

“Why Worry?”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

Some people suffer three kinds of trouble: all that ever befell them, all that beset them now, and all the trouble that the future may bring. As Robert Burns puts it in his famous *To A Fieldmouse*:

*I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess and fear!*

The mouse does not suffer memory or foresight. The poet is afflicted with both.

Memory and foresight are distinctive human gifts, but they are also snares. Memories of insults still rankle. Anticipation of problems unnerves us, even though most of our worries will never come to be. Is there an antidote to the poet's lament? The simple solution is to replace regret with resolve, and anxiety with endeavor.

"Why is she out so late?" "Will the deal come through?" "I can't believe I said that!" All the lines that pass through our thoughts should call to mind the wise words of Rabbi Yehiel Mihal of Zlochov. He taught that there are two things it is forbidden to worry about: that which it is possible to fix and that which it is impossible to fix. What is possible to fix, fix it and why worry? That which is impossible, how will worrying help? Apparently there is literally nothing to worry about.