

ISSUE 4

What Are You Worried About?

Everybody is always worried about something. Many times, their worries are counterproductive. When someone feels unwell, going to a doctor is a good, proactive step that may lead to a solution of the problem. But it does not help anyone to worry about a medical condition instead of seeing the doctor or, after seeing the doctor, to worry about the results of the medical tests. The results may be bad, but worrying about them won't change them. Instead of worrying, people should spend their time and energy seeking solutions to their problems — writing a will, or planning a budget, or making vacation reservations, or outlining a business proposal.

What is your biggest source of worry?

- (1) My job
- (2) My finances
- (3) My health
- (4) My kids
- (5) My friends
- (6) My sweetheart
- (7) My other relatives
- (8) My neighbors



-counterproductive : having a result that is the opposite of the one intended

-proactive : taking action and making changes before problems happen

-outline : describe (sth) in a general way, giving the main points but not the details

Sample Answers

(A) My parents always warned me that someday I'd have kids of my own and hoped that my kids would not be as great a cause of concern to me as I had been to my parents. Well, I guess it's pay-back time! Hardly a day goes by that I don't have some reason to be worried about them: their safety, their grades, their friends, their habits, their future. I've learned what my parents meant, *the hard way*.

(B) I hate my boss and worry about what he's going to do next to make my life miserable. He enjoys *humiliating* me in front of my co-workers and never praises me for a job well done. I'm afraid he's looking for some excuse to *fire* me. Then, instead of worrying about my boss, I'd have to worry about finding another job to take care of my family.

Speak Your Mind

1. What are the common worries ordinary people have?
2. What is their most serious worry?
3. As soon as one problem is solved, another seems to *pop up* immediately. Why?
4. With whom do you usually talk about personal matters?
5. What particular worries do the following people have?
 - (a) parents
 - (b) kids
 - (c) the rich
 - (d) the poor
 - (e) the famous
6. Is there any difference between how men and women worry?

- **the hard way** : through learning from the unpleasant consequences of mistakes

- **humiliate** : make (sb) feel ashamed and upset, esp. by making that person seem stupid or weak

- **fire** : discharge (sb) from a job

- **pop up** : appear suddenly

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

6. Is there any difference between how men and women worry?

F : Aren't you worried about your son in the military?

M : Of course I am! Don't you think I should be?

F : Of course you should be. But you never talk about it. So I assumed that you weren't bothered at all.

M : Talking about it won't make it any better. It's a situation that won't just go away immediately. But meanwhile I'm worried about him every single day.

F : If it were my son, I'd be talking about the problem every day to everybody. That wouldn't solve the problem or relieve my worries, but it would make dealing with the situation easier.

M : I don't know if it is somehow biological or merely social, but that is certainly one difference in the way men and women typically behave. A man *internalizes* his worries and keeps them to himself, while a woman more freely *communicates* her emotions. I wonder why that is.

F : Yes, I've often thought about that. Maybe it's *evolutionary*.

M : In what way?

F : For centuries and centuries, most women stayed behind in the camp or village with other women, and they would talk to each other to help pass the time while they cooked, made clothing, watched the kids, or *tilled* the fields.

M : OK. Go on.

-**internalize** : make (sth) personal

-**communicate** : express thoughts, feelings, or information to (sb) else

-**evolutionary** : connected with a gradual process of change and development

-**till** : prepare land for crops to be planted

F : The men, on the other hand, would be away from home and spending much of their time alone, engaged in activities that required a lot of silence, like tracking down animals for food or protecting the camp against enemies. And they needed to appear brave and strong in order to gain the respect of their *comrades*, so it was easier to pretend that they weren't afraid or worried at all by keeping their mouths shut.

M : So you're saying over time, these two modes — being talkative and being silent — became *ingrained* in the two *psyches*?

F : Sure. It makes sense to me.

M : So you think men and women are fundamentally different.

F : I think there are many differences. They are not exactly the same, biologically or psychologically. But that doesn't mean that one is better than the other. Men and women are equally capable of doing any job, but they may still do them differently.

M : Hmm. I'll have to think about your *remarks* for a while.

F : Fine. But after *mulling it over*, don't forget to talk to me about it. We're not robots, you know; we can consciously *alter* our behaviors, despite *millennia* of programming.

