

Spiritual Tip

Don't Worry!

By Rick Warren

The number one source of stress in your life is not work. It's worry. Work doesn't keep you up at night; worry does.

God is very clear in the Bible what he thinks about worry. Philippians 4:6 says, "Don't worry about anything" (NLT).

Why do you need to let go of your worry?

Worry is unreasonable for a couple of reasons. First, worry exaggerates the problem. Have you noticed if somebody says something bad about you, the more you think about it, the bigger it gets? Second, worry doesn't work. To worry about something you can't change is useless. And to worry about something you can change is stupid. Just go change it!

Worry is unnatural. There are no born worriers. You might think you are, but you're not. Worry is something you learned. Since worry is unnatural, it's also unhealthy. Your body wasn't designed to handle worry. When people say, "I'm worried sick," they're telling the truth. Doctors say a lot of people could leave the hospital today if they knew how to get rid of guilt, resentment, and worry. Proverbs 14:30 says, "A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body" (NLT).

Worry is unhelpful. Worry cannot change the past, and worry cannot control the future. All it does is mess up today. The only thing that worry changes is you. It makes you miserable! It's never solved a problem. It's unhelpful.

Worry is unnecessary. God made you, he created you, he saved you, and he put his Spirit in you. Don't you think he's going to take care of your needs? There's no need to worry.

The first step in stress management is to refuse to worry about anything. Why? Because it's unreasonable, unnatural, unhelpful, and unnecessary.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 5:7, "You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon him, for you are his personal concern" (AMP).

God personally cares about you and for your needs. You know all those things you're stressing, anxious, and worried about? Let it go. Give it to God.

Talk It Over

- What does your worry say about how much you trust God?
- What is it you are worried about? What can you do to change it?
- How can you practically "throw your anxieties" on God?

Parenting Tip

"Boy" Behavior

By John Rosemond

Question: My 6-year-old son is a bright and friendly kindergartner. Each day a color coded chart is sent home about his behavior. This year he's gone through several spells during which he will have a "bad color" for several days in a row. Each time this occurs we punish him by not allowing him to play soccer, sending him to bed early, confining him to his room for the evening, or taking away TV, but none of this is having any long-term effect. The misbehavior—talking out of turn and not keeping his hands to himself—will happen for a few days, then stop for a week or two, then start happening again, and so on. Your advice?

Answer: Today's parents have a "magical" belief in consequences. They believe that behavior modification (the manipulation of reward and punishment to "shape" behavior), used properly, will cure any behavior problem. When a behavior modification-based approach doesn't work, the conclusion is either (a) it wasn't used properly or (b) the child in question has a disorder that renders him immune to "normal discipline."

First, consequences do not work reliably with human beings. Another way of saying this is that behavior modification-based discipline sometimes has no lasting effect (as you've discovered) and can even backfire. Punishing a child for a certain misbehavior can make the child that much more determined to get his way, for example.

When you use a proper consequence for a certain behavior problem and the behavior does not improve, the thing to do is stay the course. Continue using the proper consequence. Unfortunately, at that point, most parents begin an increasingly-frustrated search for a consequence that will solve the problem. In so doing, they run the risk of beginning to zig-zag all over the disciplinary playing field.

Most adults, if they look back on their childhoods, will realize that they developed misbehaviors that no consequence on God's green earth would have stopped them from doing. We all develop misbehaviors during childhood that we carry into our adult lives. Our parents' best efforts to help us solve these problems failed. We had to come to grips with them as adults. We had to take full responsibility for them and purge them from our lives.

The second thing I need to tell you is that talking impulsively and not keeping one's hands to oneself is a symptom of "boy." When all is said and done, and despite the fact that they are inappropriate to a classroom setting, they are not serious problems. He is not doing anything malicious or pre-sociopathic.

Unfortunately, schools have lost tolerance for "boy." They hold boys to a female standard of behavior which is one reason why lots more boys than girls are diagnosed with the disorders referred to above.

So, you're doing fine. Just stay the course. Keep in mind that your job is not to correct all of his problems before he becomes an adult. You can't, and the attempt to do so will drive you nuts. Look around you. There are lots of moms who are driving themselves nuts trying to raise perfect kids. Right? Right. Don't go there.

Marriage Tip

7 Things No Spouse Can Be Expected To Do – Part 1

(Part 2 next week)

By Winifred Reilly

Want to guess?

Hint: I'm not talking about the laundry or housework or some wild, exotic move in the bedroom.

The main thing that no spouse can be expected to do is

...live up to your dreams.

If you want to have a happy marriage, you need to let go of your expectations that he or she will.

Face it, your spouse is simply a person with strengths and limitations, wisdom and blind spots — a person who will, if you're lucky, both charm you and annoy you for the rest of your days. Even if your spouse is slated to be Spouse of the Year, no one can be expected to give you everything that you want.

We all come into marriage with our unique set of expectations — about ourselves, our partner, and about what marriage will be.

Quite often these expectations are not articulated.

Sometimes we're not even aware that we have them.

Frequently we assume our partner's expectations are the same as ours.

Expectations are based on a fantasy about how life (and our partner) is

supposed to be. Unfortunately, fantasy and reality rarely match up.

Even those of us who see ourselves as practical and down-to-earth got married with some expectations that were too lofty to meet. I expected, for example, that my husband and I would be levelheaded problem solvers, even though both of us have fiery tempers and tend to be stubborn. I expected, as well, that because we had similar values, we wouldn't have all that many problems to solve in the first place.

Most of us are inclined to think that our expectations are perfectly reasonable. Some of us even think they're our due. The truth is, most of the expectations people have are unrealistic. When they're not met, many think there's something wrong with the relationship rather than the trouble lying with the expectations they brought in the first place.

Many people think expectations set standards when, most often, they're a set-up for disappointment or frustration.

My friends in AA say that "Expectations are resentments waiting to happen."

Why set yourself up for struggle? For the sake of your marriage, it's time to stop expecting your spouse to...

1. Change.

No news here, right? Read any relationship blog and you're likely to be told that you can't change your spouse. Occasionally someone will be clever and say that, in fact, you can, but the solution is — no surprise — you have to change yourself first.

Expecting change is a set-up for disappointment. Requesting change is

another thing entirely, though even the most reasonable and respectful requests are not guaranteed to be met.

We all know what happens when we insist on change: our partner resentfully complies or defiantly digs in. Now and again we may get an "I'll think about it" which is, quite often, a "no" in sheep's clothing.

While I would never suggest people live in situations where they're treated badly, figuring out how to live in a less than ideal world with the spouse that we picked is a fruitful endeavor.

Sustained change comes only when we take ahold of ourselves and our issues and make needed changes because we aspire to be healthier.

If you've got energy to spare, focus your attention on changing the things you need to change in yourself. You may inspire your spouse to do it too.

2. Validate your reality.

Say your spouse insisted that the sky is green. Would you feel compelled to debate it?

Maybe? Maybe not?

What if he said that you interrupted him, but you didn't think that you did? Or she said you moved the car keys when you know full well that you left them on the hook? Would you argue about that?

I've seen couples quibble over the most irrelevant details, striving to have their versions match up: You said we were leaving at 5. No, I said 5:15. No, I'm sure you said 5. No, that was last week.

Holding the tension of seeing things differently — the two of you remembering wildly divergent and often

contradictory details — requires that you have a solid enough sense of self to, essentially, not care. In other words, to accept that you will never reconcile your two versions and that it's best to let go.

Too often we can feel threatened when our point of view is not validated, especially by someone as important to us as our spouse. By validation I mean that we want our partner to agree with us, to say that our point of view has merit, to say that we're right.

What would it take to calm down and trust your own knowing when your partner isn't offering any support?

So what if the two of you don't see eye-to-eye? More challenging, still, what if your version and your spouse's have so few details in common that you're left scratching your head?

As we all know, memory is fallible, so your version may be as inaccurate as your spouse's. Even so, being able to validate yourself is essential to your well-being and will make you calmer and happier in the long run.

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