

Overcoming Fear in 8 Steps

Dr. Carmen Harra / www.huffingtonpost.com

Fear is felt in many forms. We may have a fear of flying, a fear of commitment, a fear of the unknown, or at times, all of the above. By definition, “fear is a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined...” “Fear is such a powerful emotion that it can simply override all other feelings, logic or priorities. And no matter how strong or courageous or defiant we are, inevitable circumstances can entangle us in a web of our own fears.

In essence, fear is an illusion inexistent in the physical world — it is neither tangible nor visible. But it exists in our minds and manifests through our actions. We therefore bring fear to life, many times without need. I’ve seen plenty of clients who were so afraid of losing their marriage that they couldn’t see there was nothing wrong with it to begin with. But they needed to validate their irrational fears and did so by exaggerating already-existing issues in their relationship. In their case, their fears ignited needless doubts, false conclusions and empty arguments with their partner. They began to cause external problems driven by internal fears. Then, their marriage really did begin to display the issues they had feared all along. Similarly, when our actions are founded in fear, we almost always make poor decisions which can have undesired consequences on us and others. Fear leads us to act out of desperation, frustration and anger.

But fear also plays a vital role in our lives. We would live with reckless abandon if we knew no notion of fear, performing all sorts of downright dangerous activities. The key is to distinguish between actions which induce a healthy acknowledgment of apprehension versus illogical triggers of fear which stifle our potential and limit our well-being.

Fear produces stagnancy because it causes us to battle against ourselves. The rational part of our brain wars against our agitated emotions, and the struggle for the stronger of the two causes great stress within us. We worry that our worst fears may come true. And exactly that which we fear, ironically, we bring to life. Conquering our fears begins with the acknowledgment that oftentimes fear is a decision, not an inherent trait or needed component of life.

Incorporate my eight steps to fearlessness into your everyday life and feel your fears melt away:

F-Face the truth

Face the truth of your fears. Face what scares you head-on, and challenge your trepidation. Separate necessary concerns from baseless fears. Chances are that many of your fears are unwarranted in the greater scheme of your life. Remember, the unfortunate events which you fear will happen do not need to happen.

E-Erase negative imprint

Many times, your fears stem from your own negative experiences or from witnessing the hardships of those around you. Your fear of divorce may very well be rooted in your own parents’ divorce. What you must remind yourself daily — through simple affirmations or guided visualizations — is that your past is your past, and whatever happened in your past, which makes you afraid today, must be dealt with and its mental imprints removed permanently.

A-Allow change

People are by nature afraid of change. They fear that change will somehow disrupt their lives or uproot them from their comfort zone. But change actually serves to transport us into new greater manifestations of ourselves. Allow necessary changes to come your way, even if they may seem frightening at first. Every instance of change serves a purpose towards your highest good, and you will learn this in time.

R-Relax

Fear can be the accumulation of too much stress or extended pressure. A hectic life with too many responsibilities results in fear of failure. It's essential that you take time out for yourself to relax and meditate and alleviate your anxieties. So, calm down, take a breather and remind yourself that you will be shown how to resolve all things.

L-Listen to your intuition

If you learn how to follow it, your intuition can banish your fears. This is because your intuition is like a mental GPS into the future, so that you can sense what's to come, where you need to go and ease your apprehensions of what tomorrow might hold.

E-End feuds

When you fight with others, you draw fear into your relationships: fear that others will betray, hurt or abandon you. In order to nurture fearlessness, you must make peace with those around you and understand that their intentions are not to cause you harm.

S-Selectivity: You have to learn to be selective about what you want out of life and the things you decide to go after. You have to pursue things which don't inspire fear in you and make you feel completely comfortable. Select a vision for your future and stick to that mental projection until you've brought it fully to life.

S-Secure in yourself: In order to shun fear forever, you have to work on your self-esteem. Fear arises from not believing enough in your own abilities and talents. When you constantly live in the mindset of "I can't do it" or, "I'm not good enough," you narrow your window of success to a very slim opening and inadvertently put yourself down.

Although the role of fear is to keep us safe, we do ourselves no favor by living in fear. To awaken our potential and draw in bigger possibilities, we must eradicate fear from our lives through daily efforts which promote our strength and self-security. After all, we all possess the inherent trait of everlasting courage which can guide us through most anything.