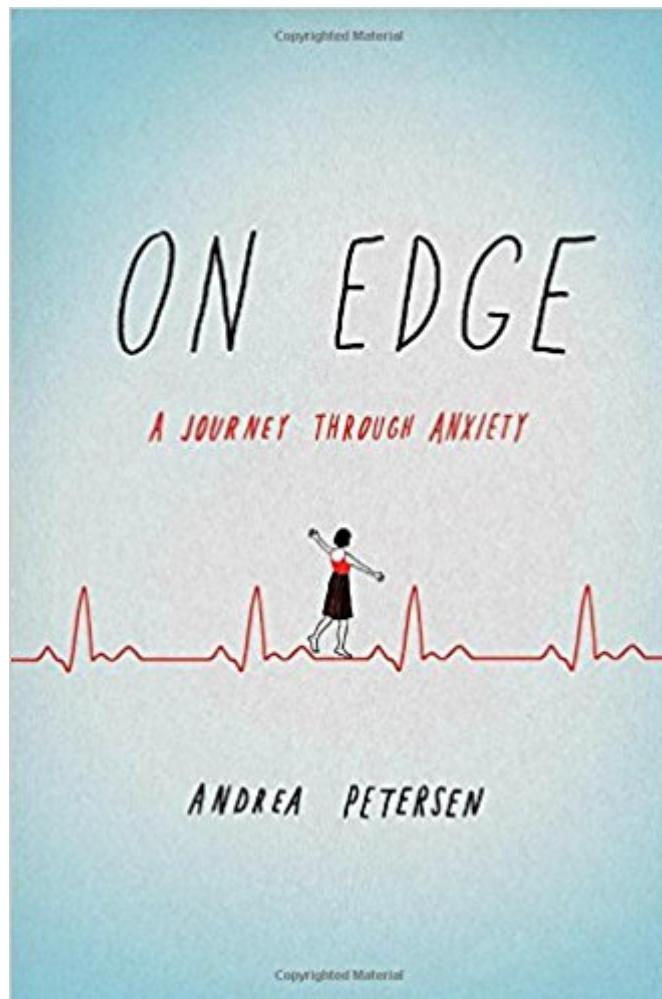


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# On Edge: A Journey Through Anxiety



## Synopsis

A celebrated science and health reporter offers a wry, bracingly honest account of living with anxiety. A racing heart. Difficulty breathing. Overwhelming dread. Andrea Petersen was first diagnosed with an anxiety disorder at the age of twenty, but she later realized that she had been experiencing panic attacks since childhood. With time her symptoms multiplied. She agonized over every odd physical sensation. She developed fears of driving on highways, going to movie theaters, even licking envelopes. Although having a name for her condition was an enormous relief, it was only the beginning of a journey to understand and master it—*one that took her from psychiatrists' offices to yoga retreats to the Appalachian Trail.* Woven into Petersen's personal story is a fascinating look at the biology of anxiety and the groundbreaking research that might point the way to new treatments. She compares psychoactive drugs to non-drug treatments, including biofeedback and exposure therapy. And she explores the role that genetics and the environment play in mental illness, visiting top neuroscientists and tracing her family history—from her grandmother, who, plagued by paranoia, once tried to burn down her own house, to her young daughter, in whom Petersen sees shades of herself. A Brave and empowering, this is essential reading for anyone who knows what it means to live on edge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Revelatory... By chronicling her own experiences with a variety of therapeutic interventions and coping mechanisms, [Petersen] sheds light on the circuitous route those with anxiety disorder

travel... [Her] account is enlightening and informative. *Booklist* "Petersen's thoughtful and encouraging treatise on living and thriving despite these disorders will be helpful reading for many, and her honesty opens a much-needed doorway onto a significant health problem that is often underreported but on the rise. [On Edge offers] sensitive and frank personal views on anxiety backed by substantial research and analysis of the evolution of treatment methods and drugs to alleviate symptoms." *Kirkus Reviews* "Deft and affecting, heartbreakingly and fascinating, *On Edge* completely captures what it feels like to live with anxiety." *Bustle* "Petersen, a veteran *Wall Street Journal* writer covering health and psychology, deftly intercuts her own narrative with wide-angle reporting, tracing a checkered history of treatments (Ã¢-Ãœpelvic massageÃ¢-Ã„Ã„ helped pave the way for early vibrators) as well as leading-edge research on genetics and neurofeedback." *Vogue.com* "A compelling read; itÃ¢-Ã„Ã„s personally relatable to those who have had similar experiences, highly informative on an emotional and factual level to those who have not. (And, for a book about such a serious subject, it has plenty of light moments.)" *Jezebel* "An honest memoir of [PetersenÃ¢-Ã„Ã„s] 15-plus years of struggle with an anxiety disorder" | Required reading for anyone working with those who have the disorder. *Library Journal* "By chronicling her own experiences with a variety of therapeutic interventions and coping mechanisms, she sheds light on the circuitous route those with anxiety disorder travel. With reported incidences of the disorder on the rise, particularly among millennials, PetersenÃ¢-Ã„Ã„s account is enlightening and informative." *Booklist* "In *On Edge*, Andrea Petersen paints a vivid picture of how anxiety has affected her work, romantic relationships, and experience as a parent. We see not only the ways in which her anxiety has held her back, but also how it has led her to live a richer, more authentic life. This brave, hopeful, sensitive account, grounded in the latest neuroscience, will be both enlightening and comforting to the millions who struggle with anxiety." *SUSAN CAIN*, author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking* "With a clever mix of science and story, Petersen reveals her search for the roots of her life-long struggle with anxiety. *On Edge* is both moving and informative, and recommended for those who suffer for similar reasons, as well as those who are simply curious about the workings of the mind." *JOSEPH LEDOUX*, University Professor and Professor of Neural Science at New York University; author of *Anxious* "On Edge is a beautiful, often heartbreakingly, often funny, always moving account of what it means to experience a degree of anxiety most of us cannot imagine. Andrea Petersen has crafted an engaging blend of memoir and science that will open your

eyes—â• and heart—â• to a condition that is usually invisible, but deserves a broader spotlight. Truly a must-read for anyone who wants to understand mental illness and the effect it can have on our lives.â• MARIA KONNIKOVA, author of *Mastermind* and *The Confidence Game* â• “On Edge is a remarkable achievement—â• poignant, funny, illuminating, and unflinchingly honest. Petersen combines the intimacy of a memoir with the groundbreaking science that is unraveling the mystery of anxiety: a fundamentally human experience, capable of making our lives miserable but essential for our very survival. A compelling and unforgettable read.”â• JORDAN SMOLLER, professor of psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; author of *The Other Side of Normal* â• “On Edge is a remarkable achievement—â• poignant, funny, illuminating, and unflinchingly honest. Petersen combines the intimacy of a memoir with the groundbreaking science that is unraveling the mystery of anxiety: a fundamentally human experience, capable of making our lives miserable but essential for our very survival. A compelling and unforgettable read.”â• GRETCHEN RUBIN, author of *The Happiness Project* and *Better Than Before*â• “This remarkable and beautifully written description of Andrea Petersen’s lifelong journey with anxiety combines an account of her personal experience with a description of up-to-the-minute research describing what we know about anxiety and its treatment. Everyone dealing with anxiety—â• the common cold of mental disorders—â• will benefit from the important information in this entertaining and erudite reflection on coping with the burden of anxiety.”â• DAVID H. BARLOW, professor of psychology and psychiatry emeritus, Boston University; founder and director emeritus, Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders â• “This story of resilience in the face of enormous challenge powerfully illustrates Andrea Petersen’s pathway to recovery from mental illness.â• Eminently readable and at times controversial, Andrea’s story is a beacon in the darkness for those living with anxiety disorders in silence.â• Stories like hers, shared openly, can change lives by reducing the stigma and discrimination that still surrounds mental illness.”â• FORMER FIRST LADY ROSALYNN CARTER, co-founder, The Carter Center â• “Andrea Petersen raises the bar for anyone attempting to explain the complex science of the anxious brain, I was fascinated by the candid, painful, often humorous account of her own struggle and her quest for the best information about anxiety.”â• KAREN CASSIDAY, president of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America â• “An honest memoir of [Petersen’s] 15-plus years of struggle with an anxiety disorderâ• Required reading for anyone working with those who have the disorder.”â• Library Journalâ• “For those with a family member, friend or employee who is battling with this invisible demon,â• *On Edge*â• can shed light down the dark cavern and help them support their loved

ones when “uncertainty far too easily morphs into inescapable catastrophe.” • Shelf Awareness

ANDREA PETERSEN is a contributing writer at the Wall Street Journal, where she reports on psychology, health, and neuroscience. She is the recipient of a Rosalynn Carter Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism and lives in Brooklyn, NY with her husband and daughter.

I highly recommend this excellent book, which is very well written, compelling and helpful. The author seamlessly weaves her personal experiences and struggles into a larger context of the causes and effects of anxiety. She clearly wants her book to help readers understand and manage their own anxieties, and to be able to better empathize with, and be supportive to, the anxious people in their personal or work lives. The book itself provides information and wisdom that is not at all stress-inducing, but in fact helps the reader approach the topic more calmly, mindfully and knowledgeably. It took a lot of courage to write this open and vulnerable book, and I commend the author for doing so and setting a compelling example of how anxiety can be faced, understood, and ultimately mastered (if not fully defeated).

Andrea Petersen’s book draws on years of reporting and personal experience, weaving together a narrative that is highly personal but also scientific. The most meaningful portions of the book are the ones in which Ms. Petersen shares harrowing moments of deep anxiety and the fallout that results. Her ongoing battle to be diagnosed and treated is a journey in the truest sense, but one that leaves fellow sufferers with hope and understanding.

If you suffer from anxiety or love someone who does, this book does a great job of charting out where we’ve been, where we are and a bit about where we might be. It does not hold a cure for anxiety but it helps explain, in plain English, much of what goes on. Very well written, an easy and informative read.

Anxiety is one of those conditions that is sinister in that you feel you’re the only one who has it. If nothing else this book is an encouragement to forgive yourself for being susceptible to stress.

On Edge is such an interesting book where Andrea takes you on her personal journey. It’s honest and moving and also provides a lot of factual information. It helps you understand and relate to

others better. I highly recommend it.

Love the book!

People with anxiety often suffer in silence, and doctors often continually misdiagnose anxiety leaving them helpless, hopeless, and alone. Now someone who has been there and done that provides a workable roadmap out of dispair. What an outstanding service to humanity.

Ms. Peterson should be an inspiration to anyone suffering with anxiety disorder. In her book she describes how she has overcome a crippling condition and illuminates various paths for others to heal as well. Ms Peterson is very real in describing her journey. She included so many personal details that I am sure were difficult to disclose. I truly enjoyed the book and read it in just a couple of days...it was that engaging! Everyone should read this book, not just because it is a page-turner, but to learn about this very common disease.

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