



Overcoming Fear

A certain level of fear is natural and normal, and can even be healthy. If you never feel fear, it might mean you are too comfortable and not growing, not reaching your potential. Fear will never go away, as long as we continue to grow. It's not wrong or shameful to feel some fear. As we've seen above, our caveman brain is highly attuned to threats, and our brain uses fear to try to keep us safe (even when there's no actual danger).

But fear becomes a problem if you let it *dominate* you and dictate your decisions, which as we've seen will determine your actions, and your outcomes. You are simply not going to get the best outcomes if your thinking is ruled by fear.

Fear can snowball. A person might worry so much about a promotion that they don't go for it; then they might start thinking that perhaps they lack ambition, and perhaps that means that they are not good enough for the job they already have; and then this infects their whole view of life and they start to think they are not good enough for their career, their family, their friends, and pretty soon everything in their life is affected. Their world begins to shrink and they do less and less; they numb the pain by watching tv, eating, complaining etc.

This is known as being caught on the "wheel of fear". A person caught on the wheel of fear may feel symptoms such as exhaustion, "busyness", self-righteousness, paralysis, confusion, feeling everyone else is the problem, numbness, guilt and shame, out of control feelings, and getting easily overwhelmed. It's fairly easy to see why these symptoms might not lead to the greatest outcomes.

What are some fears we have?

Humans are social creatures and have certain psychological needs: the need for acceptance, for love and for a sense of community. If we lack any of these, it causes us psychological distress. Hence the three universal fears are:

- 1 fear of not being good enough
- 2 fear of not being loved
- 3 fear of not belonging

All fears on some level come back to these core fears.

How to deal with fear

When we fear, deep down what we feel is that we can't handle something. The truth is you can handle everything that comes your way. You can start to realise this by taking steps to overcome your fears.

The way to deal with fear is not by running away. The more you try to escape your fears, the more you will experience them. The key to overcoming fear is to face it head on, to DO the thing you fear. As Susan Jeffers says, "Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway".

Consistently pushing through fear and succeeding, one challenge at a time, is an empowering process: it will help you to realise that you can succeed, despite your fears. Ultimately, facing your fears is less scary than the helplessness that comes when you are always too fearful to act.

The truth is you really are in total control. This realisation is your biggest asset. After all, if you realise you can create your own misery out of nothing, it stands to reason you can create your own joy instead.

Remember, everyone else also feels fear when on unfamiliar territory. There are plenty of people who have faced the same fears as you or worse, and they haven't let that stop them - they have succeeded brilliantly, so why not you too? Pretty much anyone who has done anything really worthwhile has felt fear beforehand.

We need to get past our fears and stop worrying about what *others think*. In order for our minds to be free to think about other things in life, we need to make new mental pathways to think what *we can do* instead. We don't need to spend time thinking about what's wrong, or what might be wrong, or what could go wrong - we need to turn our minds to what can we do successfully instead.

Fear and Courage

Most people are waiting to feel more confident *before* they take action: they are stuck and are waiting for courage to show up. In the state of waiting for fear to go away it is the fear itself that we are focusing on, and what we focus on is what we actually get. We need to feel the fear and move into it, lean into it. If we are waiting around for courage to turn up before we act, we have the order backwards. You need to act first, *then* you will get courage. Courage comes from self-belief, from the self-confidence that we get from actually *having a go*. We need to first *prove* to ourselves that we can do it, then we start gaining self-belief because our mind has a *reason* to feel courageous.

Lots of times when we feel fear, we start making up excuses. We tell ourselves that we can't do it and nothing seems possible, and we can feel helpless. The more we delay acting on our fear, the more we perpetually put it off, the more we end up feeling bad about ourselves. If we are doing this with many different things in our life, our self-esteem plummets, and then we are in a place where it has become harder to say yes.

Fear does not go away by willing it away; that simply will not happen. If we tell ourselves we are only going to do this thing once we are stronger, we are actually not going to do anything. We need to face the task that is creating the fear. Courage and worry do not sit in the same place. We cannot have courage and worry at the same time. What we get is what

we focus on. Courage turns up when we do the thing that was the challenge. When we overcome this fear then we are ready for our next growth.

The longer we think about our fear, the worse it is going to be. We then think the fear is the reality (rather than merely our *reaction* to the reality), and we don't take action. Deep down, we are all as brave as we need to be, but we just need to take action. When we take action, we gain courage and *that's* where the success in our life begins. Where we focus is our reality. Are you focusing on "I can do this" or "I can't do this"? Whichever you focus on will become your own reality. If you find yourself saying or thinking "I can't", you should instead reframe it to yourself as "I won't", which is a recognition that you do have a choice, you are not helpless.

Learn how to overcome fears in your life and relationship. Book your free discovery session with Kath today

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