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Introduction

Fears are a part of life. Everyone is afraid of something. Whether it comes from clowns or grizzly bears, at some point in your life, you're going to experience some degree of fear.

Fear is a generally a *good* thing. Yes, you read that right! Fear can spur you to quick action, and even save your life, when there is a real danger. While fear typically has a minimal impact on your life, there are times when fear takes over and becomes a detriment.

If fear is negatively affecting your life, fear not! ***You CAN conquer your fears and live a life free from the pain and apprehension that fear has brought you.***

There are many fears you can overcome with a conscious decision to change your mindset. Practicing some fear-reducing techniques, like those found in this ebook, may be all you need to rid yourself of them.

Other fears are so extreme that they require professional help. These are deemed phobias, and while they're tougher to crack, conquering these deep-rooted fears isn't an insurmountable challenge by any means. With some persistence and willpower, you can even overcome phobias.

In this ebook, the topic of fear will be discussed in depth. We'll delve into fear from all angles, including:

- ◆ How fear can negatively affect your life
- ◆ The nature of fear
- ◆ The difference between a fear and a phobia

You'll also find some tips and techniques to help you overcome your fears, as well as discover the positive results that come from facing your fears head on.

It may seem overwhelming at first, but when you face and conquer your fears, there are a plethora of positive effects that it can have on your life.

The most immediate after-effect is that wave of relief and joy that you feel, knowing that you're capable of overcoming obstacles. Once you can think of the thing you feared, and *feel* that it isn't really that scary after all, you'll *know* you've conquered it and it can never take you captive again!

Facing and conquering your fears will also give you a significant boost in confidence. This will enable you to strengthen other areas of your life, such as:

- ◆ Work
- ◆ Romance
- ◆ Parenting
- ◆ And more!

The Difference Between Fears and Phobias

Phobias are all the rage in medicine right now. There are phobias for all sorts of things that you wouldn't think could warrant a fearful reaction, like a fear of flowers. But if you're scared of it, it still frightens you and can bring you serious consequences, whether it scares others or not.

While fears and phobias are similar, there is a distinct difference:

- ◆ **Fear** is defined as a distressing emotion caused by impending danger or pain; the feeling or condition of being afraid.
- ◆ **A Phobia** is a persistent and irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that leads to a compelling desire to avoid it.

In most cases, a phobia causes a detrimental effect in the lives of the people it afflicts. For example, Agoraphobics (people afraid of open spaces) end up living their whole lives as shut-ins.

The psychological field has gotten so broad that there are phobias for all sorts of fears, such as:

- ◆ **Mysophobia** – fear of germs
- ◆ **Entomophobia** – fear of bugs

- ◆ **Triskaidekaphobia** – fear of the number 13
- ◆ **Coulrophobia** – fear of clowns
- ◆ **Anthophobia** – fear of flowers

And the list goes on. With some of these fears, feeling some apprehension is perfectly normal. We all want to avoid getting sick and we may feel nervous when a bee or wasp comes buzzing our way, but the trick is to maintain control and not allow the fear to *rule* you.

While some of these phobias might appear to be silly at face value, they are serious conditions that should be treated as such. If you've been diagnosed with a phobia, you too can overcome them; it just may require professional treatment.

Most likely, as in the vast majority of cases, you experience a simple fear, which can be overcome with a few easy techniques and a healthy dose of willpower.

“Every time we face our fear, we gain strength, courage, and confidence in the doing.”

~ Author Unknown

Is Fear the Mind Killer?

Science fiction fans, cult movie fans, or anyone who's seen David Lynch's 1984 film adaptation of *Dune* may be asking whether or not fear truly is the mind killer, as the film states.

The answer, surprisingly enough, is yes.

Fear has a tendency to overpower rational thought and replace it with sheer panic. Panic is a powerful sensation that can lead to undesired results. This is why you're prohibited from yelling "Fire!" in a crowded movie theater.

In this sense, it *is* something of a mind killer, as you lose yourself in the fear. Like fear, panic is also something that you can overcome.

In a fearful situation, it's important to keep these tips in mind:

1. **Stay calm.** This is one of the keys to keeping your fear and panic at bay. It may sound like a simple platitude akin to telling a heartbroken friend to get over it, but it really is the best way to face your fears. *In many cases, you can remain calm by simply avoiding thoughts about your fear.*

- ◆ For example, if you're afraid of heights and you're about to partake in a ropes course, the only way you're going to get through it is by *not* freaking out about how high up you are. In

such a case, the best way to stay calm is to simply *avoid looking down*. **Focus on your actions** as you tackle the course.

2. **Keep your wits about you.** Many times, all it takes to get past your fear in a particular situation is to *focus on a solution* and take action to implement it.

- ◆ For example, if you accidentally wander into the vicinity of a bee hive or get lost while hiking, you should remain cautious, but keep a cool head. Remember that the bees will not attack you unless provoked, and finding your way back to a main road is usually a simple matter of retracing your steps.

In more perilous situations, the same tips apply. It may sound simplistic, but it's true. For many of these situations, the solutions have been ingrained in your memory; the trick is to just remember them at the appropriate time. Consciously quieting your panic can help you recall critical information.

“Stop, drop, and roll” sounds simple enough, but when you actually catch on fire, you may not be thinking about that and will panic. Of course,

“I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when my fear is gone I will turn and face fear’s path, and only I will remain.”

~ Paul Atreides, Dune

anyone would, but you can solve the situation much quicker by focusing on what you *can* do to overcome the situation.

Knowledge is Power

It is often said that people fear what they don't understand. As such, a natural way to fight fear is with knowledge.

Horror movies often use this to their advantage, leaving certain things *off* the screen to allow your imagination to do the work for you. *The directors know that what you don't see is ultimately going to be scarier than something you do see.*

You can use knowledge to combat fear in situations such as these:

1. **Monsters under the bed.** Surely your kids have encountered that age old fear of a monster living in the closet or hiding under the bed. In almost every instance, the parental response is to turn on the lights and run an "inspection."
 - ◆ A good tip in these instances is to let the child see for himself that there's nothing there. While just peaking in the door may work for the night, *showing* the child will surpass telling him that there are no monsters lurking in the bedroom.
2. **Medical procedures.** The doctor's office can be a nerve-wracking place. This is especially true when major procedures are about to

take place. In these situations, doctors will usually take time to explain to their patients exactly what's going to happen.

- ◆ When your doctor gives you this knowledge of the details, it can go a long way toward alleviating your fear. If he doesn't volunteer the information, then ask!

For many fears, a little research to increase your knowledge may enable you to overcome it. *By knowing your fear, you can remain in control of the emotion and prevent it from overwhelming you.*

You can utilize this tactic in many other situations as well. When fear gets a grip on you, it can sometimes cause your imagination to run wild. By filling your brain with facts, it becomes harder for your mind to conjure up doomsday scenarios to send you into a panic.

All of a sudden, those things that were scary turn out to be quite the opposite. For example, the lurking shadow on the wall is really just a hat rack!

*“So now you know, and
knowing is half the battle.”*

~ G.I. Joe

Fear is an Emotion

Show me a person who has never once experienced fear and I will show you someone with a severe case of denial! *While it may seem like a weakness in the human condition, fear is a very natural thing.* Much like happiness or sadness, it's an emotion.

The trick is to keep that emotion in check. You're going to be afraid of something at some point, and *how you respond to the fear is more important than the fact that you experienced it.*

Example 1:

Let's say you go out camping with a group of friends for the weekend and your campsite is approached by a grizzly bear. You're going to be afraid. It doesn't matter how macho you are, if you're approached by a bear, you're going to get scared.

In this case, confronting your fear doesn't mean literally confronting the bear. However, it's still important that you keep a level head and prevent your fear from taking control.

- ◆ If you were to panic, start screaming, and run away, this would only result in the bear chasing you, and that bear can run faster than you can.
- ◆ On the other hand, if you calmly and quietly stand still, you may be able to avoid the bear altogether.

Example 2:

Your friends want to go skydiving. You agree, as everyone who's done it raves about how fun it is. You get on the plane and all too soon the guy looks at you and says, "You're up." You look out the hatch and suddenly the idea isn't so appealing. *This is a perfectly natural response.*

- ◆ Will everyone feel that sense of dread as they notice how much space lies between them and the ground? Well, there are those who thrive in such situations, but a vast majority of people are going to have second thoughts once they look down.
- ◆ *It's important to keep panic at bay.* Whether you decide to jump or not, everything will go more successfully if you can avoid panic and allow clarity of thought.

Since it's an emotion, keeping your fear under control isn't too different from keeping your anger or happiness under control. It's going to be a factor one way or another, but as long as you control it, as opposed to the other way around, you'll be fine.

So the next time a street clown comes prancing your way and your stomach starts to feel uneasy, take comfort in knowing that this is a normal emotion. *Each and every one of us feels fear from time to time. It's what you do with it that's important.*

The High Price of Fear

Fear is a force in and of itself. While it may not seem like it takes that big a toll on your day-to-day life, it can start to add up. The good news is that there's another side to this dilemma.

"All creatures feel fear... especially the scary ones."

*~ Thomas Wayne, **Batman Begins***

By conquering your fears, you open up all sorts of doors! You can:

1. **Gain confidence.** By casting your fears aside, you become a stronger person. Those things that once stood in your way can no longer impede you as you reach new personal heights.
2. **Enjoy an increased sense of pride.** While conquering your fears will result in more general confidence, you'll also be rewarded with a sense of accomplishment at your ability to master that which has thwarted you for so long.
3. **Experience exciting new opportunities.** Once you conquer your fears, you'll become open to new experiences which you couldn't see before because your fears blinded you to the possibilities. With new experiences, you can live a richer life and become the envy of others around you, who wish they could do what you've done.

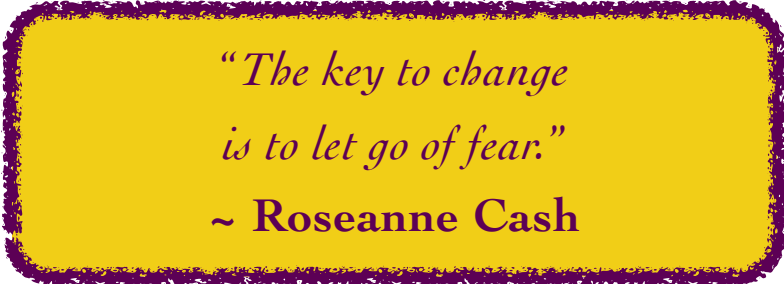
Each of these benefits enable you to enjoy an endless amount of freedom that has the potential to change your life forever. You may even find that the thing you once feared is now one of your favorite activities!

A good example of such a circumstance is with roller coasters. They're fast, they jerk around, and they even have you shooting in a loop. You look at it and think that there's no way you're going to get on one.

Maybe it's only because your friends and family bug you about it, but somehow, somehow, you make your way onto one. There's a sense of dread as you rise up the first hill, the repetitive clicking of the chains making your heart race even faster.

As you peer over the drop, you may feel a sense of doom, but once the coaster starts bolting and the adrenaline kicks in, it becomes one of the most incredible things you could ever experience.

You, a person who was once wary and fearful of such a pastime, are now clamoring to go on again in order to feel the same rush!



*“The key to change
is to let go of fear.”*
~ Roseanne Cash

How to Control Your Fear

Practice these strategies to help you conquer your fears:

1. **Take a deep breath.** This is probably one of the easiest ways to alleviate the sense of dread that accompanies a frightful moment. *Taking a deep breath slows down your heart rate and often delivers a Zen-like calm.*
 - ◆ You can use this technique at any time, making it extremely versatile. No matter what you're encountering, taking in oxygen can always help clear your mind and help you get past whatever fearsome obstacle is impeding you.
2. **Hesitation can be a detriment.** More often than not, it pays to take a moment to think before doing something drastic. In some situations, however, hesitating can put you at a disadvantage, and even allow your fear to turn into panic.
 - ◆ Take the aforementioned skydiving situation as an example. In this case, hesitation could actually work against you. The more you think about the idea that you're jumping out of a flying airplane, the more afraid you become.
 - ◆ While it doesn't apply to all situations, there are circumstances where being impulsive can actually be to your benefit. In such situations where immediate action is required, go ahead and

just rush in. *Focusing on your action takes your mind off your fear.*

3. **Remember your training.** Throughout your life, you've been trained for many fear-inducing situations, such as fires, tornadoes, and perhaps even using life saving techniques like CPR. Every time you get on an airplane, they show you what to do in an emergency. *Be confident that you have the capability to get through these crises when they arise.* Then let go of the fear!
4. **Know your enemy.** As previously mentioned, knowledge can ease your fears. By knowing more about the thing that scares you, you automatically reduce the amount of fear because you know the nature of the metaphorical beast. *Research what you fear and you may find just the thing that conquers the fear itself.*

Fear is a part of everyday life, but that doesn't mean you have to be a slave to it. On the contrary, you can overcome it and reap all sorts of benefits.

You can open yourself up to a whole smorgasbord of new experiences and possibilities. There's no shame in feeling fear, and some will take longer to overcome it than others, but make no mistake, *every fear is conquerable.*

With a healthy dose of willpower, you *can* conquer your fears and live a richer, more exciting, and more rewarding life.