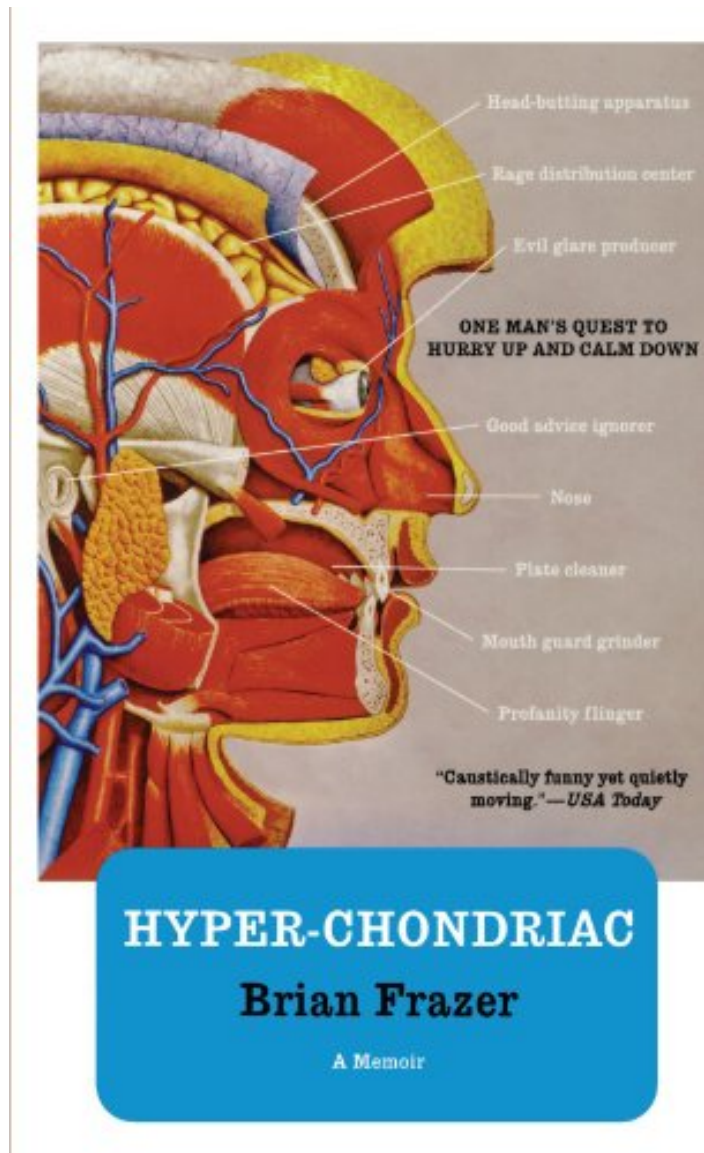


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Hyper-chondriac: One Man's Quest to Hurry Up and Calm Down

Brian Frazer

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Brian Frazer : Hyper-chondriac: One Man's Quest to Hurry Up and Calm Down before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hyper-chondriac: One Man's Quest to Hurry Up and Calm Down:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. If You Are Anxious, This Book is For You!By C. WongI loved "Hyper-chroniac: One Man's Quest to Hurry Up and calm Down by Brian Frazer. The subtitle tells the story. I read this book because I saw that Ray Romano is quoted as saying it is a hysterical book. He is right. At this point, I will

read any book that Ray Romano recommends. I laughed out loud so much it hurt and it was so very difficult to lay this book down. I, like the author have an anxiety problem. He is the one who hates long lines, waiting in traffic, waiting for medicine to work and for paint to dry and of course for more serious things like staying calm when someone insults you! The author grew up on Long Island with a Jewish background. His childhood was OK until his mother developed Multiple Sclerosis. Home went bad for him. His mother's personality soured. She constantly demanded things from his father. She allowed her caregiver, his father, no rest. He had to be fast on his feet to take care of her order to get up requests quickly. So he gulped his food down and Brian learned to do that too. And Brian learned to be anxious. Brian tries to improve his skinny body with barbells and it worked but it but made his hyper-chronic problem even worse. He trained for competitions. He was so strict with his regime. His anxiety got worse. He went on a journey of ice cream eating contests; he had long lists of foods that he could not look at without getting physically sick. He got treatment from a various counselors and complementary medicine. His struggle was intense but also hilarious. Hyperbole made his adventure so funny that now I can now see my own past anxiety situations with a sense of humor. I loved the ending, by the way. He tried some treatments that I wondered about but was too chicken to try. Now I know some to avoid! I love this book and recommend it to anyone who has an anxiety problem, like me! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Maddhatter I enjoyed the laughs and similarities, was an easy fun read => 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Very Funny - and I'm glad to see someone not just defaulting to meds for depression By Ruth Reading this book made me feel a lot better about my own stresses and obsessions. Brian is a funny and compelling writer - you want to believe he made all that stuff up, but you know from his frankness (and he comes right out and says it) that it's all too true. This is a great read. Shows that just because you're overwrought that doesn't mean you can't have a sense of humor.

Does your blood pressure surge if the car in front of you turns without signaling? Do your neck veins pulsate when a cashier takes too long to ring you up? Does relaxing seem like it'll have to wait until you're dead? Then your name could very well be Brian Frazer. On paper, Frazer is the world's healthiest guy. He eats right, exercises regularly, gets plenty of sleep, has never smoked and has missed only one day of flossing in the last five years. But inside he's a swirling vortex of angst, capable of contracting a new malady every month. Once Frazer realized that all his ills were tied to stress, he went on a quixotic quest for calm, venturing into everything from Tai Chi, serotonin blockers and Kabbalah to an unfortunate incident involving pineapple-chicken curry at a Craniosacral therapy session. Never has the road to wellville taken so many unforeseen turns. Achingly funny, uncomfortably true and always entertaining, Hyperchondriac is just the medicine for anyone who wants to take it down a notch.

"Frazer's first book is the perfect medicine for anyone suffering from a case of treacly-memoir syndrome. Hilarious and biting, Hyper-Chondriac recounts the author's lifelong battle with various ailments and maladies, ranging from minor instances of frostbite to rage-filled meltdowns. Frazer's reflections are distinct and laugh-out-loud funny. During a teen rendezvous, Frazer contemplates how his date, suffering from scoliosis, removes her brace: 'It probably had to involve her entire family, as if they were an Indy pit crew.' It's that kind of spiked, wickedly funny observation that makes this sickness-filled book so easy to swallow. A-" -- Entertainment Weekly "How did Brian Frazer take his neuroses and write a hysterical book, while mine just annoy my family? Seriously, this is one funny book. Damn it." -- Ray Romano "Hyper-chondriac is my new favorite memoir! It was so funny I laughed out loud, so honest I gasped out loud and so relatable I immediately called my therapist. I love this book!" -- Stefanie Wilder-Taylor, author of Sippy Cups are Not for Chardonnay "Brian Frazer has written a very touching and hilarious exploration of family, hypochondria, and road rage. It's awesome." -- Greg Behrendt, coauthor of He's Just Not That Into You "...a riotous romp through a head case's attempts to find inner peace for his own bodily health." -- New York Post "Hyper-chondriac is an amazing book. It's funny, raw, moving and original. And I'm not just saying that because I'm afraid Brian Frazer will be angry at me if I don't." -- A.J. Jacobs, author of The Know-it All "...caustically funny yet quietly moving." -- USA TODAY About the Author Brian Frazer has written for Esquire, Vanity Fair, Premiere, ESPN, Los Angeles and other magazines. A former stand-up comedian, he lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Nancy, and dog, Kenyon. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction: Itching March 2002 My hands were itching. After scratching my palms furiously for about an hour, they were still itching, so I drove to the pharmacy and spent thirty bucks on creams, lotions and gels. The trip was a quick one since I knew the exact aisle and shelf of every cream, lotion and gel (and capsule and tablet and cough expectorant). An hour later, my cream/lotion/gel-coated hands continued to itch, so I called a friend. Josh had been living in Los Angeles longer than I and seemed privy to every local specialist, whereas my collection of doctors was scattered between Boston, New York and Southern California. He referred me to his dermatologist, Dr. Tamm. Dr. Tamm was a stern, bespectacled man of about sixty. He also wore what appeared to be a welder's mask over his thick glasses, apparently so he could see so deeply into peoples' pores that he could make eye contact with the gray matter in their brains. Here's what I expected to happen in that office visit. "Hi, my hands itch." "Use some of this, son!" Dr. Tamm would reply while removing a tube of extra-strength, prescription-only cortisone cream from his front pocket and tossing it to me. "Thank you, sir! I will." "See Donna on the

way out for your billing information."This is what actually happened."Hi, my hands itch." "You seem pretty tense." "Actually, I feel pretty relaxed right now." "Anything stressful happening in your life at the moment? Did you start a new job? Move? Anything?" "Well, I'm getting married in a month." "Are you nervous about the wedding?" "Not at all. I knew ten minutes into our first date I was going to marry her." "Congratulations." "Thanks." "How'd you meet?" "Writing thought-bubbles on a TV show called Blind Date." "Never seen it." "It's like a live comic strip with horny people. I doubt you'd like it." "So, I don't think your itching has anything to do with the wedding. Or anything else that's going on in your external surroundings." "You know that already? You've spent like forty-five seconds with me." "I know, but your energy is overpowering. You're the most uptight, high-strung person I've ever met. The problem isn't in your hands. It's in your head." Dr. Tamm probably had a point. On paper I'm the world's healthiest guy. I eat right, exercise regularly, drink in moderation, have all of the good cholesterol and none of the bad, weigh the same as I did in high school, have ideal blood pressure, am caffeine-free, get plenty of sleep, never smoke and have only missed one day of flossing in the last five years. It's essential that I take tip-top care of myself. Because underneath the wholesome habits and exemplary bodily statistics, I'm an unmitigated, non-synergetic mess. But my body isn't to blame; it's my mind's fault. I've been attempting to regulate this high-maintenance brain of mine since my first baby aspirin. Some kids had guidance counselors. I had hypnotists. Others cried when they got braces. I had anxiety attacks whenever I saw baked beans. Friends collected baseball cards. I collected doctors' cards. Life just didn't feel right unless something was wrong. For me there's always been a certain calmness in being in the diagnostic chair; then at least there's a reason for why life isn't as satisfying and perfect as I'd like it to be. Although I usually don't know what I've got until the experts tell me, once they do, I'm psyched -- as long as there are pills to swallow, creams to rub and warnings to heed. I'm fully capable of generating a new disease every month. Colitis. Prostatitis. Bronchitis (three times, including one stint on antibiotics in England for fifty-seven consecutive days). Hepatitis (the kind that turns you yellow, not the kind that Tommy Lee gave Pamela Anderson). Bigarexia (yes, there is such a thing). And as soon as I've conquered the ailment du jour, I'll just move on to the next disorder. Hastily. But it took a dermatologist to help me realize that I didn't actually have a collection of diseases -- I had just one. Hyper-chondria. A word I've made up for my condition. Now, before I go any further, let me explain the difference between a hypochondriac (not me) and a hyper-chondriac (me). Hypochondria is when you think you're sick but you're really not. The hypochondriac's imaginary symptoms and ailments could theoretically be cured with a variety of placebos -- be they Halloween candy, dog kibble or a plastic button from a rugby shirt. Conversely, placebos don't help hyper-chondriacs because hyper-chondriacs actually are sick. Unlike my hypo brethren, when I go to the doctor, I think I have ailment X and I do. The seed of each disease originates in my hyper brain, which subsequently creates a swirl of inner turmoil and turbulence in my body. I've always been in a rush to do things: I paced in my crib, I barked at my parents to stir my chocolate milk faster, I ran out my walks in Little League. I would also seek revenge on anyone who impeded my path to getting things done quickly. Seemingly every day of my life I've had to restrain myself from punching people in the face. Before I discovered my hyper-chondria, I couldn't even drive more than a mile without honking at someone. And I don't just mean a little tap that says, "Hey...um...excuse me...but the light just changed." I'm talking about holding down the horn with my forehead while simultaneously giving the other car the finger with both hands. Not only was I rushing through life, I was rushing through life in a combative rage. For the better part of my thirty-eight years, my head felt as if it was inhabited by a pair of destructive heavy-metal bands each occupying a brain hemisphere. And neither of them liked the other. So when Dr. Tamm had a solution to my itchy palms I was ready for action. He pulled out his free drug company pen with the word "Doxycycline" printed on the side and scribbled something on his pad, then tore the page off and stared at me as I read it aloud. "Zolof?" "I think it'll help." "Isn't that for depression? Because I'm not depressed. It's one of the few things that doesn't seem to happen to me." "It can be for depression, but it's also used as an anti-anxiety medication." He proceeded to tell me that Zolof was a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor that would help take some of my edge off. Had my friends and family been in the examination room, Dr. Tamm would have undoubtedly been the first dermatologist in history to get a standing ovation. I needed a wake-up call and it didn't have to be from God or a family intervention or a fellow road-rager teaching me a lesson by shooting me with his assault weapon. Besides, I'd seen those enticing TV commercials for Zolof where that adorable little circle-creature turns his life around and it looked really appealing. I mean, it totally worked for that little circle-creature. "Now, there could be side effects such as erection problems, but you let me know if that happens," warned Dr. Tamm. "Sure." "And I don't want you to discuss today's treatment with anyone. Don't tell your friends, don't tell your family members, don't even tell your fiancée." "Why not?" "It's better if you're not self-conscious about people knowing." Keeping secrets from my soon-to-be spouse didn't seem like a good way to start a life together. But Dr. Tamm had seen through me in under a minute, so I figured why not let him push the boundaries of his skin doctor degree. Besides, I was sure my fiancée wouldn't have minded. It's not like Nancy wasn't aware she was about to wed a ragey, sick guy. The first time Nancy slept over she awoke to me stuffing baby diaper rash ointment into each nostril with a Q-tip -- a treatment resulting from three months of mind-numbing dizziness in 1995. Two surgeons were convinced I had a brain tumor; thankfully, a third diagnosed it as nasal polyps. I still required an operation, but not the kind where they cut your skull in half like a cantaloupe. Then there was the Thanksgiving I flew back east to meet Nancy's mother for the first time. In the middle

