

7/29/24

Week 31: WFL

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Barb Roose

In the studio

RANDY: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent is with me as always. How are you doing? Are you feeling pretty good? You're calm? How is life?

TAMMY: Life is good right now. But I will always have many questions when I'm feeling overwhelmed, when I'm feeling out of control, and when I'm feeling stressed out, which happens often to me. But right now I'm feeling good.

RANDY: Good! I don't know how you're doing but if you're feeling a little overwhelmed, as Tammy said, maybe a little stressed, I would invite you to stick around for just a few minutes because our guest, Barb Roose is going to give you some godly truth that I think will help you.

Now you may know Barb. She has the Bold, Brave, and Beautiful podcast. She is a contributor on a lot of Christian websites, speaks at women's conferences, and has ministered at her church, Cedar Creek up in the northwest Ohio area for many years. We are thrilled to have her. We're going to talk about her new book, *Stronger Than Stress*.

Barb, welcome to *LIFE Today*! Great to have you.

BARB: I'm excited to be here. Thank you for having me.

RANDY: Hopefully, this is not a stressful situation for you.

BARB: It is not. This is a joyous situation.

RANDY: This is an interesting thing. A lot of people since COVID especially, have written about this topic but this goes way back for you.

BARB: It does. The idea of stress, I mean we live in this world and so stress, I didn't have to figure that out, it just showed up. But the idea behind the book is what God wants more for us than from us. When we look at stress in this place where we feel overwhelmed all the time, what does God want for us? We have so many things in life that are taken from us. And so the passion behind the book is to create a space where we learn how to do less because of the Holy Spirit, we're living by the Holy Spirit more. That is what I'm passionate about teaching people how to do.

TAMMY: You are passionate about it, Barb. Reading your book, you had me all in at chapter one because I felt like I saw myself in your stories, pieces of your story. When you got to the place of throwing plates through the window I was like, I think I have been there a time or two in my life. So you had me from the beginning of this book. But I want to ask you about that moment in your life of throwing plates.

BARB: I believe that we all have these moments we look back on, and whether we regret them or whether we feel shame. But the question of how did I get here? And the moment in which those plates went through the window, I never saw that moment coming. There were parenting issues, I had struggles at my job, too much anxiety, and we had an out-of-control addiction in our household. Too little time! My to-do list was so long and I was running out of day every single day. And then the stress of it all. Internally, I was -- I was coming apart every day.

So when all of that converged, it was like a match was lit in the moment. So there was this incident that happened where all of this fear and anxiety and melted down. And also,

looked a little bit like Nolan Ryan.

[Laughter]

RANDY: So the interesting thing is, I mean I think we all have those moments. I don't like to admit it because what usually follows is guilt and self-condemnation. We know those aren't from God. So what do we do when we hit those moments and maybe we're embarrassed? We're starting to pile more -- that just makes the stress worse. How do we confront that in a healthy way?

BARB: For me, the healthiest way has been the spiritual journey of recognizing that God is safe. I learned about God's safety in looking at the scriptures. So in the Old Testament, reading when King David in the Psalms was writing about how, "God, you are my refuge." And stopping to think we need refuges. Refuges are these protected spaces when there is a battle going on when it is going down, and we could come and God would shield us.

And then in the New Testament, as we read about Jesus, Jesus is saying, "Come to me! When too much is going on I will show you how to live." And then the Apostle Paul writes about how there is a God and nothing can separate us from God's love -- not life, nor death. One of my favorite parts in that are worries for today or fears tomorrow.

So when shame sets in around stress, when we feel like failures when we're overwhelmed and we just lose it, the space for me I start with is remembering that God is my safe place to run to. And I let the scriptures continuously remind me that he is the safest place to start. He wants more for me. He is not ashamed of me. He is not condemning me. And so I can start simply with that. God, I know you love me, you care about me, and you are going to get me through this.

RANDY: And I love the picture too, a refuge, a fortress, a strong place is also a place where you go get re-armed. I think when we don't run there and try to do it on our own,

we're forfeiting God's weapons against such things. So I love that word.

How do you -- when you feel stress in your own life or you recognize this constant stress in someone else's life, isn't that a bit of a red flag that something needs to be addressed?

BARB: It is. This is the place where I have a little fancy visual demonstration. When we talk about stress that is our internal response to whatever is happening around us. So stress is something on the one hand, we think it is a bad thing but God created it as a protective response. It's our inner temperature of being able to say how am I doing in the world? When our stress rises, often we will condemn or convict ourselves. It should be an indicator of hmm, we're having a hard time with the world. It's not a place of judgment, it is just that we're having a hard time with the world. That is our internal response. What is around us is the external that we're struggling with.

So I would like to characterize some of what our stress could look like, like spinning plates! We have the spinning plates in our lives. And this notion that internally, in our mental, just in our mental world, there are lots of different types of spinning plates. So I like to visualize they're like saucers. So saucers are the plates that spin with our to-do list. And then there are salad plates. These are the plates of the ongoing things that just spin in our lives that just aren't done. Then there are dinner plates. Those are our relationship plates. So these are all, your family, your friends, your coworkers.

And then I envision the platters. The platters are emergencies. You have one platter, it can take out a whole lot. And for all of us, we have all of these spinning plates. When you and I look at this, this is kind of a fancy gimmicky thing but keeping a plate spinning isn't easy. What creates overwhelm in our lives is when the plates start to tip or when they start to fall.

So if you think mentally about how many plates you have and you're running around every day trying to go from one plate to the next to the next to the next to keep them spinning, is it any wonder that we start feeling overwhelmed? So the question for me

when I recognize this acre of spinning plates in my life is I cannot keep spinning them because they are too much. I don't have enough time.

How does God see the situation? Because we see all the plates in front of us but we forget God sees us and our plates and he has a plan to help us find victory instead of stressing ourselves out.

TAMMY: How do I start? Where do I start? There are some things that I'm fully aware of, that I react to something, even now in my life being widowed. Doing things by myself around the house, I can feel overwhelmed. When something breaks, when I can't fix it, when I'm not smart enough -- you know all those things. When I'm not strong enough, I can feel overwhelmed and fall to the ground and say it's enough! It's enough! So for me and for anybody watching that feels the same, where do we start? Where do we start to find the strategies to turn this plate around?

BARB: Yes! So there were two first steps. So like a baby takes step boom-boom, step one is we can all do this together, and you can join us at home. Take a deep breath, and then blow it out. When we take that deep breath, the very first thing it does is it helps to push us out of survival mode. Most of us are living in survival mode biologically, spiritually, and mentally. So first is that deep breath. Practically, it helps send your heart, and your body, the message that you are not in danger. I call them emotional lions. Emotional lions are things you and I are afraid of that aren't life-threatening but where most of our stress is. And the breath reminds us, the Holy Spirit pneuma, breathe.

So the first step is to take a deep breath. You can change your stress response by breathing. So in the book, I have a couple of breathing exercises. Step two, breathing, but then we need to build spiritual muscle. So this is where I talk about the spiritual practices. We don't see that word reflected in scripture, an older term would be spiritual disciplines. But essentially, we are human beings, not human doings. Some of our stress, most of our stress is that we're trying to fix what's happening inside of us by doing. And what God is saying is that you actually are a human being, and so we need spiritual muscle training to

know how to convert our stress into strength.

So once we get the breathing down, and invite the Holy Spirit, then we can begin to engage with spiritual practices. There are a number of them in the book. But the first one, the foundational one is surrender. That chapter is titled after my favorite surrender prayer, "God, I can't but you can so I will let you." Most of our problems again with stress is we're trying to do it all ourselves and it is wearing us out. And Jesus says I want to teach you. Eugene Peterson's paraphrase in the Message of Matthew 11:27, 28, says, "Please come to me and I will teach you the unforced rhythms of grace." He has to teach it to us.

We naturally know how to be stressed. We know how to run on coffee and adrenaline. That is automatic and natural. We have to be taught how to live in the grace of doing less and allowing the Holy Spirit to do more.

TAMMY: What's the difference between stress and stressor?

BARB: So this is game-changing! Game-changing! So I was at the zoo over the weekend. So stressors are internal responses. Stressors are the things around us that cause us to have emotional reactions. For example, I was at the zoo and I don't mind snakes. For some of you, you see a snake and that's a reason to move. How do you feel about snakes?

TAMMY: Girl, I'm screaming. I'm running!

[Laughter]

BARB: This idea of stress and stressors, we all have stress reactions but we all react differently to stressors. So the reason why this is important is because we confuse our stress with the people in the relationships with our lives. We often will say, "My husband is stressing me out." "My children are stressing me out." Our reaction to stress is our responsibility. When we make others responsible for our stress, this is how the enemy

destroys our relationships.

RANDY: Okay, in fairness, what if you have a lousy husband who walks out on you? Or what if you have children, maybe they're suffering from an addiction or something; they're bringing it into the home. That's a stressor, that's a legitimate stress that is not your fault.

BARB: So that's why we want to make the distinction. In my own family story, addiction was the issue. I learned firsthand that when the person in my home is struggling with the addiction, when I would see them as my source of stress, then it created a place where I would blame them for all of my actions. That's what happened to me the day I threw the plates through the window. Because I saw this person who was struggling and I made them responsible for my reaction. I am responsible for my reactions.

Now that doesn't diminish the bad decisions. It doesn't diminish the hurt, the harm. But when it comes to stress, our reactions are our responsibility. And the good news is that the Holy Spirit living within us gives us the strength to be able to face situations in a way that gives life and hope and peace. The bottom line for all of this, for all of us, is when we recognize that our stress is our responsibility then that is where we see that we need God's help. It also keeps us from wrecking the relationships in our lives. Because we are ambassadors of Christ. How can we be ambassadors of Christ when we are blaming people around us for our stress? Our children, we're supposed to raise and nurture our children and we're like, "You guys are stressing me out!" And then we're trying to give them the message of Jesus?

So keeping those two distinct. And I do. I do want to acknowledge those who are facing significant stressful situations. It is not easy. But we also want to pay attention to how we don't want to blame others for what is our responsibility and our reactions.

RANDY: Barb, I think you're striking a nerve, hitting where a lot of people struggle and live. By the way, if you're struggling in this area and you're hearing some things and

you're going, oh boy! We have a telephone number where someone will just stop, breathe, and pray with you. So call the number on the screen right now. There is always someone there who will pick you up and will just walk with you where you're at.

We would also, if you would like Barb's book, we would love to send it to you because there are ten spiritual practices. By the way, I want to point out that word *practice* is a biblical word and it means exercising a muscle. Do this and you'll be bad at it first but you'll get good at it. I love these because these are things you can start to do immediately that will help you grow. It will disciple you and it will help, I say, manage your stress but really, it means to cast your cares upon him, and that is the ultimate. So we're going to tell you how you can get that.

But Barb, I want to say thank you for this because this is important. Briefly, because we're running out of time, I want people to get the book, I just think it is important to point out that one of the biggest countermeasures for the stress in our life is cultivating an attitude of gratitude. How big has that been for you?

BARB: It is a practice that has brought so much joy to my life and also strength. Scriptures say it is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. Giving thanks to God in everyday things equips me to be grateful for God in all things. So each and every single day I can wake up and see where God is at work. That is the path of being able to keep that bead on where God is at work when it is all falling down and falling apart.

So gratitude is, that is the last spiritual practice, surrender is the first, but it is just as essential to us facing a life of overcoming overwhelm, if we see God carrying us through it and we praise him for it, and it gives us strength to go another day.

RANDY: Love it! Love it! There is a situation right now where God is at work but God can also use you in this situation of a place of frankly, great stress for a lot of people. I want you to watch this and pray about getting involved to help meet the needs of others. When you do, you can request Barb's book *Stronger Than Stress* today. We would love to

send it to you. Most importantly, we want you to be a part of God's work in the lives of some desperate people. Watch this.

On the mission field

ANNOUNCER: For the people of Liberia, each day is a struggle due to the lack of clean drinking water. With limited options, the people are forced to drink water that can bring illness or even death. Yet, there is no other choice but to drink it and live or sometimes die with the outcome. Melvin Tawn is a father all too well acquainted with the very real consequences of drinking unclean water.

Open captions

>> One day I went to work at a local farm. I left my 12-year-old son, Qwaza, at home. While I was gone, he drank our water and began vomiting and having severe diarrhea. By the time I arrived back home, he was already dead. He was a very lovely boy who loved to play soccer.

JOHN: Being here in Liberia and listening to Melvin's story, he had dreams and hopes for his son. And to go away to work and come home to a son that's gone and knowing that it was because of the water that he had drank; that there was no other option. It leaves me with, Lord, how can we help?

ANNOUNCER: Together we can be the answer to Melvin's hopes and prayers. Join us in giving Water for LIFE.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: I've gone on so many of these trips and I've always been in that same place that John was at, leaving me in a place of what can I do to help? I sit here with you today again and I say, God, what can I do to help today? What do these people need today?

I can't imagine how that father must have felt just going away for a few hours and coming back and your son is dead -- because of water -- because of what he drank in that small window of time that changed everything for that family.

What can I do to help? What can you do to help? What can we do to help? Is there even a solution? Is there anything we can do? Yes! Yes, there is. We know a way. We have been doing it for years. We can go in there right now and drill them a well that will last them for 70 years of their life. Water for LIFE! We can bring this to them. We can bring them hope, we can bring them life, we can bring them Jesus. And I love that he has given us this opportunity to step in and to be the difference, to make a difference.

So if God has blessed you today, I'm going to challenge you, challenge you, to be that answer today for this family and so many other families around the world right now.

Randy, it is something we get to do together and I know that it changes lives -- so many lives!

RANDY: It does, and it is so simple. That story right there that we saw as a father, hurts. I have four children and I can't imagine. You wonder, if you're watching, it is hard to comprehend sometimes the way many people in this world have to live. They drink -- they drink whatever water they have because it is all that they have. And they may be fine for years in the case of that one boy who ended up dying. But like that, life is fragile. Something can turn and life is gone.

We have the answer. The answer is, as Tammy said, drilling a well. Going down deep enough, deeper than they can dig with their own hands, and getting at that clean water. An average well costs \$4800. That's based on the 350 wells we drill across 20 nations. If you can drill one you can prevent others from dying, many others in fact.

On average, a well will serve about a thousand people, which is phenomenal. That is a thousand stories that we won't have to tell of loss. Many of you can give \$144 that will

provide clean drinking water for 30 people for basically a lifetime, on average, 70 years. Maybe you can give \$48. It may not sound like a lot but it is huge because \$48 will give clean drinking water to ten people.

I only wish that we could have given that man's son clean drinking water before it was too late. There are many others that need us to do something now. Will you go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can? Let's tell a story of life -- no more stories of death.

Video begins

ANNOUNCER: Every day thousands of lives are lost to a waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, now in its 25th year, you could give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "God's Word for My Day" devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily reading, an encouraging verse, and a thought to ponder for each day of the year.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "His Word is Life" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers each inscribed with a scripture will inspire you throughout the day and help keep your drinks well-insulated while at home or on the go.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people. Or a gift of

\$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And request our beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of video

In the studio

TAMMY: I hope you're going online and giving the best gift you possibly can give. I want to tell you it will make an enormous impact in the lives of so many people. And for whatever amount, whatever gift you can give today, we want to send you Barb's book. You will love it. Just request it when you make that call. And we'll get it right out to you.

I just want to share something, a takeaway that I took away from chapter one from Barb's words. I hope this ministers to you like it did for me. "Feeling overwhelmed is nothing to be ashamed of. Life is often more than we can handle. Even for someone who has been walking with Jesus for a long time. Spiritual maturity doesn't mean that you won't experience overwhelm, but your connection with God keeps you from getting stuck."

I believe he wants us to live a life fulfilled and free from being overwhelmed, out of control, and feeling like we're stuck because we're so stressed out. We want you to be free from that. I want to be free from that in my life.

Barb, thank you for today. Thank you for this book. You are a blessing to all of us. And you are a blessing to us. We hope that this show will encourage you to move forward in the practice of being free from stress in your life. Thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.

RANDY: Bye-bye!