

What worries you?
The Danville News
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"What, Me Worry?"
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What, me worry? Yes, me worry. We worry. We'd be mad not to worry. The question is: what kind of worries do we have? Next question: what type of worry?

Don't worry, be happy. Come on, get serious. There's plenty to worry about. What worries you?

Following one pulpit supply gig, a fellow assumed that I wanted to receive his emails and all the links he thought I should read. It's all political indigestion. Material often misinformed. Often mocking others. I finally replied by suggesting that instead of spending time getting obsessed over things that cause tantrums, we might benefit from rereading the Sermon on the Mount. I know I sure could. He hasn't sent me anything since.

Worry. It doesn't mean we shouldn't be concerned, prudent, or upset. Bad worry means a worry that obsesses you, strangles you, the way a cat worries a mouse. When we get anxious, we start doing nutty things. When anxious, we want relief, often resorting to unhelpful fixes. When we worry, we shut down – full denial immobility -- or panic and act rashly in haste. Afterwards, I sometimes realize how ludicrously I reacted.

Geisinger's finest neurologist delivered a church talk on the topic of stress, differentiating between good and bad stress. Stress: "producing normal physical response to events where you feel threatened, upset, or imbalanced." Not as if we'll ever experience a stress-free life, right? The issue is handling it. Your surgeon walks into your room followed by a gaggle of unfamiliar white coats. You read the newspaper or listen to the TV news. How often do we torment ourselves about a past we cannot change? A past that we let rule us today? How often do we fret about a future that hasn't happened yet? The curse of our own apprehensions and expectations? Pray for a good harvest, a Scottish proverb recommends, but keep on hoeing. True. Watching Ernie Kovacs, Laurel and Hardy, Monty Python also is cleansing

What, me worry? Yes, me worry. Let's sing-along with folksinger Glenn Yarborough: "Worry is a rocking chair, You go back and forth but you get nowhere."

Would you like a Mayan worry doll? I've begun to sleep with my Mayan worry doll, a Honduran gift. As Central American legend goes, I tell her my worries at night, then slip her under my pillow. When I wake refreshed, I listen to her whisper how I can handle my worries.

There is good stress. Someone runs the red light. Your body acts to hit your brakes. There is bad stress. Grinding your molars, kicking your cat, ulcers, sleepless nights, short-tempered, hair loss, punching the wall, Jersey gestures. Bad stress: taking your issues out on others. You may have heard about Toxic Stress and how Adverse Childhood Events require early intervention. Growing up abused, impoverished, neglected, berated, produces disease and social maladjustment, which is why hospitals must partner medical treatments with social workers to promote emotional, psychological, and spiritual resilience. Someone caring observed: "Better to build healthy children than repair broken men"

One of my demons is rage. Others have experienced my wee bit of temper. There's a scar on the back of my right hand when I punched my fist through a window. In third grade, I ripped a door off its hinges. Despite being a proud Jerseyan, I try to reign in my temper. I did so the other Sunday when driving to Sunbury. A pushy driver tailgated me, frustrated with me driving the speed limit. Bless me, I behaved. I didn't go Jersey on him. I can't always contain it, however, especially whenever there are valid reasons to become enraged. Rage rose in my gorge the other week, hearing about those innocents brutalized, shamed, tortured, butchered by Hamas terrorists. I become enraged wherever mobs maltreat people. My stomach churns over willful cruelty. My first real lavatory fistfight happened in Junior High, me sick and tired of a bully picking on my friend. It ended up with me laughing at the situation and him. My two older brothers punched harder.

The problem is that my rage, however justified, only worsens the situation. Sowing Dragon's teeth. Got to break the cycle without compromising principles or morality. Why do we manufacture these terrible nightmares? Yes, there be real Halloween monsters and ghouls, and they are us. When all choices are horrible, how to choose the least worst? The source of my faith had the guts to warn us how we mustn't let their inhumanity make us inhuman.