

The Art of Kvetching

Renate Gritter - September 24th, 2023

Watch out. She's got slides.

And there will be pictures.

Reading through this week's
lectionary, a couple of lines stuck out
to me.

“Why didn’t God let us die in comfort in Egypt where we had lamb stew and all the bread we could eat? You’ve brought us out into this wilderness to starve us to death, the whole company of Israel!” - The Israelites

"Yes, he's listened to your complaints against him. You haven't been complaining against us, you know, but against God ... Who are we in all this? You haven't been complaining to us—you've been complaining to God!" - Moses

"The desire to break camp here and be with Christ is powerful. Some days I can think of nothing better." - Paul

"These who were hired last worked only one hour ... and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day." - The John 20 Early Birds

This sure looks like complaining to me.

This made me think of:



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you want my hot take for the evening? people who dont like complainers just havent been exposed to good complaining, and will never know if they themselves have an inborn talent for the art of kvetching

Is there such a thing as "good complaining"?

I mean, sure, our lectionary friends could be
lamenting.

But then again...

A) Beefin'



B) Bitchin'



C) Moanin'



D) Groanin'



E) Whingin'



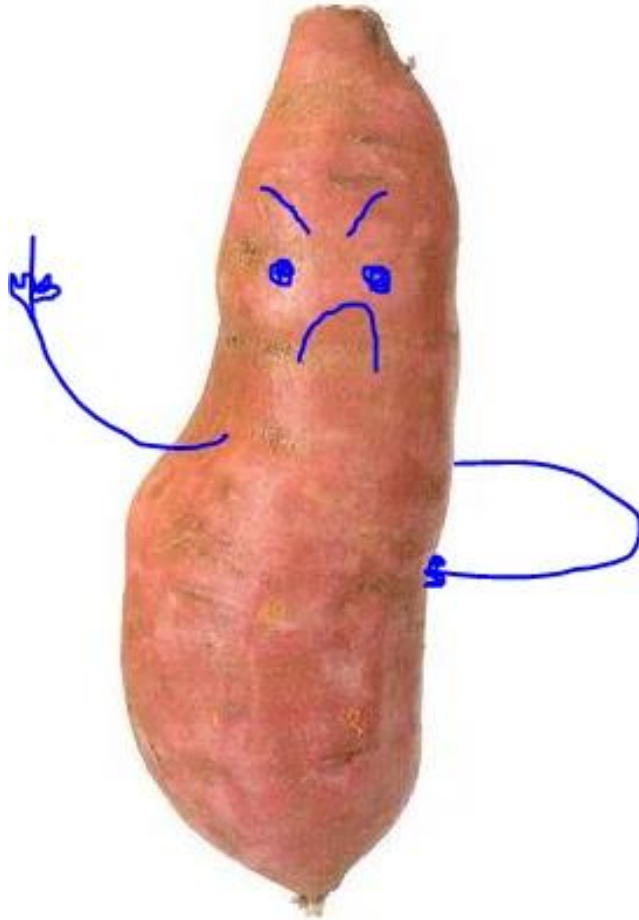
F) Whinin'



G) Wailin'



H) Yammerin'



I) Bellyachin'



J) Grousin'

This is the
absolute
worst.



K) Gripin'



L) Grouchin'



M) Stinkin'



N) Knockin' (before tryin')



Is there a difference between complaining
and lamenting?

Complaining and Lamenting

- Doug Goodwin: "A complaint has to do with expressing displeasure in someone or something. A lament is a prayer to God."
- These two things are not mutually exclusive.
- Etymologically, the latin root of complain (*complangere*) **means** lament.
- Dr. Curt Thompson: "a lament *includes* a complaint."
- Perhaps complaining includes an unspoken lament as well.
- They relate deeply to each other.

The people in the lectionary were pretty grumbly.
How did God respond to them?

- The Israelites got more than enough food and water to sustain them.
- Moses got instruction and guidance for leading his community through a tough time.
- Paul ~~was martyred~~ had one of the greatest Christian vocations while he lived.
- The frustrated labourers were given an explanation for why they were paid the same as the others.

We have reason to believe God moves within our complaining, even if it doesn't come in the form of prayer.

So. What could "good complaining" look like?



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good complaining is some combination of a) funny, b) animated and theatrical, c) insightful re: human foibles, d) inquiry into social trends and norms.it must ALWAYS involve at least a small degree of self awareness, and is often used to build camaraderie and maintain relationships.

source: im jewish

- Something that softens us.
- Something that shows us a deeper need.
- Something that releases us from "grumble squingeing" without any pressure to make our thoughts sound "Holy" before they've been processed.
- Something that allows us to compassionately hear our inner mystery more clearly.

Blessings on your complaints this week <3