

A LOONEY prescription for ANGER, AGITATION, ANNOYANCE and ANXIETY

What do you do when you are angry? Where do you go with aggravation, anxiety, agitation or annoyance? Some people eat, some have a drink. Others hit a punching bag or try to take control of the situation in some way. As a physician, I recommend you try a cigar. Yes, that's right - sit back, relax and take a few slow, deep inhalations. Of course, you've got to be careful to get the best kind of cigar. The only good smoke is holy smoke! So light up (or lighten up), and join me for a few puffs on the only cigar that won't cause cancer or stain your teeth.

Take a few deep breaths. If you are feeling anxious or angry, the first thing to do is to -

Confess it. When you feel your agitation rising, acknowledge it. Take a deep breath and let it out. *Confess* your feeling - name it. Worrying is sin, but confession brings forgiveness and healing. And don't think that saying it will make it more real. It is holding it inside that gives it power to control you.

Investigate it. After you identify the fear or frustration, try looking for its source. *Investigate*. Are there issues or feelings that you are avoiding? Is the issue one of control or fear of failure? Are you afraid of exposure or loss of esteem? Is there a sense of abandonment? Are you dealing with a lack of trust in God's character or in your own ability to persevere? Be as clear as you are able. Keep your level of curiosity high and ask God for understanding. He knows your heart and he wants you to know it as well.

Give thanks. It is difficult to be glad when adversity knocks, but the apostle James says to "count it all joy when you meet with various trials". Anxiety and thanksgiving are like oil and water, one tends to displace the other. So *give thanks*. Make your attitude one of gratitude. God is still God. He is in control and you are not. Be thankful.

Ask. Now is the time to tell God just what you want. Make a request and be as specific as you can be. He tells us to *ask*. Be sure to ask for wisdom and growth in love as well as for whatever else you have in mind.

Release it. Finally, let go!!! Whatever the problem, *release it* to God. We are told to cast our cares on Him because He cares for us. Heave those fears. God's shoulders are broad. And when the anxieties come around again, remind yourself that you have released them to God. *Receive* God's peace. Let it reign in your heart.

This process restates what the apostle Paul tells us about anxiety and peace. Memorize Philippians 4: 4-6 to help you avoid anxiety and annoyance. And don't forget this prescription. Have a cigar! Write it out and read it aloud when you are stressed. And "don't worry, be happy!"