

ur·gen·cy

1. importance requiring swift action;
2. an earnest and persistent quality; insistence

A sense of urgency can arise from two main sources. First, it could arise from the dysfunctional ego as the result of a fear that either something you want to happen will *not* happen, or that something dreaded by you may happen when you don't want it to happen. Fear is often effectively used by marketers and politicians to create an urgency to get you to behave in a way that they want you to behave. This ego-urgency can drive us crazy. Why? Because it is a false sense that there is "never enough" or that there may be a "shortage" of what you want (note I used "want" and not "need").

Second, a true sense of urgency may rise up from our hearts calling us to respond to some injustice or other true need that requires some attention. But even this type of urgency needs to be tempered by the circumstances that surround it. We can't always fix everything! We often overestimate our power to change things we think are within our control, and quickly lose our trust in God who we claim is all-powerful. Why do we think we can fix something better than Him?

We need to develop a healthy discernment to respond properly to our sense of urgency. There is indeed a proper time to do things, as the wisdom of Ecclesiastes (3:1-11) reminds us:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- a time to be born, and a time to die;
- a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- a time to feel hurt, and a time to heal;
- a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
- a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
- a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- a time to seek, and a time to lose;
- a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
- a time to tear, and a time to sew;

ACTION

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.”

What we need is to know *when* to act urgently, and *when* to let God handle things. Often when we force things to happen, we end up with something less than we expected. Some things take care of themselves; other things we should just leave alone and put into the hands of God. We begin each day (or event, or problem) with the Serenity Prayer:

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next.
Amen.

- Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)

Follow this up with constant present moment awareness, being aware of the resources around you for each moment, and knowing when to engage, and when to pull back. It is often best to leave the past to God’s mercy, and the future to His providence. Walk mindfully, think mindfully, respond mindfully. What’s *really* happening? What’s *really* needed? Take your time, and let the spiritual forces of God’s loving hand do their thing! Sometimes the best action for you is NO action. Contrary to cultural teaching, “Time’s NOT a wastin”!