

## Don't worry; be happy!

by Beverly Denver

As is often the case when it's time to write this column, I have left the office, retreated to my favorite Starbucks, ordered a cinnamon dolce latte and settled myself into a large and comfy brown leather chair.

A few of the "regulars" stroll in and out. They smile and wave but make no attempt to engage me in conversation. No doubt they spot the Mac notebook in front of me, assume I'm on deadline (again) and simply move on. Silently, I thank God for friendly and considerate folks like them!

Having enjoyed a few sips of the piping hot java, I am alert and ready to work. I place my fingers on the keys of the laptop and hope the environment will incite an effortless dripping of words onto the screen.

But, alas, I am distracted. My mind is racing. Crowds of thoughts mix and mingle in my head – like old friends gathered at a class reunion. Some remind me of days gone by and events I'd like to do over or forget about altogether, other inquire about to-do lists, goals and aspirations and offer support for resolutions for the days ahead.

At the moment, I am not in the mood for contemplations about the past or future. All are worrisome. Right now all I want to do is think about the present and the task at hand.

Woefully I attempt to begin again. I re-position my fingers on the keys of the computer and wait for inspiration. As always, I'm counting on my surroundings to help me brew up a fresh pot of ideas and words of wit or wisdom worthy of print.

Twenty minutes pass, and still I am having trouble. The meeting in my mind continues on, and my efforts to stay focused on my own agenda are fruitless. My fingers tap to the beat of the music in the background. My lips purse and twist nervously back and forth. The worry lines on my forehead deepen. The minutes tick by, and the computer screen remains blank.

Before long, the man sitting at a nearby table lends over and asks, "What are you working on there little lady?"

Politely, I explain briefly about the magazine, the approaching deadline and my urgent need to write this column.

"Well, you seem to be doing more thinking than writing," he said with a chuckle. "Need some help?"

Smiling, I asked, “Are you a writer?”

“No, but I’ve learned a lot about Houston women in the past 80 years,” he said with a laugh.

Intrigued, I asked, “Like what?”

“Well, for one thing,” he said, “women worry too much! They’ve never learned that worrying is like moving back and forth in a rocking chair. It gives them something to do, but it doesn’t get them anywhere!”

Amused, I invited him to tell me more.

“Worry is a terrible thing. And women, it seems, do more than their share. They worry about everything – what they are doing, what they are *not* doing! What men are thinking, what they are *not* thinking! Worry robs them of the pleasantries of the moment, enjoying a beautiful winter day like today, saving a \$4 cup of coffee!”

He continued, “You should write about that! Remind your readers of the lyrics of my favorite song, ‘Don’t worry; be happy!’ Remind them they aren’t responsible for everything - that the big things are already taken care of. The sun will shine in the morning; the stars will come out at night. And, if they are open to it, a close friend – or stranger – will share a special smile and make everything that seems so wrong become so very, very right.”

“Thanks, sounds like a good idea for an article,” I commented. “I think I can put that together. But first, I want to order us a couple more cups of coffee!”

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