

Oh, Those Voices in My Head!

I read an inspiring article recently on the human tendency to clutter our brains with projected *whys* and *what-ifs* and fill our heads with discordant noise. This sets up a perpetual tennis match of energy-sapping worries that distract us while awake and then follow us into our dreams.

I personally find it helpful to learn that I am not alone in this. That others fight the same daily battle for serenity, yet survive, even thrive, by identifying the problem, immersing in restorative prayer, and yes, sharing their thoughts and personal weaknesses.

For some, recurring concerns about a loved one's dangerous choices morph into rebounding resentment, ricocheting off the walls of our cranium.

Maybe an old hurt festers and pesters, feeding on precious reserves of emotional energy. Or a small patch of righteous indignation builds a fence of justification around itself for preservation.

Perhaps the rancid aftermath of an unresolved dispute with someone you care about deeply rankles and chafes.

And sometimes we simply badger ourselves about our own faults and failures, creating an overwhelming burden of self-criticism and harsh judgments.

I can clearly remember the day I realized that—*ding-dong!*—I'd long been defending my high expectations of others because they were no more rigid than the grueling perfectionism I hammered myself over the head with regularly. Bolting upright, I asked myself, *Really?! Since when do two wrongs make a right?*

Ludicrous reasoning, when examined in the light of day. But how often do we actually consciously tune in to the bleating background voices in our mental chorus of foolish chants?

The source article reminds readers that God's got a verse for that. Well, several verses, of course, but some march straight to the point. Note the no-nonsense instructions in Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

I am thinking that anger toward oneself is covered by this, and slander applies even when the subject of one's vitriol reeks of evil intent. And that bitterness incubating in the remembrance of a personal insult is ever so much more destructive to the one who harbors it than the one who earned it.

I'm reminded of the old English class exercise of diagramming sentences. When I take the time to dissect the verbiage bouncing around in my skull, I can correct the errors in thinking, weed out poor word choices, and reframe sentiments.

And oh, what blissful quietude might we enjoy if we could pack up all those thundering bullhorns that blare out exhausting messages and hand them over to the Lord.

