

Understand the Origins of Your Fear

If curiosity is excitement about the unknown, fear is its opposite. Fear is resistance to the unfamiliar. While curiosity has its foundations in hope and optimism, fear stems from caution and pessimism. These two forces are in a constant struggle within the minds of every person.

Fear, like any other emotion, is a tool we have evolved to aid our operation in the world. Like all tools, its misapplication changes its influence from benefit to detriment. Fear reminds us of our limits. Fear protects us from irreversible mistakes. Fear prevents us from stretching ourselves too thin in directions we are not prepared to go. But this is only true when we apply it correctly.

Fear is most appropriate when we are young and don't yet know the limits to reality. The members of each new generation must learn these for themselves, as the limits are always evolving. The more we master ourselves, the less we need fear's protective influence to limit our actions. But when we are young is also when our curiosity is most enthused. If the fear we develop through the various pains of upbringing overtakes it, we may lose our curious state for life.

This is when breakthrough is necessary. Fear must be pushed past while it is still malleable, before it settles completely. This is when past traumas must be reconsidered with new openness and perspective. If you do not take these crucial steps, fear maintains power over you and forever limits your actions. You grow only more narrow in your ability to explore with age when you live with fear as your dominant state.

It is said that true bravery is not the absence of fear, but acting in spite of it. The only way to cure fear is to first show that you are not willing to let it stop you. Willpower is your only weapon against it. To push against fear is to embrace conscious suffering for the things you care about. This is the most valuable kind of suffering in the world. These experiences are the fires that will forge you into a new version of yourself as you adapt to greater opportunities.

Fear is the doorway to the parts of yourself that you have yet to integrate into your working identity. You need only to keep the perspective that just because something is difficult does not make it detrimental. Very often, the exact opposite is true. The exceptional person thrives in his personal difficulties, transmuting temporary pain into permanent power, but only if he can recognize the nature of his fear.