
Overcoming Fear

“Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway.” -- John Wayne

Courage is the antithesis to fear. But what is fear really? The first step in overcoming fear is understanding what it is and why we feel it.

Most of our fears are merely adult manifestations of feelings developed in childhood. These feelings, including fears of criticism, of punishment, of reprimand, or of negative strokes, often stem from an abundance of criticism that, at the time, may have been well intended.



Fear is thinking about what we *don't* want to happen. It is, by nature, focusing on the negative. As you may have already realized, negative thinking generally yields negative results. Realize also that our “attitude” will have a direct effect on fear. Instead of fearing what “might” happen, focus your mind on what you want to happen. By confronting your fears, understanding them, and dealing with them, you can conquer them.

As you experience, as we all do, the discomfort of fear, here are proven techniques to relieve and control it:

1. Try to identify the source or origin of your fear. Once discovered, you will frequently find that it is unrealistic in light of your achievements. It may, in fact, stem from early conditioning, and have no valid place in your adult thinking. Awareness of a fear often relieves its discomfort and enable to overcome it.
2. Analyze the situation which provokes fear. Ask yourself. “What is the worst thing that could possibly happen?” Then be realistic about the possibilities of that actually happening. Usually the fear, or level of fear, is unwarranted.



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3. Train yourself to think less about yourself and concentrate on achieving your goals. The more conscious attention you give to where you want to go, and who you want to be, the less time you will have to think about your fears.
 4. Concentrate on the positive qualities you possess instead of dwelling on those qualities which you consider negative. A great exercise to build an inventory of positive qualities is to write down all of your strengths and past achievements. This is something you will have to work at... most of our clients can only come up with a half-dozen or so the first time they try. When we ask them to list all the mistakes they have made, the list goes on and on. That's not a reflection true reality for them, nor is it for you, it's just not true. The key takeaway is this; You must be willing to identify and recognize your strengths, or it will be impossible to address your weaknesses (fears).
 5. Don't let yourself get all hung up in a search for absolute perfection. The kind of excellence needed to build a fine piece of furniture is not necessary when shoring up the underside of a porch. Set your standards to fit the job at hand.
 6. Recognize that you can never know enough to be absolutely certain when you make a decision. All worthwhile decisions involve some degree of risk. By making no decisions at all, you run the risk of having someone else make them for you. Once you know yourself and have a set of goals based on your own values, be comfortable with the fact that you have based your decisions on the best of your beliefs and knowledge.
 7. Do not become immobilized through fear of making mistakes. There are few mistakes that cannot be rectified. Every great success has been, and will be, the result of learning from mistakes. You will never learn how far you can go until you are willing to take the risk and make a mistake. Mistakes often lead to a productive learning experiences for you. Little growth can take place without trial and error.
 8. Believe that most people are rooting for you rather than against you. Your behavior based on this belief will help you be more personable towards others. Their response will usually be a reciprocal one of friendliness.
 9. Set goals. One of the greatest values of maintaining a personal goal setting process is that high goals require growth. By setting challenging yet realistic goals, you stretch our capacity and use more of your potential. Confidence and courage grows in proportion to your achievement.

As you begin to achieve goals in all areas of your life, you'll find the courage to overcome your most limiting fears!

