

# “Affluenza”

**Dr. Johanna Baptist:** Fran

**Patient:** Marnie, Diane-character is affluent in appearance (done up), looks like she has it all together, holding bags and bags of department store purchases, inside she feels empty, exhausted and stressed. Must be coming down with “something” like the flu, can’t be sick has way too much to do!

**Receptionist:** one of the teaching ministers

**Setting:** Walk-in clinic exam room in main sanctuary area. Projector for interactive set to side near organ

*At the baptismal font area M/D enters on her cell phone, bundles and bags in hands and arms, looking overwhelmed and sluggish, Christmas music playing...*

**Marnie/Diane:** Slow down?!?? You don’t understand! I just have too much to do...two weeks to Christmas and I have three parties, the Nutcracker, **that thing** with my in-laws at their church, the kids’ concerts and I only have half of my shopping done. What do you get a boss these days? I want that perfect gift for her. And I just feel lousy...

*M/D makes their way down to the altar area, removes Advil/Tylenol bottle and finishes conversation*

**Marnie/Diane:** I wish I was like you, you seem to have it all together all the time. Your house is perfect, everything is done on time....the incredible family photo Christmas card....hey, I gotta go....just not getting enough done and I probably have the flu...bye.

*M/D drops bags and pulls water bottle from purse ready to take pills and notices the walk-in sign of the clinic...puts pills back and walks to the "door"*

*Music changes as she enters the area-soothing, classical...pantomime talking to receptionist, name, exchange of insurance card and credit card to pay for visit...bags are moved to the seating area with the help of the receptionist and M/D sits down exhausted, slumped over in waiting area and begins to nod off.... Music fades...*

*With energy, joy, nuttiness and clip-board in hand the doctor approaches reading the name of the patient and startles her...*

**Fran:** Mrs. Smith!

*Suddenly awakened- Startled and jumping up....*

**Marnie/Diane:** yes

**Fran:** Hi, I'm **Johanna Baptist** extends hand but realizes they cannot shake because of all the bags... please come in *motion to enter room.* M/D knocks Fran with bags and the two negotiate where to put them in the room

Let me help you...it looks like you have done a lot of shopping today.....

-.....there, now. How can I help you today?

**Marnie/Diane:** Well, I am just exhausted, I think I am coming down with something. No energy. I just don't feel well, I am tense.... Achy...maybe it's the flu! Do you think it's the flu? I can't have the flu...two weeks before Christmas...nope not the flu...do you think I have the flu?

**Fran:** I can see you are concerned...let me do an exam, ok?

Fran examines.... Open mouth, look in eyes, follow finger, blood pressure, takes temperature, checks ears, palpates throat etc...

**Fran:** Well, everything looks good. How have things been in your life? Are you sleeping?

**Marnie/Diane:** I just have so much to do and get done. Between family, work, working out, shopping, parties, and everything else- I am not sleeping that much. (*Exasperated*) Go figure...that “most wonderful time of the year” is everything but wonderful.

**Fran:** Let me ask you a few questions... *Marnie/Diane answer affirmatively by yeah, shaking head, shrugging shoulders...*

\_\_\_\_ Do you feel overwhelmed by the amount of stuff you own and the amount of time it takes to pay for, maintain and store it all?

\_\_\_\_ Is it hard hard to talk about spending and saving money in your home?

\_\_\_\_ Do your children seem more materialistic than you were at their age?

\_\_\_\_ Very often do you feel rushed with so much to do and not enough time to do it?

\_\_\_\_ Do you feel that you live my life in total alignment with my values and beliefs?

\_\_\_\_ Do you have more “extras” in your life than your parents or grandparents did, but don’t feel as satisfied about your standard of living as think they were?

\_\_\_\_ Do you seem to have enough “quality time” with family and other loved ones?

\_\_\_\_ Do you enjoy your job and would quit if you didn’t have to work for money?

\_\_\_\_ Do you hardly know your neighbors? And feel disconnected from your local community?

**Marnie/Diane:** *answers sacrcastically...so Doc whaddaya tryin’ to say?*

**Fran:** I think you have a case of affluenza. It ...

**Marnie/Diane:** I KNEW I had the flu!

**Fran:** No M/D...you are physically healthy...I said a case of **AFF**-luenza. A painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety and waste resulting from the relentless pursuit of more.

Common symptoms are a bloated sluggish feeling, along with stress, overwork, waste and indebtedness caused by the pursuit of the American dream. It peaks every December –in fact (*looking out to audience*) there is a bit of an epidemic.

**Marnie/Diane:** *feels sad* Well, how do I fix this?

**Fran:** (*Hands her a sheet*) It's not easy- but it can be done. Here are a few tips to simplify and help you prioritize...but I have found it most helpful to recommend patients get in touch with the reason for the season. The celebration of Christmas invites us to share our very best but we have confused it with sharing stuff and not ourselves or the love of Jesus the real gift to each one of us.

**Marnie/Diane:** you make it sound so nice and easy Doc... no offense but...I don't get this Jesus stuff all the time, I mean I know that this time of year I want to be and give my best and **go to church** on Christmas...but it just comes and goes so quickly...

**Fran:** M/D it is all about preparation, what we do to set ourselves up for Christmas day and season. You know, there is

a program called GIFT at Sacred Heart that has a great session on Advent...

**Marnie/Diane:** Advent, you mean like the wreaths and calendars?

**Fran:** Well, yeah, but much more. It helps you prepare for how Jesus will enter **your** life **THIS** Christmas? Think about it...there is a session today...

Both walk to the door... *pick up the bags*

**Fran:** If you take this straight path you'll get there

**Marnie/Diane:** Thanks Dr. Baptist for pointing me in the right direction...

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Closing session: Marnie/Diane bring up a candle during the closing song...