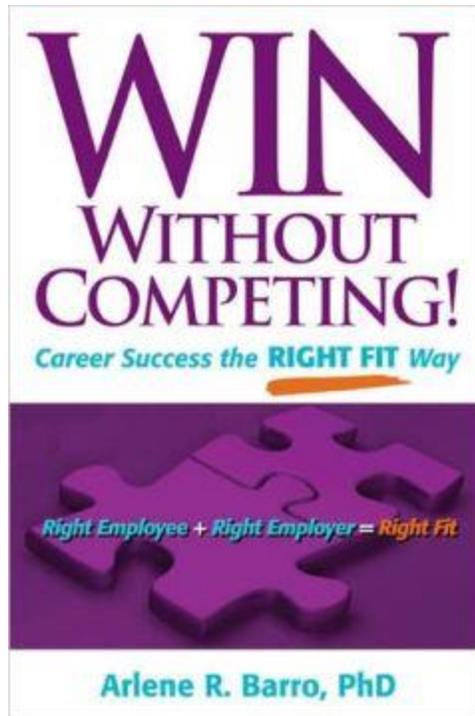


Conquering Stress! With Dr. Arlene —Trump Turmoil Causes Stress



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By Dr. Arlene Barro

President Trump is as sly as a fox, creating chaos, strife, and turmoil on planet earth to focus the 24-hour news cycle on himself. Trump excels in distraction, leading to a tangled web of ambiguity and confusion.

In 1936, Nobel Prize winner T.S. Eliot said, we're "distracted from distraction by distraction", which appeared in his *First Quartet, Burnt Norton*. Unfortunately, T.S. Eliot will never know that he was forecasting Trump's behavior before Trump was born.

Politics on the Psychologist's Couch

Trump is a master manipulator of people's behavior which could drive them to madness. When asked about the Saudi Crown Prince's involvement in orchestrating the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Trump responded, "maybe he did, maybe he didn't." Trump knew that his provocative comment would reverberate around the world, creating conflict and dissension.

Trump's comments and tweets are giving politics a prominence on the psychologist's couch not seen since the months after Sept., 11, 2001. According to writers John F. Harris and Sarah Zimmerman, in *Trump May Not Be Crazy But the Rest of Us Are Getting There Fast*, Oct. 12, 2018, Politico.com, ... "there is abundant evidence that Trump and his daily uproars are galloping into the lives of millions of Americans."

Harris and Zimmerman spoke to and cited Cynthia Baum-Baicker, a Philadelphia therapist, who discussed a couple with sex issues related to American politics, which put a strain on their marriage. The husband said that his wife was tethered to the TV. He told his wife, "If you want me to be intimate again, you'll turn the TV off in the bedroom. I can't have that man present and listen to him and feel any sense of arousal."

Therapists agree that today's political conditions are "ripe to send people of all partisan, ideological, and cultural stripes to the emotional edge". What should we do?

Trump Visualizes Mice in a Maze

Turmoil is synonymous with Trump. Constant change reinforces that turmoil. Dr. Spencer Johnson's international bestseller, *Who Moved My Cheese?*, a parable about four characters: two mice, Sniff and Surry; two "Little people," Hem and Haw searching for cheese. Spencer describes the need to adapt our behavior to changing circumstances. As Hem says, "If you do not change, you can become extinct." Trump keeps "moving our cheese," as if we are mice. He uses the same strategy on global leaders, as well. We must change our behavior to decrease stress.

Orchestrating high anxiety, stress and fear through a tedious onslaught of distractions is unacceptable. Each distraction is a bone for the media to chew and spit out. How will this benefit or harm Trump in 2020?

Responding to Trump's Machinations

Could Trump become the mouse in the maze, who cannot find his cheese and as a result become extinct? Trump's behavior is rigid. He wants others to change their behavior but does not want to change his. He engages in a steady stream of transactions, rendering relationship building insignificant. This is blatantly apparent in his dealings with those who disagree with him. He verbally chops off heads including Chief Justice Roberts'. Who is next?

If Trump continues down the Road marked *It's My Way*, he could become very lonely. His obsession with process—what he does, what others should or should not do—diminishes his accomplishments of which he is very proud. The Democratic media is glued to reporting process, reinforcing Trump as they echo his comments and tweets. The Republican media emphasizes Trump's accomplishments, not forgetting the process.

What is the number one cause of stress in the country? The political climate. Anxiety, irritability, anger, and fatigue are common complaints which impact our daily lives. We do not want our health jeopardized.

How should we manage Trump who requires constant attention? To change his behavior, we need to change our behavior.

- The media positively reinforces his behavior, even if they respond negatively. Trump believes that “bad publicity is better than no publicity.”
- The media must reduce its coverage of Trump, especially irrelevant comments and tweets. Report newsworthy events.
- The public should avoid watching and listening to the news to reduce stress.

Trump creates chaos and strife in the bedroom and boardroom. If Trump recognizes that his name represents stress not success, he might take charge of himself.

He continues to blindly follow his approach to success which he described in his book, *The Art of the Deal*. Instead, he needs to recognize the negative emotional response to him and respond to that appropriately, without bestowing blame on others. Trump lives to WIN in 2020. Will he?

Questions about this column? Email drbarro@barroglobal.com.

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