



EVERYDAY

COURAGE FOR  
EXTRAORDINARY  
TIMES

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# Everyday Courage for Extraordinary Times

Simple Strategies for Surviving, Striving,  
and Thriving in a Turbulent World



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## Courage and Perseverance are Values

At Values Coach, we teach courses on *The Twelve Core Action Values*. A fundamental premise of this 60-module course is that values are skills – they are learnable and they can be practiced. The more they are practiced, the stronger they become. Courage and Perseverance are two of those values. Following are links to the icebreaker videos that we provide to our Certified Values Coach Trainers to help them kick off discussions about Courage and Perseverance. This is “extra credit” work ☺.

Joe’s icebreaker video for Core Action Value #4, Courage

<http://youtu.be/QcdoBMbGmd8>



Joe’s icebreaker video for Core Action Value #5, Perseverance

[http://youtu.be/W9Iiek\\_amFg](http://youtu.be/W9Iiek_amFg)



## Re-spark the spirit of adventure in your life

Have you ever gone to the park on a summer afternoon and watched the children play? They seem to be immune to fear and impervious to pain, don’t they? “Higher!” they shriek as their Dads push them on the swings; after a spectacular wipe-out, all it takes is a quick hug from Mom and they’re back at it again. When’s the last time you felt the same spirit of adventure that animates these kids? How much happier, how much more successful, would you be if you could call upon that spirit at will, if you could replace anxiety with exhilaration, replace fear with fun?

Nearly 2,500 years ago, the Chinese warrior-scholar Wu Ch’i wrote a short tract on the art of war in which he said that on the battlefield, those who are determined to die with glory shall live, while those who merely hope to escape with their lives will die. That is a central paradox of life in America today. The person who simply hopes to hang onto a job and retire with a 401(k) plan reasonably intact dies a little bit every day; the person who attacks life with a spirit

of adventure lives every day to the fullest – and is ironically more likely to take the risks upon which financial fortunes are built.

It's been said that no boat ever reached a distant shore without first leaving sight of home. The uncertainty can be frightening – but it can also be exhilarating. As T.S. Eliot said, no one knows how far they can go without first running the risk of going too far. One of God's great miracles is a desert sunrise, but to witness this, you must first spend a cold night out there on the hard ground, many miles from the nearest hot shower, television set, or microwave oven.

The strategies in this workbook work. I use them myself, and I've seen them help many others change their lives for the better. Some of these ideas are as old as the Bible, others are techniques that I've developed for myself and my clients. The Zen masters say that when the student is ready, the teacher appears. If you are stressed out with high anxiety, if you are stuck in the rut of paralyzing fear, if you've given up on your grandest dreams, there is a teacher waiting for you in the pages of this book.

## **Executive Summary: Make Fear Your Ally – Make it Work for You and Not Against You**

Courage, said Winston Churchill, is the most important of all human virtues because without it, none of the other virtues are possible. Courage is essential to living a life that is filled with meaning and achievement. One of the most important services a leader (whether as a manager or as a parent) can provide is to equip people with the skills and confidence to overcome uncertainty, anxiety, and fear.

There are two general steps to making fear your ally: confront your fears and then take action in spite of them. Fear is an ally when it draws your attention to critical problems in your work and in your life, and then impels you to take corrective action. Following are some of the steps to make fear work for you rather than against you:



**Understand your fear:** What is it trying to tell you? If you give fear a name it becomes just a problem, and it's easier to solve a problem than it is to conquer fear.

**Talk back to your fear:** When fear is trying to prevent you from taking risks that could in fact eliminate the source of the fear, you need to put on your bravest face, rebut your fears with your bravest affirmations, and then fake it till you make it. As Mark Twain said - act brave, even if you're not, because nobody can tell the difference.

**Get the facts:** Fear breeds in ignorance and dissipates when you shine the light of knowledge upon it. What do you not know that if you did know would make your fear more manageable, and how can you find it out?

**Prepare yourself:** Fear is often simply the suspicion that you are not ready for some future occurrence. What steps can take to prepare yourself for the future eventualities you fear today? Fear doesn't stand a chance when confronted with preparation and discipline.



**Transform inertia into energy:** By altering your conscious perception of the emotion, you can transform paralyzing inertia of fear into catalyzing energy for action and change. The physiologic symptoms of terror and exhilaration are identical.

**Channel fear into a constructive direction.** While you cannot drive fear out of the workplace, you can effectively channel it. People *should* be afraid of the competition, of losing a customer, of falling behind in technology. They should *not* be afraid of the boss. When people fear the boss more than they fear the competition, the competition will prevail.

**Take action.** Do the thing you fear, said Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the death of the fear is certain. This ancient wisdom has never been more relevant than in today's fast-moving world. Action is the difference between wishful thinking and positive thinking.

***Connect with other people:*** Speaking with others can give you both comfort and courage, and may well open your eyes to possibilities that you haven't yet considered for eliminating the source of your fears.

***Pay attention:*** Learn from the past, plan for the future, but live in the present. Fear is caused by focusing your attention on an undesirable future; the antidote is present awareness.

***See the world as it really is:*** When you can see things as they really are – not as they used to be, as you wish they were, or as you fear they might become – you avoid many of those “fantasized experiences appearing real” that are the source of much fear.

***Have fun:*** You cannot simultaneously be amused and frightened. Spontaneity, humor and laughter bolster courage. As a side benefit, they also foster creativity.

***Have faith:*** This is the ultimate antidote to fear. One good working definition for everyday faith is expecting that in tough times you will be supported in ways that cannot be predicted or understood, but that can be relied upon and appreciated.

**Fear is an ally** when it alerts you to the fact that you are not prepared for some possible future event. Fear is an ally when it induces you to reach out and ask for help to do that which you cannot do by yourself. Fear is an ally when it prompts you to learn new skills so as to confront the challenges of the future. What might your fears be trying to tell you?



# Part 1: Confront Your Fears

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## Who could you be if you could conquer your fears?

Who could you see looking back at you from the mirror if you didn't allow fear to prevent you from doing the things that need to be done in order for you to achieve your most authentic goals and dreams, and from becoming the person that you know you are meant to be?

### Two questions that could change your life:

**What would you choose to do with your life if every job paid the same and had exactly the same social status?**

**What dreams would you pursue if you knew you could not fail? To what would you devote your remaining time if you knew you only had one year left to live?**

Would you take a sabbatical and travel the world? Join a writers' group and get started on the Great American Novel? Sign up to help Habitat for Humanity build a home for someone less fortunate than you? Or would you shy away from the risk and the uncertainty, choosing instead to settle in for 365 evenings of watching television sitcoms?

In all likelihood, the biggest barrier standing between you and the fulfillment of your greatest dreams is your own fear. Fear can be a prison more confining than any iron bars. As Dr. Edward Hallowell points out in his book *Worry*, simple fear can be a learning disability more crippling than attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, and every other medical condition. The simple fact that you have this workbook tells me that you're yearning to re-spark the spirit of adventure in your life, and to overcome the anxieties, fears, and doubts that stand in your way.

Here's my challenge to you: crystallize a mental vision of you *actually living that adventure*. Clearly define and understand the fears that are inhibiting you from getting started, and preventing you from living your life to the fullest, using the diagnostic tools included in this workbook. Then act as if you could not fail. The words were spoken by Winston Churchill, but the wisdom is ancient – the advice echoes through the pages of the Bible, the Bhagavad-Gita, the I Ching, and every other source of eternal wisdom. And it echoes through our world today.

It's visible in the thousands of homes built by Habitat for Humanity, the "impossible dream" of Millard and Linda Fuller, who believed that they would not be allowed to fail. You can see it on your computer screen when you visit Amazon.com, the brainchild of Jeff Bezos, who set out to reinvent retail merchandising with a determination that he would not fail. Your children (perhaps you as well) see it reflected in the success of J.K. Rowling, who overcame personal and financial difficulties to write *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, every day picking up her pen as if she could not fail.

I did not learn everything I need to know in kindergarten. I did not even learn everything I need to know during four years of graduate business school. But in recent years I have learned, and continue to learn, how to think bigger, and then to act as if I cannot fail. It's all a matter of courage and perseverance. You will meet many successful people in this book. Chances are, the primary difference between those people and you is that they have learned how to make fear an ally, not an enemy, and how to make adversity a teacher, not a problem. In short, they have learned the skills of everyday courage. You can to. So let's get started.

## **No Fear, No Courage - Big Fear, Big Courage**



Dr. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*, wrote that the absence of fear is not courage - it's brain damage! Fear is a natural human condition. Our challenge is to harness it for good purpose, and not allow it to interfere with our goals and dreams. Courage means standing up to fear, not eliminating it. That's what courage is, isn't it? Not the absence of fear, but rather the strength and determination to overcome that fear and do what you have to do anyway.

Why do some people like to ride roller coasters? Because it's controlled terror. The physical symptoms of terror and exhilaration are identical: rapid breathing, clenched stomach, sweaty palms. Often the difference between terror and exhilaration is simply the interpretation we chose to give to those symptoms. If you are a salesperson about to make an important call, are you terrified of the possibility of rejection or exhilarated by the potential of a big sale? The physical symptoms are identical. If you've just lost a job, are you terrified by the void that's been created in your life, or exhilarated by the prospect of new challenges and opportunities?



Think about your biggest fear, and then write about how proud you will feel when you stand up to that fear and do what you have to do in spite of being afraid.

“Often the bravest warriors were originally the greatest cowards. The more fear you confront and conquer, the greater courage you will possess.”

Chin-Ning Chu: *Thick Face, Black Heart*

### Distinguish between anxiety, fear, and worry



As in treating illness, so too with overcoming fear – the first step is diagnosis; you can’t fight what you can’t see. And as in medical care, a missed diagnosis can result in the wrong treatment, causing contrary and potentially adverse outcomes. For example, if you diagnose yourself as having fear of failure, but at a subconscious level what you really fear is success, each step you take to overcome the fear of failure could actually make things worse, since it brings you that much closer to the success that is the real cause of your anxiety.

Notice that in the last paragraph I used the terms “fear” and “anxiety” as though they were interchangeable. Actually, the first step in Diagnosis is to recognize the difference. Anxiety is a generalized state of dread, the black cloud of doubt and apprehension that appears to be a foundational quality of the human condition. Fear, on the other hand, is specific. It has an object – the something you are afraid of. As we saw in the last issue, your own fear can be a prison more confining than any iron bars. It can also be a serious learning disability. Fear can provoke you into self-sabotaging attitudes and behaviors. Fear can lead to aggressive (fight) or passive-aggressive (flight) behavior that is both career-limiting and life-diminishing.

Anxiety is chronic, fear is acute; anxiety is the black cloud, fear is the fierce storm. And here’s the problem. As theologian Paul Tillich noted in his book *The Courage to Be*, because anxiety is the most uncomfortable of all emotions, it strives to become fear. At least with fear, you have some sense of control, since you can see “the enemy,” that thing of which you are afraid.

Now, there are certainly times when this is a good thing. If walking through a dark forest provokes anxiety (thereby heightening your alertness level and pumping adrenaline into your

system) and you come upon an angry bear, you will be primed to pick up a stick and fight or to run as fast as your frightened legs will carry you.

But in the world of today, most of our fears cannot be run away from, and they cannot be beaten into submission with a stick. When anxiety becomes fear, it can provoke inappropriate reactions that make us miserable.

Worry is another word that's often used interchangeably with anxiety and fear, but it's important to recognize the differences. If anxiety is the dark cloud and fear is the fierce storm, then worry is the weather forecast predicting even more bad days to come. And while anxiety, fear, and worry can each be valuable guides when managed effectively, out-of-control they contribute to self-sabotaging attitudes and behaviors.

Here's an example of how it can work. Let's say that a salesperson, or a writer, has an underlying sense of inadequacy and insecurity around other people. That provokes anxiety. This in turn leads to an acute fear of rejection, since this is automatically interpreted as confirmation of that self-perceived inadequacy. The fear of rejection prevents him from making the calls or sending out the manuscripts upon which his livelihood is based, so he worries about how he's going to pay his bills. Of course, the more he falls behind, the more intense the anxiety. This stokes more fear which churns up more worry in a self-perpetuating downward spiral.

Just recognizing it in yourself is the first step toward breaking the cycle. Paying closer attention to your worry habits can help you identify your fears which in turn will begin to uncover underpinning sources of anxiety. And that, as we shall see, can turn out to be a real gift.

### The “benefits” of worry

If you are a worry-a-holic, the diagnosis begins with appreciating the benefits that you derive from your worry addiction. As Edward Hallowell points out in his book *Worry: Controlling It and Using It Wisely*, healthy worry can keep you focused on key priorities and potential problems. Although toxic worry does not help you solve any problems (and usually makes them worse), it does have some other things going for it:

- Worry creates the perception that you are doing something about the problem, without your actually having to do something about it.
- When you are worrying, it strokes your ego by reinforcing the notion that you are at the center of the universe after all (“I must be very important to have so many worries”).
- Worry diverts your attention toward urgent crisis problems (like worrying about how you’re going to pay your rent this month) and away from important underlying causes (like the spendthrift habits that have kept you mired in debt).
- Worry can give you a great adrenaline rush.

Be honest with yourself. Are you really being truthful when you say that you wish you didn’t worry so much, or are you in fact “enjoying” some of the “benefits” described above.

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## Three Bad Things that Happen when You Are in the Grip of Anxiety

In the book *Worry* (highly recommended!), Hallowell notes that anxiety increases performance *up to a point*, but that after that point, it causes performance to decline. In his book of leadership



secrets, former New York Yankees' coach Joe Torre wrote that one of his key responsibilities was preventing player anxiety from interfering with on-field performance (a difficult problem when the mercurial and temperamental George Steinbrenner was the owner!).

Norman Dixon's study *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* sheds some light on why anxiety interferes with performance. Dixon explored the differences between capable and inept military commanders, most of whom had very similar careers until being put into the pressure cooker of the actual battlefield situation for which they had trained. The primary distinction was this: Competent commanders were able to manage their anxiety; incompetent commanders were driven by their anxiety into either paralysis or panic. When you are full of anxiety, three bad things happen at a cognitive level:

### **Memory Distortion:**

Your memories are distorted; when filled with anxiety, all your past failures loom large in your mind, and seem certain to be repeated, while past successes feel like distant anomalies that were the result of luck that has now deserted you.

### **Perception Distortion:**

Your perception of the current reality is distorted; the high-anxiety person always sees "the enemy" as being bigger and stronger than it really is, and sees his or her own resources as being smaller and weaker than they really are.

### **Vision Distortion:**

When filled with anxiety, you do not perceive the opportunities for audacious action that would not only solve the problem at hand, but bring a stunning turnaround, because you can't see through the prison bars of dread.



## Despair: Anxiety on steroids

Winston Churchill, a man who knew many dark days, had one ironclad commandment: never despair. To despair is to lose all hope. When someone is looking at the world through DOOM glasses, it does not matter whether the sun is shining or not – everything is dark and gloomy. It has nothing to do with what objectively is going on outside – the darkness is on the inside. Hope is the foundation for optimism – when all hope is gone, it’s almost impossible to envision a better future.

## There’s no such thing as false hope

Maggie Mermaid, a character in my book *The Healing Tree: A Mermaid, A Poet, and A Miracle* is a poet who writes poems for hospitalized patients. She wrote “The Hope Diamond” for a cancer patient who was at risk of losing hope. Hope is the antidote to dread and despair. One way to foster hope is to practice learned optimism (see next heading).

*The Healing Tree: A Mermaid, A Poet, and A Miracle* is available at Amazon.com and other online booksellers.

### THE HOPE DIAMOND

**The most precious diamond in the world cannot be purchased, it can only be accepted.**

**The most precious diamond in the world cannot be seen, it can only be felt.**

**The most precious diamond in the world cannot be worn around your neck, it can only be kept safe in your heart.**

**The most precious diamond in the world cannot be taken away, it can only be given away.**

**The most precious diamond in the world is free for the asking, and you can have as many as you ask for.**

**The most precious diamond in the world is stronger than iron, but is more fragile than a dream.**

**The most precious diamond in the world is always genuine, because there is no such thing as false hope.**



[http://www.amazon.com/Healing-Tree-Joe-Tye/dp/1887511296/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1350331086&sr=1-2&keywords=the+healing+tree](http://www.amazon.com/Healing-Tree-Joe-Tye/dp/1887511296/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1350331086&sr=1-2&keywords=the+healing+tree)



## Learn how to be more optimistic

In his book *Learned Optimism*, Martin Seligman admonishes that we should avoid interpreting adversity in a way that makes it seem personal/ pervasive/ permanent (“I lost the job because I’m incompetent/ I screw up everything because I’m incompetent/ I will always be incompetent.”) You can teach yourself to expect positive outcomes, he says, and your optimistic expectations will help you create the reality. Optimists do better professionally, are happier, and live longer than pessimists. It’s as simple as ABC, says Seligman: Adversity leads to Beliefs which lead to Consequences. What you choose to Believe about Adversity will powerfully influence whether it has positive or negative Consequences.

In his follow-up book *What You Can Change and What You Can't*, Dr. Seligman emphasizes that it’s not sufficient to improve your self-esteem; you must first and foremost stop seeing yourself as a helpless and passive victim and take personal responsibility for your own future. This is VERY difficult to do when it feels like life has pulled the rug out from under you. The time to work on the ABCs of learned optimism, the time to cultivate a more constructive and empowering self-image, is right now. You cannot know when the next bout of adversity will occur, or what form it will take, but you can strengthen yourself to more effectively deal with it when it does occur.

## Consciously manage your awareness

When you are struggling with anxiety, it is human nature to look for the things that justify that anxiety. On the other hand, when things are going great and we seem to have nothing to fear, there is a tendency toward complacency. Therefore, it is useful to be a bit of a contrarian when managing the three temporal facets of awareness – memory, observation, and visualization.

### Memory:

People with high anxiety have a strong tendency to remember past failures and disappointments more frequently and more vividly than their previous successes. This creates a sense of helpless victimhood and feelings that past failures will inevitably repeat themselves. The higher your anxiety level, the more important it is for you to force yourself to draw strength from your past victories, not weakness from your past defeats.

**Observation:**

The higher your anxiety level, the more certain it is that you will fix your attention upon the negative, frightening, and depressing circumstances and events of the world around you. At these times, one of the best things you can do is stow the newspaper and turn off the TV. Instead join some organized activity that gets you out of the house and focused on something more positive, such as a civic or service group organization, bowling league, or support group.

**Visualization:**

It's been said that worry is like paying interest on a debt you might not even owe. The higher your anxiety level, the greater the perceived debt, and the more interest you will pay. More than at any other time, periods of high anxiety are when dreams die. That's when it's most important for you to force yourself to visualize the outcome you desire, not the results you fear.

*"When afraid for the future*

*Concentrate your attention on the work of today*

*When afraid of today*

*Fix your vision on the dreams of tomorrow"*

*McZen*

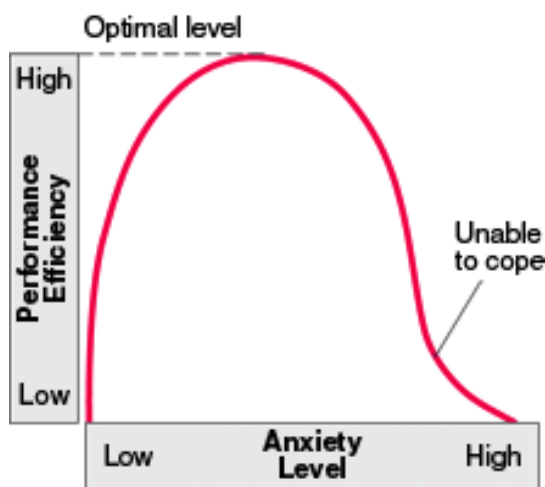
## Anxiety and stress

Anxiety and stress are related and can contribute to each other, but it is important to be mindful of the distinction. Stress is something that is “out there,” an external factor that is stressing you out (work, family, money, etc.) Anxiety is “in here,” an inner emotional condition. As Robert Gerzon writes in his book *Finding Serenity in the Age of Anxiety*, it is more socially acceptable to be stressed out than it is to admit to high anxiety, because the former is something being done to you, while the latter might be seen as being a weakness of some sort. But failure to acknowledge the role of anxiety in creating stress can reduce the effectiveness of any stress management initiative, both at the individual and the organizational levels.

## Anxiety and depression

Another thing that Gerzon points out is the relationship between anxiety and depression. Here are two key points. First, many times people will careen from one to the other – pressing the limits of anxiety as they stretch out of their comfort zone, then falling back into depression when they give up the quest. Second, the more you fail to stand up to and overcome anxiety now, the more likely it is you will suffer depression later in life.

## Master the performance-anxiety curve



In his book *Worry*, Edward M. Hallowell describes the performance-anxiety curve, which “shows that as anxiety increases, performance improves, *up to a point*. Beyond that point, as anxiety continues to increase, performance declines.” Hallowell cites studies showing that effective entrepreneurs and business leaders do worry a lot, but that their worry has two distinct characteristics that are different from what most people do when they worry a lot. First, their worry is focused on the achievement of

goals, not concern for personal advancement or the opinions of others.

Second, their worry precipitates action that obviates the cause of the worry, thereby freeing the leader’s attention to focus on some other worry. When it is properly focused on important



goals and accompanied by a commitment to taking effective action – even at the risk of rejection, failure or humiliation – worry can be a powerful leadership tool. When it is not, worry inevitably degenerates into anxiety, which can be a leader’s worst enemy.

## **Recognize double bind situations**

A double bind is the term that psychologists give to a no-win situation. The executive who brings home a briefcase full of work and feels guilty for not playing with the children, then plays with the children and feels guilty for not doing his work, is in a double bind. It’s been said that there are only two basic human fears – fear of dying and fear of living. That’s the ultimate double bind.

Almost by definition, you cannot “fix” a double bind. It’s not a problem, it’s a predicament, and you cannot solve a predicament, you can only learn how to live with it more comfortably. But here are two things that you can do. First, acknowledge the predicament (diagnosis) and accept that the best you can do will probably be less than ideal.

Second, very clear about your values so that whatever decision you make will be one that you will be proud of. In the briefcase example, a solid grounding in Core Action Value #1, Authenticity, can help guide you toward the best use of your time in each situation. If you recall the exercise of writing “I Am...” declarations and coupling them with the “As If” principle, you’ll see how having thought these things out in advance can give guidance to Dad’s decision when he walks in the front door – does he honor “I am... a caring and loving father,” or does he honor “I am... a dedicated and loyal member of the workplace team”?

There is not a right or wrong answer in the abstract, and the best answer might be different depending upon the circumstances, but having thought through the values-based response will minimize negative emotions.

## Stand up to your irrational fears



While you might not be afraid of being sucked out of your car by alien invaders, chances are that you have other irrational fears. Perhaps you don't swim in the ocean for fear of sharks, even though your chances of being killed by a falling vending machine are actually greater than your chances of being eaten by a shark. Or maybe the mere thought of picking up a perfectly harmless garter snake causes you to shake in your shoes.

Most of us have irrational fears that might on the surface seem perfectly rational – fear of poverty in the land of plenty (where the closest most people come to real starvation is the pizza delivery guy showing up late); fear of poor health in the age of medical miracles; fear of death at a time when historical longevity records are being shattered. Some of these irrational fears can be perfectly harmless (after all, most of us don't pay any sort of penalty for not picking up snakes), but others can be seriously confining. The person who is terrified of rejection will never ask; the person who is terrified of failure will never try.

**The first step to conquering irrational fears is simply to identify them and to illuminate them with the cold light of logic.** If you give fear a name it becomes just a problem, and it's easier to solve a problem than it is to conquer fear. For example, if you fear losing your job, the *problem* is that you have not made yourself indispensable. If you work on the problem by learning new skills and knowledge, being more positive and productive on the job, and expanding your range of networking contacts, the fear will diminish. If you end up losing the job anyway, all the work you've done will assure that you find another job, and probably a better job, all the quicker. (By the way, that's the reason that the fear of losing a job really is irrational – in almost every case, the person who lost the job eventually says that it was the best thing that ever could have happened.)

**The second step is to find the humor in your irrational fears** (“can you imagine, I used to keep my car windows up on a hot day for fear of being sucked out the window by alien invaders”).

A friend of mine who is a writer deals with the fear of rejection by writing his own rejection letter before submitting any book proposal to publishers. It begins, “Dear (ha ha ha!) Author,” and goes on to threaten him with legal action for abuse of the language if he ever writes another sentence. He knows that no publisher will ever top that one. He’s eaten his live toad – nothing worse will happen all day!

**The third step is to confront the fear head-on** – going for that swim or picking up that snake. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “do the thing you fear and the death of the fear is certain.”

What irrational fears are holding you back? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the humor that transforms them from irrational to ridiculous? \_\_\_\_\_

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What will you do to confront those fears? \_\_\_\_\_

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Of course, some fears really are warranted – before you pick up a snake, make sure that it’s a garter snake and not a coral snake; before you head into the surf, buckle up that life jacket.

### **Give fear a name and it becomes just a problem**

If you give fear a name, it becomes just a problem, and it’s easier to solve a problem than it is to conquer fear. For example, almost everyone fears poverty, however they define that term. A

friend of mine who helps wealthy people with their financial planning told me that the more money someone has, the more they worry about money – which is a pretty good definition of mental poverty. In other words, the fear of poverty is not one that is likely to go away, even if you get that pay raise.

So if you're afraid of financial difficulties, what is the underlying *problem*? Quite simply, you are spending more than you are making, and you are not saving or investing at an adequate rate to provide for your future comfort and security. You might not be able to control the economic cycle or the outsourcing of jobs to India, but you can manage your own spending habits.

I know two brothers who illustrate this point. One is a public servant on a modest salary who lives well within his means and has for years been an aggressive saver. The other is a medical specialist who makes well into the six-figures. He also drives six-figure cars and lives in a seven-figure home. Each month there is a scramble to pay all the bills. If poverty is defined as always worrying about money (which is the best definition I can think of), then the high-income doctor is far more impoverished than the brother of more modest means.

**EXERCISE:** Write about something you fear, turn that fear into a problem, then write about possible solutions to that problem:

**My fear is:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The problem is:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Something I can do to solve that problem is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**NOW GO OUT AND SOLVE THE PROBLEM!**

### **Give Fear a Number**

Another aspect of giving fear a name is to precisely quantify those fears. For example, if you are only vaguely aware of your financial situation, it's difficult to counteract an inner voice that screams, "My God! We're headed for the poor house!" every time you see a bill in the mailbox. The first step for overcoming fear of poverty is to precisely quantify every dimension of your financial life - how much you owe, how much you make, how much you are spending, the cash value of all of your assets, etc.

Read any book on personal finance and the first recommendation will likely be to keep a journal that documents every penny which comes into and goes out of your life (for example, *Your Money or Your Life* by Joe Dominquez and Vicki Robin). One of the chief benefits of this approach is that you are giving fear a name - a precise and understandable name - that helps you transform that fear into a mere problem to be solved.

Be precise in the words you use. For example, change the sentence: "My God, I'm going to run out of money!" to "I have \$3,500 remaining in cash and liquid assets; I'm spending about \$1,800 per month, so I have about six weeks to figure out a way to generate some extra income." Precise descriptions of reality can help you avoid the fear, doubt, and anxiety that are caused by fuzzy warnings of impending disaster.

### **Distinguish between fear and risk**

Whenever I speak with groups of sales professionals, I ask them what they perceive to be the major barrier to success in their field. The answer is always the same: fear of rejection. Of course, nobody likes to be rejected. As my friend Steven Pressfield points out in his book *The*

*War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle*, the fear of being rejected goes back to our caveman days, when to be rejected by the tribe meant isolation and almost certain death. This innate fear was intensified over the centuries by church organizations that coupled excommunication with the threat of eternal damnation. The fear of rejection is deeply imprinted in our psyches.



But in today's world, that fear is not rational, because in most cases the *risk* associated with rejection is virtually zero. When someone says no to a salesperson, he is absolutely no worse off than he was before the "rejection." In fact, if he has the proper perspective he is actually better off, because the prospect's lack of interest can guide him toward changes that he might need to make in his product or his pitch.

Likewise, when someone is "rejected" after a job interview, she is in exactly the same position she was in before the rejection – the *risk* was zero. In fact, even though she did not get the job, she will still be better off if she did a few simple things during the process. For example, she hopefully learned a lot about the company and the industry – including competitors who might be looking for someone with her talents. She might have asked people with whom she interviewed for names of other contacts for networking. By being exceptionally courteous with and curious about everyone she met (including the follow-up notes she sent), she has planted a seed that might well bear fruit the next time the company is looking for a good person.

Paradoxically, many of us are not sufficiently afraid of some of the *real* risks in life. For example, spending evenings being a vegetable on the couch in front of the tube is a definite risk factor for early death from heart disease (if not even earlier death from terminal boredom), but you don't see people having mini-panic attacks before they go plop down on the sofa, like the ones they might get before picking up the phone to make a sales call.

**EXERCISE:** In the left-hand column below, write about your biggest fear and in the right hand column make a list of the *real* risks associated with that fear. You might want to refer back to "Stand Up to Your Irrational Fears" above before completing this exercise ☺.

This is my fear:

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These are the actual risks:

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### **Distinguish between problems and consequences**

When I cover the notion of turning fear into a problem in my *Never Fear, Never Quit* workshops, I mention that in the world of today, the fear of losing a job is not only reasonable, it would be irrational to not prepare for the eventuality. Most heads nod in agreement. Then I ask how many people are themselves, or know someone who is, afraid of losing a job. Nearly every hand goes up.

Then I ask what the problem is. I tell them that there is one and only one correct answer to that question, then I open the floor for their responses. Nobody ever gets it right. I hear such things as, “you might run out of money.” I hear “you might not be able to find another job,” and that “people might start avoiding you because they know that you’re unemployed.” This all might be true, but these things are not the problem – they are *consequences* of not having effectively dealt with the problem.

If you are afraid of losing a job the problem – the one and only problem – is that *you have not made yourself indispensable*. If you were indispensable, you would not be worried about losing the job, would you? And if you were that good, even if you did lose the job, it would not be long before you had another one, would it?

Now, obviously no one is indispensable, but in any job are there things you can do to make yourself more valuable (and thus more indispensable) to your employer? When I ask my audiences that question, they have lots of ideas: get more education and learn new skills;

develop a happier and more constructive attitude about your work; be a better team player; get out of your office and do some managing by walking around; get out of your box and do some networking to gather new knowledge and ideas.

When you diagnose a fear and turn it into a problem, two good things happen. First, once the problem has been identified, you can start working on effective solutions – just as the people in my audience are stumped by the first question (what is the real underlying problem?) but instantly have answers for the second question (what can you do about the problem once it has been identified?).

Second, because at any given time either the right brain (emotional) or the left brain (rational) tends to dominate your conscious state, when you are working on solving a problem – a definite left brain task – the right side of the brain is quiescent and fear subsides. (By the same token, however, when you let fear take charge, it tends to shut down the left side of the brain so that instead of taking action to solve the problem you are left paralytically (that’s my own word – meaning you’re paralyzed) ruminating on the fear.

**EXERCISE:** In the spaces below, write about your biggest fear and turn it into a problem:

This is my fear: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

This is the problem: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Now, what are some things you can do to work on solving the problem?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Big Fears

We have many fears in our lives – some legitimate, some irrational. But there are five fears that are pretty universal: fear of change, fear of rejection, fear of commitment, fear of failure and (what author Steven Pressfield calls “the mother of all fears”) fear of success. Let’s look at each one.

**Joe’s video “You’re stronger than you think you are” recorded in the Grand Canyon**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VVgO7sYGko&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=1&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VVgO7sYGko&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=1&feature=plpp_video)



## **Fear of change**

There is a general perception that people are afraid of change (nobody likes change except a wet baby). People believe that to be a true statement, but it is not. People love change – so long as they're certain it will be a change for the better. To prove this to yourself, imagine that everyone where you work had their paycheck changed by having a zero added to the dollar amount – would anyone be afraid of that change? What people *do* fear is the uncertainty of change that comes without a guaranteed outcome. Tell people that there's going to be a change in their paychecks without telling them what that change will be and you are certain to see anxiety go through the roof.

This is a critical point for you to understand in your role as a manager, and as a parent. In the uncertain world of today, you cannot prevent change from occurring, nor can you guarantee that it will always have a positive outcome. What you can do, however, is equip yourself and others with the attitudes and skills to embrace change with a spirit of adventure rather than with trepidation.

In today's turbulent global economy, doggedly hanging onto the past is a sure-fire recipe for failure. One of the leader's chief responsibilities is to help people understand the need for change, to help them develop the emotional and practical skills necessary for accomplishing that change, and then supporting them through the process. One way to overcome fear of change, however, is to calibrate the pace to the culture of the organization. The past several years have seen a number of high-powered CEOs who were brought into an organization with a mandate to change end up falling on their faces because they didn't take the time to fully understand the organization before pushing ahead with their change agenda.

## **Fear of rejection**

I have participated in a number of writer's workshop classes. I'm always impressed by the desire and talent of my fellow pupils. Yet when I ask the instructor what proportion of his or her students will go on to publish their work, the answer is a tiny fraction. What's preventing these talented writers from achieving what most of them say is an important goal? Often it's the fear of rejection: fear that friends and family members won't like what they've written; that they won't be able to find an agent or publisher; that, if their work is published, it will languish unsold on bookstore shelves. Every successful author has accumulated piles of rejection letters.

Instead of letting it be a source of fear and pain, however, they have learned to transform rejection into an opportunity to improve their craft, to expand their network, and to cultivate mental toughness.

### **Fear of commitment**

In her book *Making a Living While Making a Difference: A Guide to Careers With a Conscience*, Melissa Everett provides a wonderful discussion on commitment. “One of the most frightening aspects of commitment,” she says, “is the specter of success... Because unconditional commitment to one’s work is powerful, it is also terrifying -- so terrifying that many of us screen it out of our awareness at all costs.” True commitment, which she distinguishes from externally-imposed duty, includes the following components:

- ◆ It comes from within, articulated by what’s important in your life.
- ◆ Keeping such a commitment offers a path for self-expression and actualization. It may require delay of gratification, but not suppression of your essential self.
- ◆ It is grounded in a higher purpose than personal satisfaction; it entails the desire to leave a legacy.

Everett says that commitment is not just a state of mind, but requires a consistent pattern of behavior. It’s not just caring, but cultivating the skills necessary to effectively act upon that commitment. What are some of the actions that you can (and will) take to solidify your commitment to your big dreams and goals?

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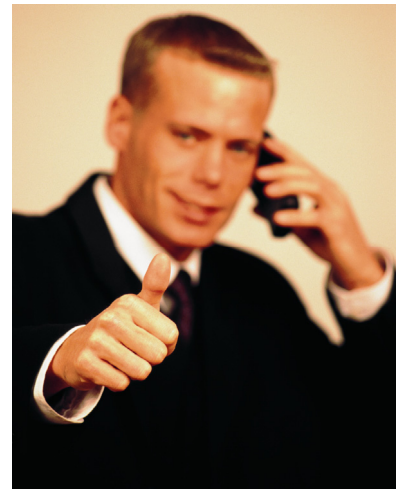
### **Fear of failure**

Nigel Newton is Chief Executive and Chairman of Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, the entrepreneurial publisher behind the *Harry Potter* series J.K. Rowling. He told *Fast Company* (September 2001) that not only is he willing to fail on some individual books but he expects to. He tells his Editors that one third of their books might fail to reach their objectives. He tells his editors that one third of their new books should fail in the market. "You have to take big and small risks in this business," he says. "If you're not having a fair degree of failures, you're not exposing yourself to the upside of getting it dramatically right on dark horses."

At the time Bloomsbury accepted *Harry Potter*, a quirky children's book from a previously unknown and unpublished author, there was no way of foretelling the massive success it would achieve. Only in retrospect is it clear that the greatest possible failure would have been seeking to avoid failure. Paradoxically, having the courage to fail in the short run often lays the foundation for success over the longer term.

### **Fear of success**

While most of us say that we want to be successful, many of us are deeply ambivalent about the prospect of that success. Will we achieve our goals, only to conclude that the accomplishment was not worth the price? Will success put unbearable strains on friendships and family relationships? Will we be discovered as the frauds we secretly suspect ourselves of being? Will we be unable to top the last performance with an even more impressive encore? Will we climb the ladder of success only to find that it was propped up against the wrong building?



Psychologists tell us that the fear of success underlies many self-sabotaging attitudes and behavior patterns. Because it is so insidious, it is often difficult to recognize; because it can be so detrimental, the leader must be alert for its presence in himself and in others. The antidote to this particular fear is believing that you are capable of achieving your goals, and that you deserve to enjoy the fruits of your success.

I recently read an interview with a psychiatrist who works primarily with top level executives. The interviewer asked him if he ever encountered the fear of success in his patients. The doctor replied that fear of success was virtually *the only thing* he dealt with.

Fear of success is far more dangerous than fear of failure, because the subconscious mind works to prevent that which it fears. People may fear success because of low self-esteem and a feeling of not deserving it; because it will increase the hassle factor in their lives; because it will increase what others expect of them; or because it will run them headlong into the Peter Principle (being promoted to their level of incompetence). Symptoms of the fear of success include chronic anxiety, acceptance of mediocrity, lack of focus and concentration, not working well under pressure, and not keeping promises. Here are some steps to overcome this fear:

- Clearly define your purpose and goals.
- Make sure that you understand why you selected those goals, and why you deserve to achieve them.
- Identify the service component; how will other people benefit from your success?
- Specify the additional resources, skills, or connections you will need to develop for you to effectively pursue the achievement of your goals, and develop a plan for how you can get those things.
- Study role models who have accomplished similar successes before, and then do what they did to achieve their success.
- Pray for help in achieving and coping with success, acknowledging that it is acceptable to pray for you own success so long as it's with the understanding that a higher will be done.
- Every day, visualize yourself in your new successful role; make it as tangible as possible – a “memory of the future.”
- Commit yourself to daily action; do the thing you most fear to do, do it now, and keep doing it for as long as necessary.

Fear of success is sometimes manifested as a sort of internal circuit breaker. If it seems like things are going too well or too fast, and you suddenly run out of steam, ask yourself whether or not fear of success has pulled the plug on you, and if so, go plug it back in.

## **Pay close attention to your mental theater**

The mind, wrote theologian Paul Tillich, is a factory that produces fear. We don't do this deliberately, or even consciously, but what we allow to play in the theaters of our minds substantially determines whether we are paralyzed by fear or galvanized by courage. Following are four specific things that you should pay attention to:

**Metaphors:** As a way of trying to simplify and comprehend the world, the human mind naturally uses metaphors. Unfortunately, the metaphor can become the reality. See yourself as “a pussycat” (a metaphor) and you will end with a very different personality than if you see yourself as “a bulldog” (another metaphor). One way to change your life is to change the metaphors you use to describe your life. I have personally used this technique to help people overcome their fears of public speaking, of starting a business, and of making sales calls.

**Self-talk:** Watch closely what you say to yourself. You might not literally mean it when you say something like “my head is killing me,” but your subconscious mind does not distinguish very well between reality and imagination. Say something like that often enough and you just might scare yourself to death!

*Word are Powerful!* Be careful to distinguish between verbs, adjectives, and nouns. To have failed (verb) at keeping a job, or to have been part of a failing (adjective) business, does not make you a failure (noun).

**Mental images:** Garbage in, garbage out, the computer folks tell us. The same is true of your own consciousness. If you fill your mind with the violent images that are so prevalent in the world of (so-called) entertainment today, you will subconsciously develop a view of the world as being a dangerous and violent place, which in turn will increase your anxiety. And this can be the first step down toward self-sabotaging attitudes and behaviors.

**Projections:** Richard Bach, best known for his book *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, writes about what he calls alternate futures. One reason fear can be such a destructive emotion is that through constant visualization of a worst-case outcome, you actually increase the likelihood of that outcome. The more anxious you are about the future, the more important it is for you to keep your vision riveted on the ideal outcome, not on the potential catastrophe.

## **Listen for what fear might be trying to tell you**

A state of chronic anxiety or acute fear might simply be trying to tell you something, including one of these four possibilities:

- You are not ready for some potential future event. You're more likely to be afraid of taking a test for which you haven't studied than one for which you are well-prepared; the well-informed salesperson will make more calls (and more successful calls) than the one who hasn't done any homework.
- You're on the wrong path in life. The fear that is associated with loss of a job, or more broadly with mid-life crisis, is often a not-so-gentle prod to evaluate whether it's not time for a major life change.
- Fear can be a call to action.
- Fear can be a call to faith.

## **Change your metaphors**

We shape our buildings, said Winston Churchill, then our buildings shape us. The same is true of the metaphors we use to simplify and explain the world around us. When we say "the football team's new running back is a real tank," we don't literally mean the man is thirty tons of steel mounted on treads with a cannon turret on top. It's a metaphorical image that conveys a whole range of meanings - unstoppable, indestructible, threatening - in one simple picture.

You use metaphors hundreds of times a day, mostly without thinking about the underlying mental image they convey. But your subconscious picks up on those images - and many of

them can be horrifying. Without intending to do so, without even realizing that you're doing it, the metaphors you use can provoke serious anxiety. Here are just a few examples:

When asked how you're doing, you reply, "I'm hanging in there." What's the mental image? Hanging on the side of a cliff with your fingernails clawing into the stone face? Hanging by your neck from a tree?

Running up to "a deadline" (in itself a terrifying metaphor - the line at which one dies), you say "I'm really behind the gun." What's the mental image? You standing in front of a firing squad?

Reading about job layoffs in your industry, you say "I wish I had more of a safety net." Who needs a safety net in the circus? And what is the consequence if they fall without one? Hint: it begins with D. And then you wonder why you're "scared to death."

I was once at a meeting to discuss high stress and sagging morale (in a hospital, of all places!) in which within one hour the phrases "cut off at the knees," "blood all over the floor," and "handed her head on a platter" were all used. And the executives who said these things were wondering why people were stressed out! Think of the horrific mental images that these violent metaphors conjure up, and the subconscious perception of threat with which people respond to hearing them. When I pointed this out, they were appalled - they weren't even conscious of what they were saying, or of the impact those words and images had on their people.

Think about the metaphors you use to describe yourself, your circumstances, and the world around you. Consciously expunge those that have negative or frightening connotations and replace them with more positive ones. It's not a deadline - it's a victory line!! You don't need a safety net, because you've got a built-in trampoline that bounces you back every time you fall!!!

## **Lighten Up and Have Fun**

Fear is the most toxic of emotions; it can be a prison more constraining than any iron bars, but it's hard for fear to imprison you when you're laughing. Likewise, a person who is having fun at whatever they do is less likely to quit when the going gets tough. Especially in an intense and fast-paced industry like healthcare, the ability to have fun is essential.



The most successful airline in the world is Southwest Airlines. At Southwest, it is a condition of employment that you must have a good sense of humor. It's no coincidence that the people who work at Southwest are dramatically more productive and creative than the staff at any other airline.

In my seminars, one of our primary objectives is to have people give themselves permission to have fun. There is incredible peer pressure to be "dead serious" in our society (if you doubt me on this, try skipping and singing your way down the main concourse of O'Hare airport someday; you'll quickly have the entire concourse to yourself - that is, until the airport police show up to question you as to why you having so much fun). Joining together with your colleagues on the patient care unit to do the lion hunt dance, for example, can give you a totally new perspective on your problems.

Make a list of some of the things you can do to be more spontaneous, more outrageous, more adventurous, and more of the fun-loving person that you were as a child. Then pick one or two and actually go out and do them!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

*Just because the list stops doesn't mean that you need to ☺.*

## Stay out of the Victim Spiral

Attitude is everything, it's been said, and nowhere is this more true than in building self-belief. The negative attitudes of the Downward Victim Spiral seriously undermine your self-belief.

**Learned Helpless:** This is the belief that the circumstances and problems of your life are beyond your control. This leads to ...

**Blame Game:** Since you cannot fix the problems and improve the situation, somebody else must be responsible for your misery. So you tend to descend into ...

**Victim Syndrome:** Chronically feeling sorry for yourself because "they" are making your life miserable and there's nothing you can do about it (Poor me!"), which further reinforces Learned Helplessness and Blame Game, accelerating your descent into the pit of self-pity and surrender.



## The two great detachments and the two great freedoms

I will be the first to acknowledge that these two detachments are not easy to achieve, but will also emphasize that it is not an either/or condition. Rather, there is a continuum upon which the more detached you are, the freer you will be. Let me also emphasize that to be detached does not mean not to care. Quite to the contrary, the freedom that detachment brings quite likely will increase your capacity to care.

**Detachment from things brings freedom of movement:** The more attached you are to your possessions, current and desired, the less freedom of movement you are likely to have, both geographically and professionally. Consider, for example, the highly-paid executive who over the years has become bored and burned out. What he really loves is to work with his hands crafting fine furniture. To pursue this passion, however, he would have to quit his job (professional freedom) and relocate from his exclusive subdivision (geographic freedom). Unless he can detach himself from his paycheck and the things that it buys, he will never be truly free to pursue his dreams, and to be true to himself.

**Detachment from opinions brings freedom of conscience:** The more concerned you are about pleasing and impressing other people, the more worried you are about what other people think of you, the less freedom you will have to express your own conscience. Several years ago, *Time* magazine cited whistleblowers from Enron, WorldCom, and the FBI as their Persons of the Year. Now, these three women were clearly courageous in standing up for their convictions, but why were they so alone? And why is it so remarkable that they stood up and spoke out? Mainly, it's because most everyone else feared the type of repercussions that these three women are in fact now experiencing. But in the long run, the real winners in life aren't those who quietly look the other way while hiding in their cubicles, they're the ones who stand up and tell the truth.

# Part 2: Act in Spite of Your Fears

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## Take action

When it comes to courage, action is where the rubber hits the road:

Action is the key difference between wishful thinking (which is hoping for something and waiting for it to happen) and positive thinking (which is expecting something and working to make it to happen).

Action is the coin with which one purchases self-confidence and genuine self-esteem.

Action is the catalyst that transforms hope into expectation.

Action is the foundation upon which most good habits are built, while inaction is the source of many bad habits.

Action, as the late Og Mandino once wrote, transforms the lion of terror into an ant of equanimity.

In the book *Never Fear, Never Quit* I wrote that “fear is a reaction; courage is a decision.” That is true, but it does not quite go far enough. The decision itself is not really courage until it is acted upon. I also wrote that the difference between courageous and crazy is often evident only after the fact. You must be willing to take action even in the absence of an assurance of success.

My friend and Values Coach colleague says you must choose your misery: the certainty of misery or the misery of uncertainty.

## Courage and energy

Without energy, courage is just a good intention; without courage, energy is more likely to run away than it is to stand and fight. That’s why it’s so important for you to guard, channel, and enhance your energy. With energy, your life can be an adventure; without energy, your life will be just a chore.

## Cross the boundaries of your comfort zone

In *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Margaret J. Wheatley describes the remarkable parallels between recent developments in quantum physics and other fields of scientific inquiry, and behavior within modern organizations. She emphasizes the paradox that over time, organizational stability and strength develop only when leaders are willing to leave their comfort zones by openly sharing information, interacting with the environment, and fostering an environment that is supportive of continuous change.

She gives the example of a chemical manufacturing facility that reached out to create working relationships with traditional opponents, including government regulators, environmental advocates, and community groups. “As relationships developed far beyond the plant,” she says, “it created conditions *within* the plant for levels of autonomy and experimentation that resulted in extraordinary new levels of safety and productivity” (emphasis in original.)

## The body-mind-spirit connection

We all know that the mind speaks to the body: it says to the hand, “pick up that pen,” and the hand obeys. Less well understood is how the mind (and the heart) take direction from the body. This has enormous implications for conquering fear and other negative emotions; body and mind can’t remain simultaneously in different states for very long. If you sit



slouched in a chair with your head in your hands long enough, you will become depressed; stand straight and tall and walk faster, and you’ll become more enthusiastic and more courageous. This happens automatically – you can scarcely resist.

Dr. Dale Anderson wrote a book called *Act Now!*, which describes how using some of the techniques that professional actors employ to “get into character” can help you be happier and more successful. In that book, he recounts an experiment in which he has people rate how funny cartoons are while holding a pen in their mouths. When holding the pen with their teeth, which forces a smile, they are four times more likely to rate the cartoon as being funny than

when holding the pen in their lips, which forces a frown. Anderson concludes that, “the humor these people find in the cartoons may have more to do with their mouths than with what they see on a page.”

Trying to think your way out of a frightened funk usually does not work very well, and often is downright counterproductive since (as we’ve seen in previous modules) the human mind is pre-programmed to gravitate toward negative, frightening and depressing thoughts. But when you move, when you take action, the change in your physical state will influence your mental and emotional state. You cannot for very long remain emotionally depressed while maintaining a confident and assertive body posture and facial expression – any more than you can be frightened by a horror movie after having laughing gas administered to you in a dentist’s office.

One of the most exciting fields of science today is understanding the body-mind interface (e.g. research in psychoneuroimmunology). It turns out that the linkage is far more complex and interactive than was once believed. Something as simple as a smile or a laugh, walking a little faster and standing a little taller, can actually influence your brain chemistry, change your mental and emotional state, and equip you to take actions that will change your life.

## **Double-time yourself**

One reason Napoleon’s armies achieved so many tactical victories is that they marched at a pace much faster than the convention standard, and thus often showed up where they were not expected. If you do your own shopping, you know as well as I do that you could do it in half the time by marching more decisively, refusing the temptation to comparison shop or impulse buy, and moving decisively from one isle to the next. Make decisive speed a habit and you will end up with a lot more time, and incidentally also have more money, to do the things that really matter to you.

In the classic book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James wrote that there is a constant struggle in the human consciousness, a struggle between the desire to push the envelope and stand out on the one hand, and the inhibitions that seek to hold us back on the other. “Few people,” he writes, “who have not expressly reflected on the matter realize how constantly this factor of inhibition is upon us, how it contains and moulds us by its restrictive

pressure almost as if we were fluids pent within the cavity of a jar. The influence is so incessant that it becomes subconscious.”

The inhibition of which James writes is a source of procrastination and paralysis. It prevents us from pursuing our most authentic dreams and keeps us stuck in a hum-drum existence. One of the surest ways to break through is to move faster, and to keep moving – to get done with the routine work and to get on with the fine art of really being alive.

**Joe’s video “When was the last time you did something for the first time” recorded in the Grand Canyon**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35zPZeufq0&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=2&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35zPZeufq0&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=2&feature=plpp_video)



## **Know when NOT to act**

Susan Jeffers is best known for her book *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*. In her more recent book *End the Struggle and Dance with Life*, she says that there are times when you should feel the fear and DON'T do it anyway. Specifically, when you are being driven by the addictions of workaholism or perfectionism. In those instances, she says, you are “best served by sitting ... down in a quiet spot and figuring out what [you are] trying to mask with [your] constant activity.”

Here’s a practical suggestion, one that I often use myself: *Slow down on the inside so that you can speed up on the outside*. What I mean by that using meditation, physical exercise, prayer, or some other method to calm down the inner emotional storms can help you more productively concentrate on outer activities. I find that by slowing down the emotional racing, I’m able to focus my concentration far more effectively, and get a lot more done.

Here's another tip. I once read about an executive who had kept two goal-setting journals – one entitled “Plan and Work” and the other entitled “Pray and Wait.” After he retired, he reviewed what he had written in each journal over the course of a long and successful career. He concluded that he'd been more successful at achieving the dreams outlines in the “Pray and Wait” journal than those in the “Plan and Work” journal. Sometimes, as the ancient Taoist sages well knew, the most effective action you can take is non-action – to meditate, to reflect, to pray and wait.

### **Create a “worry box”**

Make yourself a Worry Box. You can do this by cutting a hole in the top of a shoe box. Any time a worry pops into your mind, write it down on a note card and drop it into the box. Then make an appointment with yourself to review those worries at a time when you're in a positive frame of mind (e.g. after having watched a funny movie, or having just returned from jogging). You'll be amazed at how much smaller they look after having been imprisoned in your shoe box for a while.

### **Change the station**

Think of your perceptive mind as a television set that is being bombarded by invisible signals 24 hours a day. With a TV set, you pick up the channel changer and choose whether to watch a violent murder/mystery on channel 2, a sitcom on channel 6, or a historical documentary on channel 9. Following are several “channel changers” that can help you transform anxiety and fear into confident energy:

**Physicality:** Any form of exercise can jump you from one mental state to another. In their book *The Warrior's Edge*, military special forces experts John R. Alexander, Richard Groller and Janet Morris recommend “cross crawls” to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain. The simplest cross crawl exercise is marching in place with the left arm and right leg lifting in unison, followed by the right arm and left leg. This should be done in a free-flowing, relaxed, and stress-free manner. Ten minutes or so every day will enhance energy and creativity.

**Music:** From the warrior drums of ancient times to the marching band of today, music has been used to help people stoke up their courage. Pick a musical selection that you associate



with mental vitality, and whenever your energy begins to flag, put it on. Some possibilities from the classical repertoire include: the first movement of Beethoven's 5th symphony or the last movement of his 9th; Dvorak's 9th Symphony, "From the New World;" Wagner's The Ride of the Valkyries; the Sabre Dance from Khatchaturian's ballet Gayaneh; Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture; or Borodin's Polovtsian Dances. If you are more into new age music, The Spirit of Olympia by David Arkenstone and Kostia is a great selection. And, of course, there is always Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones!

**Prayer:** Virtually every religious tradition encourages some form of prayer as a means of helping people deal with anxiety. As Norman Vincent Peale pointed out, this is one of the central themes of the Bible. A prayer of petition can help you transform fear into courage, as in going from "I'm afraid this cancer will kill me" to "give me the strength to find meaning and grace through my suffering."

## **Leave behind the deadweight of emotional baggage**

Why are anxiety, fear, and worry such formidable mental foes? One reason is that they are invisible, and it's tough to fight what you can't see. This is one area where the metaphorical visualization techniques that I've described in previous issues can be so powerfully effectiveness.

Here's a technique that I've personally used to help many people overcome all kinds of fears, including those which have had them paralyzed for years. Pick up a rock and let it represent a specific fear (for example, fear of quitting a job to start your own business). Haul that rock around with you wherever you go (yes, even to bed) as a constant reminder of the dead weight of the emotional baggage you've been hauling around.

Carry on a conversation with your rock (really, I'm serious about this); try to understand what it wants you to do or not to do, and explain to it why you have to do that thing anyway. Then, when you're ready, ceremoniously jettison the rock and the fear it represents. Bury it in the back yard, or throw it in the river. You may have to do this more than once, but each time it will become easier.

Joe's video on using the metaphor of carrying a rock in your backpack to help you leave behind the deadweight of emotional baggage – recorded in the Grand Canyon

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfwhegiRTi4&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=12&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfwhegiRTi4&list=PL3D4053857B619B2E&index=12&feature=plpp_video)



### **Action is the antidote to negative stress**

Psychologists have shown that the perceived absence of control over one's circumstances creates anxiety and stress. The only way to reassert control is to take action. It does not necessarily have to be conclusive action – sometimes something as simple as picking up a book or picking up the telephone, going for a jog or having a good belly-laugh, can break the emotional logjam of fear and paralysis. The immediate consequence is usually a surge of positive emotion and self-confidence, which in turn paves the way for even more effective action.

Do the thing you fear, said Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the death of the fear is certain. That is largely because once you do the thing you fear, the uncertainty goes away – even if you had an adverse outcome! At least you have learned what was the worst that could happen, and that you could cope with it.

### **Taking action means taking risks**

In a fascinating new book entitled *Whoever Makes the Most Mistakes Wins*, Richard Farson and Ralph Keyes argue that “the world belongs to those who don't let anxiety about screwing up keep them from moving forward. Those who are too afraid to make a mistake work for those who aren't.”

To act is to risk, and to risk is to eventually fail. Unfortunately, in our risk-averse world, failure has gotten a bad name. Because people are afraid to fail, they are afraid to act; because they fail to act, they fail to learn and grow, which is the ultimate failure. Farson and Keyes point out that

the most successful organizations, and the most successful individuals, generally have a track record of “failure” (and learning from that perceived failure) that leads up to the success for which they are recognized.

In my own business, I have “failed” many times. I have received more rejection letters than I can count (as recently as yesterday); I have put on conferences that received excellent evaluations from participants yet very nearly put the business under financially; and I’ve written several books that are now out of print.

Failures? Not really – each of these experiences have contributed to me being the person I am today, and in many cases have opened the door to new opportunities. My son plays guitar and sings for a rock band. The first time they try out a new song, it’s pretty dreadful. By the time they perform that song on stage, however, they sound really good. That’s a great metaphor – perceived failure is nothing more than the necessary dress rehearsal for eventual success.

## **Keep moving**

Feeling out of control – of yourself, your environment, your future – can be terribly frightening. One of the simplest things you can do to re-exert a sense of control is to move. Just move. Go for a brisk walk or a jog. Pick up the phone and make a call. Do a Lion Hunt Roar. We know from the science of psychoneuroimmunology that not only does the mind talk to the body, the body talks to the mind. H. Jackson Brown, author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, wrote: “Be brave. Even if you’re not, pretend to be. No one can tell the difference.” And one of the most powerful ways that you can pretend to be brave is to keep moving when what you really feel like doing is crawling under the bed with your thumb in your mouth.

### **Joe demonstrates the Lion Roar**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCMyH-SU9lg&list=PL58774C51E1E2D3A9&index=1&feature=plpp\\_video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCMyH-SU9lg&list=PL58774C51E1E2D3A9&index=1&feature=plpp_video)



## **A therapeutic trinity**

It is hard to diagnose what's going on inside when you are under tremendous physical stress, because you aren't thinking clearly. We know from the science of psychoneuroimmunology that what's happening in your physical body has a profound impact on your thoughts and emotions. Here are three things you can do to take care of your body so that your mind is more effective at dealing with anxiety:

*Get enough sleep.* Fatigue makes cowards of us all, Vince Lombardi said, and with good reason. One of the first mental capacities to dissipate when you're sleep-deprived is creativity. Unfortunately, it is often at times of high anxiety that you are most in need of creative new responses to the old problems.

*Get more exercise,* especially when you're feeling anxious or stressed. Not only does this give you a greater sense of control over your circumstances, the release of endorphins will give you a more positive mental perspective.

*Eat a more nutritious and balanced diet* (less junk food that's full of sugar and starch and more fruits and vegetables). One often overlooked element of this is being properly hydrated. Many of us suffer chronic low-grade dehydration. Your brain needs fluid for all the chemical reactions that, at a physiological level, underlie your every thought and feeling. When the brain runs dry, anxiety flares and fear runs amok.

## **Follow your anxiety**

Here is the good news about anxiety, which I promised above. In *Finding Serenity in the Age of Anxiety*, Robert Gerzon says that anxiety can actually be a guide to our greatest strengths, our greatest joys, and our life's true calling. He says: "It is our deepest desires that can arouse our greatest apprehension – for what if we should try, really try with all our heart, and fail?"

That one sentence explains so much, doesn't it? It explains why so many would-be writers freeze the moment they sit down with a full pen and an empty pad. It explains why so many successful public speakers were once terrified of the prospect. (It probably explains why I have an anxiety attack just before I hit the "send" button on each edition of my *Spark Plug* email newsletter!). And it explains why so many people find so many excuses to avoid "following

their bliss,” in the memorable phrase of Joseph Campbell, because standing between them and the bliss of calling is the anxiety of transforming, of stretching and reaching and growing.

This brings to mind a scene from one of the Star Wars movies. Luke Skywalker is sent by Yoda into a dark and terrifying cave. He comes face to face with his worst nightmare, only to find that he’s looking into a mirror. It takes courage to diagnose our anxiety and confront our fears, but the reward can be dramatic – to realize your strengths and become the person you are truly meant to be. “I have met my anxiety and it’s me!”

## **Employ the power of research**

Fear breeds in ignorance, and it wilts under the light of knowledge. Whenever you feel overwhelmed by anxiety, fear, and worry, ask yourself this question: “What do I not know now that if I did know would reduce or eliminate my fear?” Fear is often simply an indication that you are not prepared for some possible future event. Here are three research tools that can help you more effectively manage uncertainty, doubt, and the negative emotions they create:

**Library:** Money worries got you down? Make a trip to the library. There are shelves full of books on how to get out of debt, how to invest wisely, how to more effectively save for college or retirement, and how to balance the demands of a spiritual existence in a material world.

**Internet:** Just been diagnosed with cancer? You can have almost instantaneously access to a wealth of information and inspiration through the medical and health websites, support groups, and other resources available online. Under the heading “Knowledge Heals, Ignorance Destroys,” the website of the R. A. Bloch Cancer Center ([www.blochcancer.org](http://www.blochcancer.org)) says that over nine million people are alive today with a diagnosis of serious cancer because they didn’t give up the fight against the disease.

**Telephone:** Afraid of losing your job? Don’t wait for the proverbial ax to fall. Hit the phone now, while you still have the opportunity to ask a more intelligent question than, “Do you have a job for me?” Think of an important question in your field of work, then call fifty or a hundred people who have expertise and ask them how they deal with that problem. Writing up a summary of your findings in a report to your boss will make you more valuable to the company; sending copies of that report to everyone who participated will assure a more receptive audience for those job search phone calls should they become necessary anyway.

## Dare most when times are darkest

In the 1980s, Chrysler slumped into what medical doctors would call a persistent vegetative state, and most industry observers were certain the only thing to do was pull the plug. But the story of how Lee Iacocca rescued Chrysler vividly illustrates what a daring attitude in dark times can accomplish. At considerable risk to his own career, Iacocca took on the challenge of reviving Chrysler.

His bravura shocked the company back to life and electrified the American public. A less dramatic performance would certainly have failed, but by daring greatly during the darkest days, Iacocca created an American legend.

Some 2,500 years ago the Chinese warrior Wu Ch'i wrote that on the battlefield those who are determined to die with glory will live, while those who merely hope to escape with their lives will die. That was a paradox Lee Iacocca well understood: Desperate times call for daring measures, pursued with energetic and courageous determination.



As Doug Hall wrote in his book *Jump Start Your Business Brain*, "Fear is greatest when things are going badly. And this is just the time when courage is most needed." Hall cites a 1999 study reported in the *Journal of Product Innovation Management* showing that business people were much more willing to take a risk after a recent success than after a failure. When things are going great, we don't have much need for courage. Then it's easy to take a new risk. When things are tough, however, fear is high and the natural tendency inclines away from additional risk.

Yet these are exactly the times when a dash of courage can yield a disproportional payoff. In 1967, most businesses were retrenching in the face of a predicted recession. Ray Kroc, however, continued his aggressive expansion of McDonald's, knowing that by putting his foot on the gas at a time when competitors were feathering the brakes, he would leave them even farther in the dust. He hit the gas, and his competitors never caught up.

## Roar at fear

It was a sweltering day under the relentless Alabama sun, and the last thing in the world the men on that chain gang wanted to be doing was shoveling hot asphalt. It showed in their faces and it showed in their work. Even the guards, eyes hidden behind mirrored sunglasses, were apathetic. Suddenly and without warning, Cool Hand Luke (played in the movie by Paul Newman), gave a shout and drove his shovel deep into the asphalt, then flung it across the road. Another shovelful, and he was working at triple time, racing down the road. The other convicts caught the spirit, and the dumbfounded guards weren't sure whether to shoot them or just try to keep up with them. By noontime, the men had finished the road that was supposed to take all day, so they spent the afternoon playing cards in the shade.



In that split second, nothing had changed, but everything was different. The prisoners were still in chains and the sun was still hot, but for those few hours they had taken back control of their inner lives. They were no longer slaves, they were men. The transformation happened in the blink of an eye, with Luke's yell.

David Miln Smith, author of *Hug the Monster*, was a speaker at one of our *Never Fear, Never Quit* conferences, when he taught us all how to do the Masai Lion Hunt Roar. I have adapted his technique over the years, and it goes like this: standing with your feet slightly apart, get a good stretch, take a deep breath, then leap into the air. As you hit the ground, crouch down, clench your fists in front of you at waist level, put a ferocious scowl on your face, and ROAR!! Hold that position for three seconds, release and laugh, repeat as needed.

The physical symptoms of terror and exhilaration are identical – the difference lies strictly in how you interpret them. The Lion Hunt Roar is a terrific way to transform terror into exhilaration. Several years ago, I had an insurance salesperson, who was already one of the top producers in his company, tell me that the Lion Hunt Roar had increased his income by about

twenty-five percent. Instead of starting his workday with coffee and donuts in the break room, he would stand in front of a mirror doing the Lion Hunt Roar until he felt as ferocious on the inside as he appeared on the outside. Then he would start making his calls. An investment of several seconds each day yielded him a return of many thousands of dollars. And it can work for you.

Here's something for you to do: Identify the fear that is standing between you and the outcome you desire. Now, visualize that fear as a cartoon character of a lion. Get all your senses involved - in the theatre of your mind, listen to the lion snarling, deep and throaty; see the blood dripping from its bared fangs; smell its hot breath, foul on your face. Since the subconscious mind does not distinguish between reality and vivid imagination, your body will respond - your breathing will become more rapid and shallow, your heart will race, your stomach will clench. Classic symptoms of terror.

Now, do a Lion Hunt Roar. Do it again. And again. Each time, visualize the lion of terror being transformed into a pussycat that looks like it's been plugged into an electrical socket. Keep doing this until you break out in laughter at this ridiculous lion-turned-kitten, and at yourself for having allowed it to stand guard at the gateway to your dreams, preventing you from stepping through.

### **Laugh in the face of fear**

If you saw the movie *Monsters, Inc.* you know that in the end the monsters discovered that laughter generates more energy than screams. At a physiological level, fear and laughter are incompatible states. Finding a way to laugh at your fears is one of the most powerful steps you can take to chase those fears away. In a 1995 survey of top executives by Accountemps, it was found that 90% said a good sense of humor is important for anyone desiring to reach senior management.





## Get connected

Child psychiatrists tell us that the earliest terrors experienced by the infant are fear of desertion and isolation. Those fears evolve as we grow, but they never completely go away. The more isolated you sense yourself to be, the more prone you are to anxiety, fear, and worry. On the other hand, the more consciously you cultivate a network of connections with other people, the more apt you are to draw courage from those people at times you need it.



The *Course In Miracles* says that the opposite of love is not hate, it is fear. If that is true, it stands to reason that love can also be the antidote to fear. In the words of a song by the contemporary musical group Morcheeba, “fear can stop your loving, love can stop your fear.”

Dr. Deming made “drive fear out of the workplace” one of his 14 points for total quality management because he knew that fear of criticism, fear of rejection, and fear of failure inhibit creativity and innovation, prevent effective teamwork, and create a toxic workplace environment. As I have demonstrated in previous modules, you really can’t drive fear out of the workplace. One thing you can do, however, is foster a greater sense of connectedness. If you need a more compelling reason to foster connectedness in the workplace, see the excerpt from Dr. Edward Hallowell’s book *Worry* in the Great Books section at the end of this module. This edition of Spark Plug is devoted to the why and the how of fostering a greater sense of connection in your life and in your organizations.

## Caring is the root of courage

Although there is snow on the ground as I write this, I know it’s springtime in the Midwest – the red-wing blackbirds have returned. I love these little birds, because they’re such a powerful metaphor for this eternal truth: caring is the root of courage. Once their nests have been made, they will attack anything that gets too close – crows, falcons, coyotes – nothing is safe from the furious protectiveness they have for the eggs in their nests.

Whatever “the eggs” are in your life, when you care enough, you will find the courage to do what you need to do. Sometimes simply reminding yourself why you care – reestablishing that connection with a loved one, with a dream, with something important in your life – will galvanize the courage you need to take action. I want to emphasize that this must be a conscious process: you have to periodically remind yourself of why you care, and of who you care for. That knowledge, the why and the who of your caring, will often point you in the direction of what you must do to effectively express that caring.

*Flags of Our Fathers* by James Bradley is the moving story of the six men who were captured in one of the most famous photographs of all time – the raising the American flag over Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima. During the long battle, this tiny island was the scene of innumerable acts of heroism. As the men whose stories Bradley tells all put it, it was not God, flag, and country that drove them; it was concern for their buddies. One of the six was Sergeant Mike Strank, who was looked up to as a natural leader, “a Marine’s Marine.” It was not physical toughness or courage that earned him such respect, however. It was the caring and the love he showed for his buddies, the way he would risk his life for them, the way in end he died for them. His quiet example was more powerfully motivating to his men than a pep talk from the President himself would have been.

If the power of caring can motivate men to advance into the teeth of machine gun fire, or throw themselves onto a grenade to save their buddies, imagine what it can do to fire up your organization! Here’s a great question to ask yourself: What kind of example are you setting when it comes to promoting an environment of caring and friendship, at work, at home, and in your community?



## **Distrust first impressions and stereotypes**

Most of us pride ourselves on the ability to be a good judge of other people based on our gut reactions. Most of us are wrong. First impressions tend to be based upon superficial exterior attributes and a person’s social and material status. Listening to your gut can prevent you from

really getting to know people who seem to be different from you, and unnecessarily limit your circle of friends to include only people who are pretty much just like you.

We tend to judge other people by what we think they have already done, not by what they say they would like to do. On the other hand, we tend to judge ourselves by our intentions, and wish other people to do likewise. Keep this in mind the next time you're about to come down hard on someone for not keeping a commitment, or feeling resentful at someone for not giving you the benefit of the doubt.

“Fear wants to keep out anyone who’s different, who makes you feel the least bit uncomfortable, anyone who challenges your established opinions and assumptions. At the same time that your fear is excluding them, their fear is excluding you. Pretty soon, they’re not just different, they’re worse. And of course, you’re not just different to them, you’re worse too. And it’s not a very big step from being worse to being wrong. And from being wrong it’s not a very big step to being an enemy.”

Joe Tye: *Never Fear, Never Quit*

## **Now when to change your reference group**

Sociologists tell us that one of the most important, if not *the* most important, influences on our lives is the people we spend time with, the people with whom we identify. This is what they call our reference group. People tend to hang around with others who are much like them in terms of attitudes, opinions, income level, etc. We are all profoundly imprinted by the characteristics of the reference groups with which we identify, in both conscious and subconscious ways.

If your reference group consists primarily of people who are depressed, pessimistic, and chronically whining about how the world has made them a victim, over time it will be almost impossible for you to not fall into that emotional quicksand. On the other hand, if you are depressed and anxious but spend time with people who are confident and optimistic, their attitudes are likely to rub off on you.

One of the surest ways to enhance your courage is to change your reference groups. You do this by consciously seeking out people who have the qualities you would like to emulate. This

entails sticking your neck out, making those proverbial cold calls, joining Rotary or the Optimists Club, and otherwise getting out of your shell. The payback can be enormous, however, both personally and professionally.

### **Seek a mentor**

Speak long enough with someone who's successful in any field, and they are likely to point to the influence of some coach, teacher, or mentor in their past. One of the things you can do to enhance your own courage connection is seek out people who can serve as mentors for you. This could be an informal relationship, as in seeking advice from people who have been successful at accomplishing something you would like to do. It could also be a more formal relationship with a professional coach.

### **Replace fear with faith**

When Randall Patrick MacMurphy is committed to a mental institution in Ken Kesey's masterful novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, he quickly grasps a truth that has alluded the mental health professionals who work there: many of the inmates aren't crazy at all, they're just scared to death by the prospect of facing the realities and responsibilities of the world outside. They have given up their freedom in exchange for the illusion that the real world can be kept outside the gates of their self-imposed prison. But as Chief Bromden proves by his escape, you can only gain freedom by facing your fears bravely. Once you do, however, you will realize how little you truly did have to fear.

Needless fear is the hidden crippler of our time. Its paralyzing effects prevent people from pursuing their dreams and goals, and as a result it is responsible for massive and unnecessary poverty – of body and soul. Fear corrodes self-esteem, fear corrodes the willingness to act, fear corrodes the ability to love, fear corrodes faith.

And faith is the antidote to needless fear. Having faith that the dragons of your imagination will be slain before they become real in your world (acting as if you could not fail) is often the most important step in the long march toward the realization of your dreams. As Norman Vincent Peale often pointed out, “fear not” is one of the most frequently-stated admonitions in the Bible.

## Don't project your emotions onto others

One of the most dangerous mistakes you can make is to assume that your inner emotional map is an accurate projection of the outer landscape. If you are in a state of high anxiety and from that jump to the conclusion that the world is a hostile and threatening place, you will make bad decisions and engage in self-sabotaging behaviors. If you allow feelings of low self-esteem to deceive you into believing that other people see you as being inferior and inadequate, you will consistently cheat yourself by settling for anemic dreams and accomplishments. Here's a simple formula: if a certain emotion makes you feel good about yourself and other people, you can probably rely upon it as being accurate; if it doesn't, you probably can't.

## Be a Dionarap

After defining the clinical condition of paranoia, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary goes on to define the everyday variety as "*baseless or excessive suspicion of the motives of others*" (emphasis added by me, and for a good reason!!). Being paranoid can be seriously harmful to your happiness, and to your success. Consider this about two of the predominant fears in the world of business – fear of rejection and fear of failure.

People are not afraid of rejection – they are afraid that *someone* will reject them (in other words, they are paranoid).

People are not afraid of failure – they are afraid of the embarrassment that might be caused by what other people think of the fact that they failed (in other words, they are paranoid).

When you make negative assumptions about other people (they will reject me, they will laugh at me if I fail), those assumptions will quite likely influence your attitudes and your behaviors. In other words, your negative assumptions about other people can bring



about a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you expect to be rejected, the way you present yourself could telegraph that expectation, and as a result you could end up with that rejection letter. The

solution is to do a complete 180-degree shift in attitude, to go from being a paranoid to being a Dionarap (don't try to look that word up in Webster's – I made it up).

Dionarap is the word paranoid spelled backwards. Being a Dionarap – a backwards paranoid – is one of the surest ways to overcome the fears that stand in the way of genuinely connecting with other people, including fear of rejection, fear of humiliation, and fear of criticism. Convince yourself that people genuinely like and respect you; that when they criticize your ideas or reject your offers, it's nothing personal; and that regardless of what they do or say, they are acting in good faith. If you can do that, you will find the courage to stick your neck out more often and cultivate more meaningful relations. Too often, because we are hurt by criticism or rejection, a connection is broken, and the relationship stops growing, dead in it's tracks. For the Dionarap, however, criticism and rejection become the opportunity for asking the kind of questions that actually deepen the relationship.

### **Fear and courage are both contagious**

“Don't let the troops see you sweat.” General Colin Powell wrote that in his autobiography. Wise leaders (and parents) know when to disguise their fear in order to give courage to others. As Mark Twain put it, be brave. Even if you're not, pretend to be, because nobody else can tell the difference. And here's perhaps the greatest benefit – the person who is most likely to be affected by your show of courage, as much as that show might feel like a fake – is you. Fake it till you make it. Act like you're brave. When you read about acts of great courage, chances are the person whose courage you so admire was scared stiff on the inside, but was just acting brave on the outside.

*Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.”*

*- Robert Louis Stevenson*