

Recommended Reading

For people with social anxiety

What to start with

Out of all the books that focus specifically on social anxiety these two cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based books are the best ones to get. They are comprehensive, professional and cover important points such as safety behaviours/subtle avoidance behaviours that other books do not touch on. Both books offer similar techniques but each will also contain extra information that the other does not include. It is a good idea to read and work through at least one of these two books if not both.

Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness: A self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques (2009) by Gillian Butler. ISBN: 1849010005. Also comes as a three part course/workbook set (2007). ISBN: 1845295714, 1845295722, 1845295730.

The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook: Proven, step-by-step techniques for overcoming your fear (2008) by Martin M. Antony and Richard P. Swinson. ISBN: 1572245530.

'10 Simple Solutions to Shyness' offers a similar approach to the books above but in a condensed form. It is a shorter easier read and will be useful for those who struggle to take in large quantities of text, but although well written, it cannot be a full substitute for the more comprehensive books listed above.

10 Simple Solutions to Shyness: How to overcome shyness, social anxiety & fear of public speaking (2004) by Martin M. Antony. ISBN: 1572243481.

Those with a little extra pocket change might like to try the audio program and workbook combination called 'Overcoming Social Anxiety: Step by step' which is based on cognitive behavioural therapy. Costing almost \$400 including shipping to the UK (more if charged import taxes), this product is expensive, but Dr. Richards comes across as a genuine guy who has lived with social phobia, overcome it and then professionally trained to help others. He clearly has a good understanding of what people go through and what can help. Some will struggle to motivate themselves through this program due to its slow and repetitive pace and it comes across as a little peculiar at times, but many people have found it has helped them understand their social anxiety and make progress.

Overcoming Social Anxiety: Step by step (2000) by Dr. Thomas A. Richards. Can only be bought directly from www.socialanxietyinstitute.org. Shipped from the USA.

Most people struggle with assertiveness, but particularly people who experience social anxiety. Much of 'The Assertiveness Workbook' will be highly relevant to them and, although some may find the exercises quite challenging, it is a book worth reading and persevering with. The book contains lots of examples that people with social anxiety will be able to relate to.

The Assertiveness Workbook: How to express your ideas and stand up for yourself at work and in relationships (2001) by Randy J. Paterson. ISBN: 1572242094.

If you struggle with depression as well then 'Manage Your Mood' comes highly recommended. It is up-to-date, professional, well-written and covers most of the issues people with depression will be experiencing. It is based on 'Behavioural Activation' which is a therapeutic method for depression that has evolved from cognitive behavioural therapy and is supported by clinical research.

Manage Your Mood: Using behavioural activation techniques to overcome depression (2007) by David Veale and Rob Willson. ISBN: 1845293142.

Recommended Extras

This refreshing smallish book can seem unprofessional at first glances due to its plain cover and hand drawn diagrams but it contains a depth of insight that other books rarely offer.

The Promised Land: A guide to positive thinking for sufferers of stress, anxiety and depression (2005) by Dr. Rick Norris. ISBN: 1420895826.

'Beyond Shyness' is a mixed bag that could be seen as giving the wrong message with its focus on social skills (i.e. you are not good enough as you are). Additionally, some may find the anxiety management techniques only minimally helpful as a long-term solution, but this book makes the list due to its two chapters on dependence and parental enabling. This is something not covered by other social anxiety books and will be particularly relevant to the many adults with social anxiety who are living with parents (or other family members) or who at least remain dependant on them.

Beyond Shyness: How to conquer social anxieties (1994) by Jonathan Berent and Amy Lemley. ISBN: 0671885251.

The affordable bestseller brick mentioned below (also known as 'The Feeling Good Handbook') was first published in 1980 and has since been revised and updated. It contains over 700 pages of information that could prove useful to someone with anxiety or depression but is mentioned here for its substantial and helpful sections on relationships, intimacy and communication.

Feeling Good: The new mood therapy (2000) by David D. Burns. ISBN: 0380810336.

Something a little different

Byron Katie offers a simple method of challenging and turning around our unhelpful and negative thoughts. Some may find this a helpful alternative to that offered by cognitive behavioural therapy.

Loving What is: How four questions can change your life (2002) by Byron Katie and Stephen Mitchell. ISBN: 0712629300.

'The Power of Now' focuses on the simple idea of living in the present moment. Many people seem to find it helpful and recommend it and it is therefore included here.

The Power of Now: A guide to spiritual enlightenment (2004) by Eckhart Tolle. ISBN: 1577314808.

While reading Covey's international bestseller book on seven timeless principals of effectiveness it should be kept in mind you do not need to become more effective as a person to be liked or free from excessive social anxiety. This book does contain sound knowledge that all people could benefit from though. There is a lot of depth to this book and some may find how it is written a little heavy going or will be put off by its slight orientation towards the business world. Using the audiobook version can make it easier to take in. Fully understanding and mastering habit one is particularly beneficial.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful lessons in personal change (2004) by Stephen R. Covey. ISBN: 1416502491. Also in audiobook format. ASIN: B002Q0C38Y.

America's most successful success coach, Tony Robbins, is not to everyone's taste, but many will find this book inspirational and motivating, as well as a source of useful information. Just reading this book alone will probably not help you overcome your social anxiety but it contains lots of useful exercises and insight that can help you along the way. It can also help with developing a positive outlook.

Awaken the Giant Within: How to take immediate control of your mental, emotional, physical and financial life (2001) by Anthony Robbins. ISBN: 0743409388.