

When Bad Things Happen
Rabbi Deborah J. Brin 12.15.18

Neurological responses to stress:

- a. fight/flight Walter Cannon, 1927-1932. Primary neurochemical/hormone is adrenaline (epinephrine).
- b. freeze [tonic immobility] G.G. Gallup, 1977
- c. tend/befriend Shelley Taylor, et al 2000. Primary neurochemical/hormone is oxytocin

In 2000, UCLA social psychologist Shelley Taylor and her colleagues wrote an influential article in *Psychological Review*, which Taylor later expanded into a book called *The Tending Instinct*, to propose that when it comes to stress, women are different from men. Instead of getting ready to fight or to flee, women become more likely to express affiliative social behavior, either to befriend the enemy - if there is an enemy and is causing the stress - or to seek social support from their family members or friends. Physiologically, instead of releasing large amounts of norepinephrine and cortisol into the bloodstream the way men do, Taylor argued that women respond to stress by secreting more endorphins - neurochemical substances that help alleviate pain and make us feel good about social interactions - and oxytocin, a neurohormone that is linked to the motivation to behave in a friendly manner to children or close social partners. [underlined words are embedded in the article on the website].

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/games-primates-play/201203/gender-differences-in-responses-stress-it-boils-down-single-gene>

Personal responses to stress:

- a. Resilience: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. [OED]
- b. Perseverance: Persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. [OED]
- c. Hope: A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen. [OED]
- d. Prayer:
 1. A solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or another deity. [OED]
 2. The “root meaning [of T’FI-LA] as a *clarifying* and *connecting*, a *judging* and *joining* of one’s thoughts, impressions, and energies to Divine purpose . . . “ Everett Gendler, “Three contributions to Prayer” in Response: A Contemporary Jewish Review, Fall-Winter 1982
- e. Also . . . depression, despondency, rage, fear, hopelessness, helplessness . . .

Harold Kushner: When Bad Things Happen to Good People

“What do we do with our pain so that it becomes meaningful and not just pointless empty suffering?” p.87

“In the final analysis, the question of why bad things happen to good people translates itself into some very different questions, no longer asking why something

happened, but asking how we will respond, what we intend to do now that it has happened.” p. 197

Elie Wiesel [Commencement, class of 2011 Washington University, St. Louis]
“The greatest commandment to me in the Bible is not the Ten Commandments. (First of all, it’s too difficult to observe; second, we all pretend to observe.) **My commandment is ‘Thou shall not stand idly by.’** Which means, when you witness an injustice: Don’t stand idly by. When you hear of a person or a group being persecuted: Do not stand idly by. When there is something wrong with the community around you or far away: Do not stand idly by. **You must intervene. You must interfere. And that is actually the motto of human rights.**”

NOTE: based on Leviticus 19:16 “Do not stand idly by while your neighbor’s blood is shed”.

Margaret Mead — ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’

From the news:

“Thai cave rescue: Boys soccer team and coach all out of cave” JUL 10 / CBS/AP
[HTTPS://WWW.CBSNEWS.COM/LIVE-NEWS/THAI-CAVE-RESCUE-SOCCER-TEAM-ALL-OUT-OF-CAVE-IN-THAILAND-2018-07-10-LIVE-UPDATES/](https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/thai-cave-rescue-soccer-team-all-out-of-cave-in-thailand-2018-07-10-live-updates/)

“Church’s endless service stops deportation” *Albuquerque Journal* 11.29.18
attributed to *Washington Post* “Since October, the Hague-based Bethel Church has held an uninterrupted service to prevent authorities from entering the premises and deporting the family living there. According to Dutch law, police officers are not allowed to enter churches while services are ongoing.”

“Calif. fire gives rise to family-reuniting ‘angels’” *Albuquerque Journal* 12.11.18
attributed to *Associated Press*. “They have become known as the Angels of Paradise. But there is nothing ethereal about them. They are online sleuths who know how to find people, and they have been putting their skills to use in the aftermath of California’s catastrophic wildfire. . . Nancy Collins knew she could help. A mother of two and a 911 dispatcher, Collins volunteers as a “search angel,” someone who helps adoptees find their biological parents. She knows her way around public records and how to track people down. . . . “I said, ‘I have a bunch of genealogy friends, and we can help,’” said Collins, who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and formed a team of eight “angels” from around the country and one in Canada . . . In the four weeks since the fire started the search angels have connected nearly 250 people with the relatives and friends they were searching for.”

“Border Patrol arrests 32 at San Diego demonstration” *Albuquerque Journal* 12.11.18
attributed to *Associated Press*. “U.S. Border Patrol agents arrested 32 people at a demonstration Monday that was organized by a Quaker group on the border with Mexico, authorities said. Demonstrators were calling for an end to detaining and deporting immigrants and showing support for migrants in a caravan of Central American asylum seekers.”

