

About Fear..

FEAR. Fear is a word that most of us shy away from. We all know that we have fear, we may even know what our specific fears are, but many of us either don't admit to our fears or we let fear run our lives. For most of us, fear is something that stands behind us, driving us this way or that way, moving us toward certain choices and away from other choices.

If you acknowledge that you have fear in your life, then you're standing at the starting line. Until you acknowledge that you have fear, you can't begin to deal with it – awareness is always the first step. It doesn't matter what kind of fear you have, or where it came from, just that you recognize it. You could be afraid of the dark, rejection, financial lack, snakes or public speaking. Just realize that we all have fears, even the people who go bunging jumping or speak in front of thousands of people. We all have fear. Some have just gotten better at recognizing their fear and putting fear in its proper place.

So how do we put fear in its proper place? By getting to know it very intimately. Many of us recognize fear on an intellectual level, but shy away from it on an emotional or physical level. For instance, we might admit that we are afraid of the dark to other people, but when we are actually faced with the dark, we run from it because our emotional and physical reactions of fear drives us away from the dark. When we run from our fears we never know them.

To know your fear, you have to understand what fear does to you on intellectual, emotional and physical levels. The next time you are confronted with something you fear, check in with yourself. What's your mind thinking? Is it thinking that you should get out of here? That you should never do this again? Is one part of your mind yelling at another part, telling it not to be afraid? Check in with all of these thoughts. Remember them and record them.

Next, check in with your emotional state. What's happening there? Emotions are harder to put into words, so you may simply want to absorb the "inner taste" of your emotional state. After a while, you'll develop a keen sense of inner taste and be able to sense your emotional state immediately. You may feel an emotional constriction, just as you feel a physical constriction of muscles. Just keep tasting – you'll get something useful.

Finally, check in with your body. What's your body doing? Do you have sweaty palms? Is your stomach tight? Is your throat tight? Is your mouth tight? Check in with all of these bodily sensations and remember them.

Now that you've gotten data from your mind, your emotions and your body, put the whole picture together. For instance, you may have a wild vortex of conflicting thoughts, telling you to run and stay at the same time, you may have a slightly resentful emotional state that you're back in fear again, and you might have sweaty palms and a tight stomach. Good! Now you can say to yourself, "Ahhh, this is fear. This is fear." Remember, to deal with something you first have to know what it is. Now you have fear in your grip rather than fear having you in its grip. You've got fear under the

microscope, and you know exactly what you're dealing with.

Remember this moment sharply and clearly – it's going to help you the next time you have to deal with fear. Remember how it feels to know fear, to hold in your focus. Take a moment to pause and consider this: what is fear, really? Are those thoughts, emotions and physical sensations so bad that you can't deal with them? Thoughts are just thoughts – they just exist in mind, little voices chattering in your head. They aren't you and you aren't them. Can you turn the volume down a little on those voices? Emotions are harder to deal with, but still, they just boil down to certain feelings. Do you have to go with them? Can you simply be still inside a moment at a time? And what about the physical sensations? Sweaty palms and tight muscles – can you wipe your palms and relax your muscles with some deep breathing? If this is all that fear boils down to, aren't you more than capable of dealing with it?

Now fear is no longer standing behind you and driving you to make certain decisions. Now fear is in front of you, running in all directions with wild thoughts, emotions and sensations, and you have it in your sights. You can see what it's doing and you can choose whether to let it affect you. You're in control, not fear. Happy hunting!