



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Worry

Over a half century ago, MAD magazine debuted on the American scene with its unique brand of humor and perspective on life. Its primary character, Alfred E. Neuman, quickly developed a following because of his goofy smile, his half-witted wisdom, and his timely question, "What? Me worry?" Alfred's question gives a face to the saying, "If you're calm while everyone around you is freaking out, maybe you just don't know what's going on."

While Alfred seemed to have escaped the snare of worry, most of us are quite familiar with it. It's not that we enjoy it. It's just that it seems so normal, so natural, and maybe even expected from a truly caring person.

Yet, we were not created to suffer the misery of worry. It is, sadly, one more evidence of the brokenness of our world. The good news is that we have the option to resist it and replace it with something better. To do this, however, we must first have a clear understanding of the nature of worry. Let's note four "worry truths".

1) "Worry" is not the same as "caring". It is also not the same as "anxiety". While anxiety may have a worry component to it, it is typically less focused than worry and often has a biological basis. And while caring is directed toward others, worry is

primarily self-focused! How can this be? It's because ...

2) We worry about what we can't control. The things we can control, or at least influence, we work on hoping to produce the outcome we desire. The things we can't control through our efforts frustrate, annoy, and worry us.

3) All worry boils down to one fear - that things won't be as we want them to be, or more simply, that we won't get what we want. While this may seem to be a cold and harsh statement, a simple test may clarify its truth. Briefly note any area of personal worry, and see how easily it can be followed by the words, "... and that's not how I want it to be." Even those areas that stem from caring about others morph into fears of personal hurt or disappointment by the time they translate into worry. Thus, worry appears primarily self-centered.

4) Worry consumes time, energy, and effort that might better be directed toward constructive action in areas where we can have a positive influence.

So what can we do about worry? Here are a few suggestions.

1) Decide that worry is not an inevitable, inescapable part of life. Refuse to give worry more power than the Spirit that lives within us.

2) Assume our proper position in life. Just as worry is not the boss over us, so we are not the boss over everything that

happens in our life. We have been given strength and power to exercise, and responsibilities to fulfill, but we have no right to assume that everything will unfold as we want it to, no matter how right and just and caring our wishes are. To embrace our proper position in life, we must ...

3) Be humble. Humility is not weakness, insignificance, or passivity. It is recognizing our proper limitations, living with power, excellence, and significance within them, honoring the importance and value of others, and thankfully serving the Creator God who truly is our Lord.

4) Be active. Releasing worry doesn't mean passively resolving ourselves to whatever may be, but rather using our energy wisely to exert a constructive, positive influence where we can. It might be directed toward a specific goal outside or within oneself. While personal growth and development may not keep unpleasant things from happening, they do empower us to better handle whatever comes our way.

5) Trust - Trust the Creator God that He truly is present, loving, and wise to a degree that is beyond our human ability to comprehend.

Worry is a bully with no ability to enhance or improve our lives. Let's evict it (as often as needed) and replace it with loving concern rooted in confident trust. Relief awaits!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Worry

Have you ever gone on a vacation and found yourself confronted with unexpected conditions that you were totally unprepared for? So it is with our life in this world. We were never designed to be broken creatures, in a broken relationship with our God, living in a broken world. We were designed to be creatures in a perfect world enjoying an intimate relationship with our Creator God. But as they say in the Wizard of Oz, "We're not in Kansas anymore."

Seeing the reality of our situation, we can better understand how worry sets in as we try to take on tasks and responsibilities we were never empowered to accomplish. We try to control what we can't, or assume there is no control, and develop fear and anger as we await the random results of our failure.

We were never designed to handle all the brokenness of this world. But that's okay! We don't need to.

Once we recognize the present reality of our Creator God and the healed relationship we can enjoy with Him because of Christ's work, we are freed to release our fears and our attempts to control our world and turn these duties back over to God, whose they were from the beginning. Bathed in the security of our divine relationship, we can focus on being the best we can be in whatever arena we are called to serve, and leave the rest to our God.

Things won't always make sense to us and we won't always get what we want, but as long as we trust in the loving wisdom of our God, we can confidently live, free from the worry of what will be.



"What worries you, masters you."
- Haddon W. Robinson

"Worry is a futile thing, it's somewhat like a rocking chair, Although it keeps you occupied, it doesn't get you anywhere."
- Anonymous