

**Dear Steve,**

Throughout the years I have clenched my teeth. But this past year seems to be the worst. I wake up with pain in my jaw. And sometimes, during the day, I get minor headaches from the clenching. I try not to grind my teeth, but I'm not too successful at that.

My job is somewhat stressful. And I worry a lot about not doing things right or producing enough. Also, I first noticed the problem about 5 years ago, when I changed jobs, bought a house, and we had our first son. I know it's stress, but I have a tough time knowing what to do with it.

Tired of worrying,  
Dan - Chicago, IL

**Dear Dan,**

Grinding your teeth, also known as Bruxism, can definitely cause problems if not addressed. So can worrying. There seem to be many expectations about your performance and the roles you try to play - perfect father, husband and employee. I question whether or not you enjoy your job. Are there things that could change if you would just "open your mouth" and speak up? Or do you feel you need to merely "grit your teeth and bear it."

Notice when you grind your teeth, and what you were thinking about within a few minutes of doing so. Get to the positive thought and relax. You can also program your subconscious to notice any grinding, then to accept the positive thought, and relax.

I recommend you do some brainstorming to find alternative means of meeting your own and others' needs. Having unreasonable expectations (which could have been learned during childhood) is unhealthy because it usually ends with failure. It's hard to meet others' demands, especially if you have set it up to "have to" do better than your best. It's okay to have lower expectations. With each success, you can then raise the expectations appropriately.

**Positive Thought To Manifest:** I am in the perfect place at the perfect time, successfully engaged in the perfect activities, with the perfect people. I safely share that feeling with others.

Expect yourself to make reasonable goals,  
Steve