

Tougher, Stronger, Smarter....Stop!

My back has been bothering me, so this morning I visited my chiropractor. He tried something new on me, something I hadn't tried before – electronic muscle stimulation. I didn't see what he put on my back, but I suppose they were leads or pads of some kind. They were attached to a small box with dials on it. The machine feeds an electronic pulse into the pad on my back, thus stimulating blood flow and reducing inflammation. It was good; I liked it, and hope it helps.

When the doctor hooked it up and explained it, he said he was going to start it up and keep turning it up until I said, "stop". Laughing, he said he had a few "farmer types" who would never him to stop, assuring him that that they could "take it". "That's not the idea," he said. "Tell me when it's strong and comfortable, both."

So he turned it up and up and then I finally said, "stop". But you know what, it wasn't comfortable. It was too much. Then I remembered I was raised by former farmers, so I had him turn it down a notch and then he left the room.

That's when I started the ridiculous process of comparing and self-doubt. I couldn't see the machine. What was it set? Was it a one to ten measure? If so, where was I on the dial? Was I at a good strong six or seven, or a wussy two or three? Maybe I shouldn't have asked him to turn it down. Shouldn't I be able to stand at least at five? (Remember, I hadn't see the dial at all!)

Did I know anyone else who had used this machine? I wonder how high their number was. I knew my husband would have a higher number. But what about other women my age? Was I tougher? More sensitive? I wanted to know! How did I rate? Even as I laughed at myself, I knew I would check the dial before I left the room.

This light-hearted, silly example reminded me how often and in how many ways we measure ourselves against each other. We are so desperately driven by the desire to prove ourselves by being "better than" in any and every way possible. And more than that, we grant ourselves – and others- worth based on where we perceive ourselves in the pecking order.

We know God doesn't see us that way. God values us for who we are, period. Not who we are in comparison to someone else. There have to be tougher and less tough people; smarter and not so smart. Can we learn to just live with that fact and celebrate both our own uniqueness and the uniqueness of others?

Be you, as strong and as weak, as smart or as not-so-smart, as tough or as not-so-tough. Let others do the same. Rejoice in all God's creatures – including yourself. By the way, the doctor reset the machine to zero before I could look. Sigh.

Pastor Susan