



ANXIETY IN THE AFTERMATH OF SCHOOL SHOOTING

Nashville-Based Counselor Sissy Goff Helps Families Navigate Tragedy

**GOFF'S NEW BOOK OFFERS STRATEGIES FOR ANXIOUS PARENTS,
*THE WORRY-FREE PARENT: LIVING IN CONFIDENCE SO YOUR KIDS CAN TOO***



Nashville, TN (March 2023) — On Monday, March 27, the unimaginable happened at The Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee. Just three miles away, counselors at Daystar Counseling Ministries heard of the shooting and responded immediately – grabbing their therapy pets and racing to reunification points to assist families. **Sissy Goff**, Daystar’s Director of Child and Adolescent Counseling, spent the rest of that week helping parents, students and the larger community navigate the aftermath of tragedy. National media outlets, including *CNN*, *Good Morning America*, *Inside Edition*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Christianity Today*, *The Tennessean*, and Katie Couric, tapped **Sissy Goff** to discuss how to care for traumatized children and families.

“As a therapist, I’ve sat with thousands of families over my three decades of counseling children. And I know the heartache and panic that comes with trying to walk kids through trauma,” Goff explains. “This month I had the heart-wrenching privilege of spending time with the Covenant School families, both at the reunification center, at meetings for school parents and teachers, and within the walls of my own counseling office. Those adults wanted to feel

prepared to talk with kids about what felt unspeakable.” Within hours, Goff began publishing Instagram videos to guide parents as they talk with children about traumatic events, including school shootings.

Sissy Goff has been talking to kids and the adults who love them for 30 years, and during the past five years, she watched anxiety grow to epidemic rates. **She warns parents that anxiety is contagious and has an amazing ability to spread.** But it is possible turn the worry tide, Goff says, when parents are willing to see how their own anxiety impacts their children.

National research shows anxiety has increased significantly in children ages 3-17 in the last five years. Anxiety rose 27% from 2016 to 2019, and by 2020, 5.6 million kids (9.2%) had been diagnosed with anxiety problems.[1] Research reveals if a parent has anxiety, their child is seven times more likely to deal with it themselves.[2]

Goff’s new books, arriving August 2023 just before the new school year begins, are entitled *The Worry-Free Parent: Living in Confidence So Your Kids Can Too* and *The Worry-Free Parent Workbook* (both published by Bethany House). This pair of books, written and scheduled for August publication before The Covenant School tragedy, addresses the escalating anxiety of parents and children while offering practical strategies for reducing worry.

“It is my goal to reframe worry for parents,” says Goff. “Parents worry because they are good parents. Even the great Mr. Rogers admitted, ‘It is not possible to be a parent without having times of worry.’ But with the right perspective, appropriate self-reflection and proven tools, parents can turn away from anxiety.”

The Worry-Free Parent and its companion workbook are designed to help parents learn to:

- ✓ Uncover the roots of their own anxiety
- ✓ Process their anxiety in healthy ways rather than passing it on
- ✓ Model bravery in their families
- ✓ Discover a place of deeper, more joyful connection to the moment and to their children

“Parents today are trying harder than ever to do all they can to love their kids,” explains Goff. “I would tell the struggling, concerned parent, ‘I see you. You’re brave enough to look at how your life impacts your kids.’ Because I truly believe that parents who examine their own lives and deal with their own stuff are giving the very best gift to the next generation.”

Each chapter of *The Worry-Free Parent* addresses five different core truths, including memorable and applicable concepts such as:

- 5 Things True about Anxiety
- 5 Ways Parents Have Gotten to an Anxious Place
- 5 Ways the Anxiety of Parents Impacts the Anxiety of Kids
- 5 Ways Anxiety Impacts Your Body
- 5 Things to Do to Help Your Anxious Heart
- 5 Ways Parents Can Learn to Trust Their Gut

In addition to *The Worry-Free Parent*, **Sissy Goff** has written three popular guides for tackling anxiety among girls: *Raising Worry-Free Girls* (for parents), *Braver, Stronger, Smarter* (for girls ages 8-11), and *Brave* (for teen girls).

About Sissy Goff



Sissy Goff, LPC-MHSP, has worked as the director of child and adolescent counseling at Daystar Counseling Ministries since 1993. She speaks to parents and children's ministers across the country and is a frequent guest on media outlets such as *Southern Living*, *NBC Nightly News*, *CNN*, *Good Morning America*, *Focus on the Family*, *That Sounds Fun*, *Family Life Today*, *Fox News*, and many more. **Sissy Goff** is the author of 13 books including her latest, *The Worry-Free Parent*. She co-hosts the chart-topping *Raising Boys and Girls* podcast, with fellow Daystar Counselor David Thomas. The podcast just celebrated more than 5 million downloads to date. www.RaisingBoysandGirls.com @RaisingBoysandGirls



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RESOURCES ON ANXIETY & WORRY FROM SISSY GOFF

ARRIVING AUGUST 2023

For Parents: *The Worry-Free Parent: Living in Confidence So Your Kids Can Too*

Workbook: *The Worry-Free Parent Workbook: Learning to Live in Confidence So Your Kids Can Too*

MORE FROM SISSY GOFF

For parents: *Raising Worry-Free Girls: Helping Your Daughter Feel Braver, Stronger, and Smarter in an Anxious World*

For teen girls: *Brave: A Teen Girl's Guide to Beating Worry and Anxiety*

For younger girls: *Braver, Stronger, Smarter: A Girl's Guide to Overcoming Worry & Anxiety*

www.RaisingBoysandGirls.com

[1] Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, accessed March 23, 2023, <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2022/03/24/research-update-childrens-anxiety-and-depression-on-the-rise/>

[2] Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons, *Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children* (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2013), 35.

Advance Praise for Sissy Goff and *The Worry-Free Parent*



“Every parent needs **Sissy Goff** in their corner. Her grace-filled advice always reminds me of what’s at the heart of my worries—my desire to be the best mom I can be. This book gave me the tools to be exactly that.”

- **Emily Ley**, bestselling author of *Grace, Not Perfection*



“In this well-researched and deeply practical book, **Sissy Goff** serves as a trusted guide and counselor to help you overcome the crushing weight of worry and move into more freedom and peace as a parent. Whether you are just stressing a little over minor things or feeling suffocated and strangled by fear of the present and future, Sissy’s words of encouragement will be a balm of hope and hands-on help for your weary heart!”

-**Crystal Paine**, *New York Times* bestselling author, podcaster, founder of MoneySavingMom.com, and mom of six



“My friend Sissy has done it again. Drawing on years of clinical practice and extensive research, Sissy wrote a book specifically to support parents. Parents are living busier and more distracted lives. When meeting with parents who express worries about their kids (or themselves), I first offer encouragement and then a resource—a tool to help them feel calmer and more equipped. This gem of a book does both. Anxiety plays tricks and lies. Sissy offers truth and helps parents gain mastery over anxiety by guiding us to do our own ‘worry work.’”

-**Chinwé Williams**, PhD, owner and principal therapist, Meaningful Solutions Counseling & Consulting; coauthor of *Seen: Healing Despair and Anxiety in Kids and Teens through the Power of Connection*



“Our family has been greatly impacted by the words, wisdom, and counsel of **Sissy Goff**. *The Worry-Free Parent* is another powerful tool that is helping my wife and me navigate the imperfect journey of parenthood. We all need help along the way, and helpers like Sissy are a gift from God.”

-Christian recording artist **Matthew West** and his wife, **Emily West**

Suggested Questions for Sissy Goff

*Anxiety is an isolator, but it is certainly not an isolated issue.
In almost every situation in which I've had an anxious child or teen in my office,
they have had at least one anxious parent.*

-Sissy Goff, LPC-MHSP, Daystar Counseling (Nashville TN)

- ▶ You were immediately interacting with the families of the Covenant School. How is the community in the aftermath of the shooting? How has it affected anxiety levels for both parents and kids?
- ▶ Why is anxiety the primary mental health problem facing children and teens today? How have you seen this issue escalate among children you counsel?
- ▶ How do school shootings impact anxiety among kids and parents nationally, not just in the community where the shooting took place?
- ▶ You write that “anxiety is contagious.” How so?
- ▶ What is the common denominator in all people – of all ages – who battle anxiety?
- ▶ How does anxiety manifest itself for parents?
Your book describes five ways that a parent’s anxiety impacts their kids. Can you unpack that with us today?
- ▶ What is the relationship between fear, worry, and anxiety?
- ▶ You write that we all worry to some degree. How can a concerned parent know if their worries are veering toward chronic anxiety?
- ▶ What are specific ways adults can create security for the anxious kids in their life?
- ▶ What do you feel trips up even the most well-meaning parents these days?
- ▶ What are the two most common coping strategies for anxiety? How and why are those strategies not working for us?
- ▶ You say that “past hurts mixed with present pressure will impact the future.” What does that mean for those struggling with anxiety?
- ▶ You tell parents to “let go of the bottom 20%.” What do you mean by this phrase?
- ▶ How would you encourage the anxious parent listening today? Or the perfectionistic parent?
- ▶ Where can parents connect with you and pick up their copies of your new books, **The Worry-Free Parent** and its workbook?



GUEST: **SISSY GOFF** (LPC-MHSP, Licensed Counselor)
Director of Child and Adolescent Counseling, Daystar Counseling, Nashville, TN
BOOK: ***The Worry-Free Parent: Living in Confidence So Your Kids Can Too***
(book + workbook, Bethany House)
AVAILABLE: August 2023
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