

Marriage and Family

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I frequently reference Lisa Borden's statement: "If you aren't outraged, then you just aren't paying attention." My follow-up comment is always that the word "outraged" can be replaced at any given moment with many other words, such as sad, annoyed, joyful and excited.

Our lives are filled with opportunities for all emotional reactions, depending on our focus and perspective. Our lives are also filled with opportunities to be many things.



I am enough

During times of high stress, this complexity can be difficult to see and it is easy to have narrowed vision. Being able to — and choosing to — look around at the breadth and depth of emotions and of truths about ourselves, allows more creativity and effectiveness in dealing with stressful times.

Focus and perspective might shift according to how safety versus security is viewed by an individual.

The distinction between safety and security can be subtle, but powerful. Both can also easily be related to danger.

Security means "the state of being free from danger or threat." Safety is "the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury."

Surely, living is not safe, in that danger might present at any time and in many forms, including risk to physical safety.

As a matter of semantics, it is possible to examine security in the context of this uncertainty — or even in the certainty of danger.

Faith is a key component to that examination. For some people, faith is a matter of belief in God or religious doctrines. Faith is also the "complete trust or confidence in someone or something."

Trusting God, life, self, family, community, love — or other important parts of life — can allow for security, even when safety is uncertain.

By the design of God, of evolution, or of both, the complexity of humanity includes intrinsic worth, strength and potential.

Within our complexity and our complex experiences and circumstances, possibilities to thrive are present. Of course, these possibilities are not always clear. That is why faith is important.

Dr. Brené Brown's work on vulnerability and authenticity provides a view for faith in these truths. In "The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are," she wrote "Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen."

In addition to living a life that is less full than it could be, Brown also notes, "If you trade your authenticity for safety, you may experience the following: anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addiction, rage, blame, resentment and inexplicable grief."

The practice of "showing up" and of "being seen" by those around us and, more importantly, by ourselves, requires faith that there is a purpose to that practice.

This practice often heightens safety. It may always be part of increasing security.

Informed by these ideas, I seek to maintain the view of humanity as complex and amazing. I seek to support that view of and for my clients, family and friends. Most importantly, I seek to sustain that view of myself.

That view of myself is most important because without it, I am not really able to encourage other people in this way.

So, when stressful times make it easier to wonder if there are answers for happiness, growth, wellness, security and even safety, I seek to "practice what I preach" by renewing my focus and shifting my perspective to know that, in this complex way, I am enough and I have enough.

In this month of Thanksgiving, I also wish that for you and yours.

For more information on available services or to discuss information in this column, contact:

MARY MCKINNEY, MA, LMFT

McKinney Marriage and Family Therapy 828.268.0155

For urgent matters and first-time callers: 828.773.5463

www.mckinneymft.com

mary@mckinneymft.com