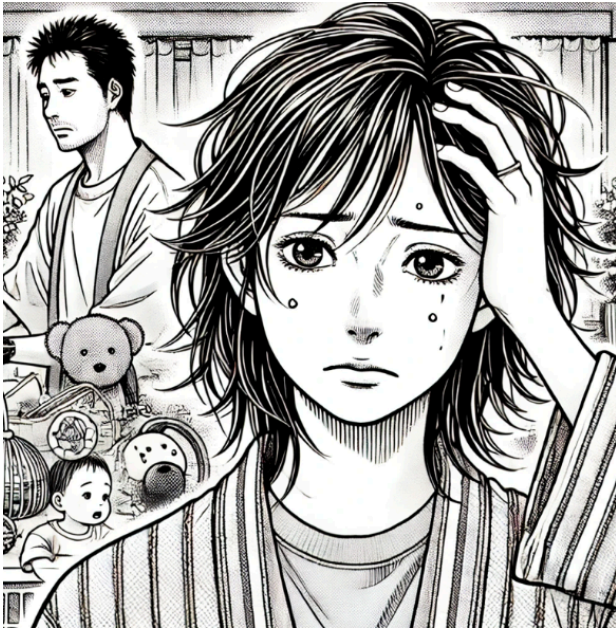


ロー博士のコラム：「いつも疲れている」



エレノアは、怒りを爆発させながら叫びました。「なぜ私はリラックスできないの？ ずっとこんなに疲れていなきゃいけないの？」私は落ち着いて答えました。「あなたが怒りを抑えることなく、感情を高ぶらせ続ける限り、疲れは消えませんよ。」しかし、この説明は彼女を落ち着かせるどころか、さらに激しい感情の爆発を引き起こしました。私は意図的に無関心を装って彼女を見つめ続けました。こ

の態度に彼女は困惑したようで、やがてその困惑が彼女を落ち着かせる効果をもたらしました。数分後、彼女の叫び声は次第に落ち着きました。その後、私は面談の終了と次回の予約が2週間後であることを告げました。すると彼女は「次の予約なんていらないわ！ここに来るたびに叱られるだけで、帰る頃には完全に疲れ果ててるのよ」と言い返しました。

エレノアは2か月近くクラスに参加し、『メンタルヘルス』を読んでおり、神経的疲労の主な原因が怒りであるという私の考えをある程度理解していました。しかし、彼女は自分の怒りっぽい習慣を抑えようとはしませんでした。その理由は明白です。怒りは刺激的で興奮を与える一方で、自己制御は退屈で魅力に欠けるからです。怒りは色彩豊かで活力を与えますが、自己制御は単調で疲れるだけで、まったく魅力がありません。

他の多くの患者と同様、エレノアは自分の疲労が本物で、「本当の疲労」だと強く主張しました。彼女は2人の子どもの母親であり、「子どもたちは手が付けられなくて、一日中私を忙しくさせるの。毎日の一瞬たりとも静かな時間なんてない。休む暇もないんだから、当然いつも疲れているのよ」と言いました。

「休む暇がないし、当然いつも疲れている」というこの話は、多くの母親が口にするものです。患者であってもそうでなくても同じです。そして私は、子どもたちに振り回される母親が疲れているのは当然だと認めます。しかし、「当然いつも疲れている」と主張する母親がいる場合、その疲労が「常に存在する」ことについて疑問を投げかけざるを得ません。自然の法則に従えば、どのような疲労も休息によって和らぐはずですが、もし疲労が常に存在し、休息しても回復しないのであれば、それは全く自然ではなく、むしろ人工的である可能性が高いのです。そのような疲れは「感情を高ぶらせた」ことによって人工的に作り出されたものであり、自然は怒りについて何も知らず、感情を高ぶらせるプロセスについてもほとんど何も知りません。

近年、「疲れたビジネスマン」についてよく話題に上ります。この現代的な概念は、過労の母親が使うのと同じような誇張された表現を用います。現代の母親と同様に、今日のビジネスマンも「全く休めないし、当然いつも疲れている」と不平を言う傾向があります。しかし、私は「疲れたビジネスマン」についてよく耳にしますが、「疲れた農民」や「疲れた労働者」について聞いた記憶はありません。その理由は簡単に推測できるでしょう。労働者や農民は正直に一日分の労働をし、それが確かに疲れる仕事であることは否定できません。しかし、適切な休息を取れば活力を取り戻し、「当然」もう疲れていません。

農民や労働者と現代の母親やビジネスマンの反応の違いを説明してみたいと思います。特に現代の母親のケースは教訓的です。この哀れな存在は、教育学者や子育て指導の講師、作家たちによって絶え間なくアドバイスを浴びせられます。しかし、これらの「専門家」は2年ごと、あるいはそれより短い間隔で見解を変える厄介な癖があります。この事実だけでも現代の母親を混乱と混沌に陥れるのに十分です。さらに、異なる講師が連続して行う講座に参加したり、異なる著者が書いた新聞コラムを読んだりすれば、彼女たちの混乱は一層深まります。こうして母親たちは無力感、継続的な疑念、そして緊張とストレスを抱えるようになります。この精神的混乱のストレスが、筋肉の疲労として誤解されるのです。実際には、この疲労は筋肉ではなく精神的なものです。そして精神的な疲労は「当然」休息によって解消されることはありません。

同様に、「疲れたビジネスマン」のケースも、混乱が精神的ストレスと神経的疲労を引き起こし、それが筋肉の疲労として誤解されるという同じ原理で説明できます。農民や労働者は厳しい競争の圧力を受けず、「専門家」の相反する意見からも解放されています。したがって、比較的少ないストレスの中で安心して休息を取り、「当然」いつも疲れていることはありません。

(『意志によるメンタルヘルス』第33章、270ページより)

DR. LOW'S COLUMN: I AM TIRED ALL THE TIME

Eleanor, in an outburst of temper, shouted: “Why is it that I can never relax? Will I always have to be so deadly tired?” I replied calmly, “You will be tired exactly as long as you will insist on working up your temper.” Far from pacifying her, my explanation merely served to turn her excitement into a wild explosion. I sat looking at her with studied indifference. This seemed to puzzle her, and the puzzlement appeared to have a sedative effect. The result was that after a few minutes her yelling trailed down to a lower key. I then indicated that the interview was terminated and the next appointment was to take place two weeks hence. She snapped back, “I don’t want a next appointment. I am tired of being bawled out each time I come to see you. When I leave your office I am just exhausted.”

Eleanor had attended classes for close to two months, had read “Mental Health” and was tolerably acquainted with my views on temper as the main source of nervous fatigue. If she knew that her fatigue was due to temper, why did she refuse to curb her temperamental habits? You know the answer: temper is exciting and stimulating while self-control is a dragging, uninspiring, humorless practice. Temper is colorful and vitalizing while control is dull, wearisome and utterly lacking in glamour.

Like many other patients, Eleanor argued persuasively that her fatigue was of a genuine quality, a “real” fatigue. She was the mother of two children. “The youngster are wild, they keep me busy all day. There is never a quiet moment day after day. They never give me a rest and , naturally, I am tired all the time”

This story about never getting a rest and, “naturally” being tired all the time is told by many mothers, patients or no patients. And I shall readily grant that a mother, being harassed by unruly children, has a right to be tired. But if a mother maintains that “naturally,” she is tired all the time, I shall question the justification of a tiredness which is present “all the time” and will seriously doubt the “naturalness” of a condition which conforms so little to nature that it actually defies it. By nature every fatigue yields to rest, and if a fatigue is there all the time, if it fails to yield rest, then, emphatically, it is not at all natural but suspiciously artificial. That tiredness has been artificially created by a “worked up” temper, and nature knows nothing of temper and very little if anything about the process of working oneself up.

There is much talk these days about the tired businessman. This modern creation voices the same inflated phrases which are used by the overworked mother. Like the modern mother the contemporary business man is likely to complain that he “never” gets his rest and that, “naturally,” he is tired “all the time.” The remarkable thing is that while I frequently hear about the tired businessman, I do not remember having ever been told about the tired farmer or the tired laborer. You easily guess the reason. The worker and farmer do an honest day of work, and their work is undoubtedly fatiguing. But after a suitable rest period they have regained their vitality and are, “naturally,” no longer fatigued.

I shall try to outline the difference between the reactions of farmer and laborer, on the one hand, and those of modern mothers and present-day business men, on the other. The case of the modern mother is particularly instructive. This

pathetic creature is continuously subjected, by professors of education and by writers or lecturers on child guidance, to a never ceasing torrent of advice on how to bring up children. The calamity is that these “scientists” have an exasperating habit of changing their views about every two years and not infrequently at shorter intervals. This alone is bound to throw the modern mother into chaos and confusion. Confusion becomes more confounded yet when the hapless mothers attend courses conducted successively by different lecturers, or if they read newspaper column written by different lecturers, or if they read newspaper columns written by different authors. Since each lecturer or columnist has or may have a pet opinion of his own, the unwary reader or listeners are unhappily exposed to a multitude of views which may or do contradict one another. Chaos and confusion are then inescapable. The mothers become bewildered and unsure of themselves and do not know what to do and what to believe. The result is helplessness, sustained doubt and continued tenseness and strain. It is the strain of mental confusion which they then misinterpret as muscular fatigue. In actual fact, their fatigue is mental, not muscular. The mental fatigue, quite “naturally,” does not yield to rest. Mothers of this kind, being eternally mystified and puzzled by the contradictory thoughts and views offered them by “trained experts,” sense intuitively that the surest way to escape confusion is to stop thinking and viewing. Hence they are afraid to take a rest. Resting means thinking, and thinking has, in our day of “expert” counseling, turned into strain and tenseness. The mothers conclude erroneously that they are tense and tired because they work too hard. The reverse is the truth. They force themselves to work hard because resting and thinking renders them mentally strained and nervously tired. The hard work is expected to rescue them from the ordeal of hard thinking.

The case of the tired business =man could be explained on a similar basis of confusion causing mental strain and nervous fatigue and then being misinterpreted as fatigue of the muscles. It could easily be demonstrated that modern businessmen, exactly like modern mothers, do not become tired because they work too hard but, on the contrary, work hard because they suffer from mental strain which they try frantically to escape by working overtime. But the demonstration would call for a lengthy explanation competitive and creates an exceeding measure of frustration, self-doubt and self-blame. The perpetual self-condemnation induces a high degree of mental strain and nervous fatigue. Laborers and farmers are spared the grind of fierce competition and manage to avoid or mitigate their quota of frustration, bewilderment and confusion. They work at least as hard as does the businessman but, abiding ruinous competition and the conflicting views of “experts,” they are under relatively little strain, hence they dare to rest and are “naturally” not tired “all the time”.

“Mental Health to Will”, page 270, chapter 33