

How to Fight Back When You're Under Attack

It never fails.

☒ Each time I've given a presentation or radio interview, something crazy happens just before my event. Like a spontaneous guests popping by during my only quiet preparation time. The police knocking on my door. The computer crashing, pneumonia, serious brain fog or power outages.

Honest-to-goodness, my first scheduled book interview with Janet Parshall on her live radio show, lightning knocked out power to my church building! I only needed one landline phone for the interview and none of the dozen phones available worked. Cell phones are a no-no for on-air broadcasts, in case you're wondering. Five minutes before the show, Janet's producer canceled my interview, saying they'd have to reschedule another time.

Grrr.

When such absurdities strike, I can only guess the enemy's up to one of his distraction tactics. Sideswipes such as this always send me into a mental spin. This is one of the reasons I've started a series: "I Don't Want To Worry Anymore."

Just like you, I need reminders of what to do when the unknown creeps in. Although all the tactics I'll list deal with combating fear, today we'll specifically address what I've done when I felt my anxiety's linked to spiritual warfare. I don't know about you, but when God's about to do something extraordinary, that's when the madness begins.

For instance, the spring of 2013 there was an upcoming event where I was both heartbroken and anxious, all wrapped into one.

You see, the week before my speaking engagement, my dad suddenly passed away. Sad, shocked, and emotionally raw, I wavered on what to do about my commitment. Since my name, photo, and seminar description on “How to Write a Book” were already printed in the District Toastmasters’ program, I felt obligated to follow through.

On the drive down to Fort Lauderdale, all I wanted to do was turn around, go back home and weep under the covers.

I had forty-five minutes of silence to question why in the world I hadn’t canceled this gig. *Dumb, dumb, dumb decision, Dabney.*

But it wasn’t until the hour or so before my presentation that I realized I was a serious mess. In my distracted state, I’d minimally prepared for this speech. Sure, I’d just completed my manuscript and my tips of what to do were fresh on my mind. And my PowerPoint, I reasoned with myself, could back up memory mishaps. But typically, for a big event like this, I’d prepare for hours.

Not this time.

Panic welled as I listened to the whispers growing louder in my head. Surrounded by District Governors, club presidents, and all the other bigwig Toastmaster types—who were expecting a professional presentation—I knew they’d see right through a shoddy speech.

So I did the only thing that came to mind. Tactic No. 2: prayer.

Only, the anxiety didn’t subside.



{Photo Credit: Flickr/Jhaymesisvipphotography}

I began texting my mom. And close friends. And my faithful

prayer warriors, asking them all to petition God for His peace to transform my soul, for an hour's worth of energy and for His words to fill my mouth (specifically intelligent, Toastmaster-level ones).

Even now, I can picture the navy club chair I sat in when the slew of returned texts messages filled my iPhone screen.

My eyes watered.

Glorious words of Christ-filled friends who knew just what to say responded with various versions of, "I've gotcha covered in prayer, but God's got this!" That's when the chest-tightening subsided, and a grin grew lopsided across my face.

Their prayers had reached heavenward.

You can't fake that.

Not a Holy Spirit enlightening sensation. There's no other body tingle in the world like the power of the Spirit filling you from within.

I'll have you know, out of all the times I've ever spoken, this Toastmasters event ended up being one of my top two favorite speaking engagements.

You know why?

When I started my seminar, I shared point after point on how to write a book. But between notes, I either shared or read sections of my testimony from my manuscript, showing them how I took a first draft to a final draft, thinking I was making a point on how they could improve their writing, by rewriting and editing and such.

But I noticed something.

When I shared writing tips, they scribbled feverishly along their yellow legal pads. When I shared stories of God's

miracles, the audience leaned in.



{Photo Credit: Flickr/Jesper Ronn-Jensen}

Pens down, heads cocked, this room full of businesswomen and men sat eyes-wide, hungry for a taste of God's goodness.

And that's when I realized I wasn't there to tell them how to write a book.

I was there to slip some Jesus in.

Guess who knew I'd talk about God and miracles and the power of prayer?

The enemy. No wonder I was a mini-mess just hours beforehand. No wonder the visions flitting through my brain were of me failing miserably. No wonder, because the devil hates when we spread God's message.

Despises it.

He'll trip us up every time with distractions and fear and self-doubt. He specializes in silencing our voice. A whisper here that others won't approve, a remark there that we're not good enough or prepared enough or we'll never have the financial stability to start this ministry, or fears that our spouse/boss/child will never, or, or, or...

Satan wants to kill.

And destroy.

And steal any bit of good we may do for the Kingdom; steal our hope, our faith, our mind.

And the best way he attempts to silence us is by filling our heads with fear.

Prayer unleashes a supernatural effect we'll never understand

this side of heaven. Sadly, this simple act gets overlooked when we let the hecticness of life get in the way. Don't. Not this time. What's on your mind? What's consuming your thoughts? What's wrapping your heart so tightly you can't imagine any way out?

Most have read the verse Philippians 4:6, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

But honestly, how many times have we skimmed over that powerful word "petition"?

Prayer and petition go hand in hand. Keep asking. Then ask your friends to ask. And then ask again. Christ loves diligent seekers, kind of like the persistent widow in the Bible. Jesus told a story about a woman who pestered a judge so much so that she drove him crazy day and night. He finally gave in just to get rid of her. And this is exactly what Jesus tells us to do: pester, petition, bring in reinforcements like your prayerful friends (Luke 18:1-8; Matthew 18:20).

I can't tell you how many times I've faced a significant obstacle and decided to hop on Facebook, send an email or text, asking friends for support. Later in the day I'd notice that calming sensation and realize it wasn't until I kept petitioning and invited others to join that God showed up.

Are you on the verge of making a major spiritual decision? Are you involved in or are you considering stepping into ministry? My prayer is that you'll drive God crazy with petitions. He won't mind. Actually, Jesus said He wonders how many will have praying faith when He returns (Luke 18:8)?

{If you've ever felt under attack and God answered your prayer, will you share your experience with everyone by leaving a comment? Or, maybe you need prayer right now. I'd love to add you to my prayer list. Feel free to anonymously comment below.}

“One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up” (Luke 18:1 NLT).

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