

## **Fear and Anxiety in 2018: Reflections on Contemporary Living**

### **Meet Sally**

-trying live as Christian, apprehensive, alternates between paralysis and over-functioning  
-jumpy, edgy, heightened senses, tense muscles, heart rate increases, poor breathing, etc.

### **Sally Meets Culture Expert**

-overestimation of danger and the underestimation of our ability to cope with our own lives  
-same is true in our relationship with colleagues, parents, children, grandchildren, friends  
-anxious and fearful for others and their ability to cope > paralysis or hyper over-function

- undergraduates reporting overwhelming anxiety -2011- 50%; 2016- 62%
- freshmen- feeling overwhelmed by all I have to do-1985- 18%; 2010- 29%; 2016- 41%  
(American College Health Association; Higher Education Research Institute)

-Gandhi- There is more to life than increasing its speed.  
-any speed limit in culture? do I have a speed limit? does God have a speed limit for me?

### **Sally Meets Counsellor**

-DSM-5 (Diagnostic Statistical Manual)- Anxiety Disorders (separation anxiety disorder, selective mutism, specific phobia, social phobia, panic disorder, agoraphobia (place/situation difficult to escape), and generalized anxiety disorder) distinct from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders and Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders

-worry- thinking process around what ifs

-anxiety- free floating apprehension with no specific object or event in focus

-fear- response to a known and specific threat/danger

-panic- extension of fear in an extreme and overwhelming form

-environmental and genetic issues (twin studies)

-brain- amygdala and hippocampus important as well as neurotransmitters

-developmentally- fear important-1- noises; 2- departure of parent; 3-6- auditory

-counselling will

- a. address the EAC and the link with PRHES
- b. help kill the ANTS- automatic negative thoughts
- c. move what-ifs to even-ifs

### **Sally Meets God (Psalm 46)**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Selah <sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. <sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. <sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. <sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah <sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. <sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. <sup>10</sup> He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." <sup>11</sup> The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

### **What is Outside Sally? What is Inside Sally? Who is With Sally?**

-outside culture>lifestyle choices; inside issues>counselling; with you?>embracing God

## Reflecting on Contemporary Culture

1. Think about the speed of our culture. What are the factors that play into the speed? What needs to change so we go slower? Do what degree are you impacted by the increasing speed all around us? What influence is it having on your own worry, fear, and anxiety?

2. In his 1907 book, *Through the Eye of the Needle*, William Dean Howells was concerned about the influence trains were having on contemporary culture. He wrote:

*People are born and married and live and die in the midst of an uproar so frantic that you would think they would go mad of it; and I believe the physicians really attribute something of the growing prevalence of neurotic disorders to the wear and tear of the nerves from the rush of the trains passing almost momentarily, and the perpetual jarring of the earth and air from the swift transit.*

In what way are our senses bombarded in 2018 to such a degree that the wear and tear on our nerves is contributing to the growing prevalence of neurotic disorders in our day?

3. In his 1883 book, *The Right to be Lazy*, Paul Lafargue spoke about the overwork of laborers:

*Cannot the laborers understand that by over-working themselves they exhaust their own strength and that of their progeny, that they are used up and long before their time come to be incapable of any work at all, that absorbed and brutalized by this single vice they are no longer men but pieces of men, that they kill within themselves all beautiful faculties, to leave nothing alive and flourishing except the furious madness for work.*

Think of your workplace, whether it is inside/outside the home or paid/unpaid. To what degree is the pace of your workplace contributing to your own worry, fear, and anxiety?

4. Speedometer Exercise. The speedometer below goes from 0 km to 240 km. Think about the speed of your life and lifestyle and your typical week. Select a number for these three.

- \_\_\_ Speed I travel most of the time.
- \_\_\_ Speed I would like to travel most of the time.
- \_\_\_ Speed limit I think God has posted for me at this point in my life.

Don't tell them your three speeds, but ask your spouse/best friend(s)/roommate/family their answer to these three questions about you and see how your kms compare.

