

# FEARLESSNESS

*"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."*

NELSON MANDELA

## ABOUT FEAR

The fear that we are speaking of is that which limits us, holds us back, stops us from speaking, acting or both. Close examination shows that fear is in the imagination and not in the actual experience. Hence, the importance of *always doing what we're afraid to do*. Fear is always concerned with the future and how it will impact on 'me' and 'mine.'

Socrates once said that this fear of the future is a pretence of wisdom, thinking we know when we cannot. We may ordinarily think that fear is of the unknown, but in fact it is what we think we know that fills us with fear, i.e. thinking that we know the future and that future is something to fear.

Where did we come by this gift of prophecy?

Fear originates within and can therefore only be eliminated from within. The challenging proposition is, there are no external causes. We each must take full responsibility for ourselves to become more and more fearless in all aspects of our working and personal lives.

## AFFECTS OF FEAR

Fear can affect us in two ways, we either freeze or become frenetic. The former renders us incapable of action and so we postpone, delay, procrastinate and/or avoid the situation altogether. The latter fills us with a frenetic busyness which is propelled by worry and anxiety and results in fearful reactions rather than a reasonable response. The antidote for these two common affects is as follows:

### FROZEN

The key to resolving this frozen state of inaction is to initiate activity, step by step. Ask yourself the question: *What is the one next step I can take right now?* - Take it!

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## FRENETIC

In these circumstances we need to minimise activity. Practice the senses exercise and allow the incessant thinking to subside. Once you have regained a level of composure, ask the question: *What is the need right now?* - Do it!

## ADVERSITY

We're familiar with the saying 'adversity is a great teacher' but have we ever asked ourselves - Why? When we face adversity (not run away) we draw on an inner strength that is there, available at all times, but not availed of often enough. This is why we are encouraged to always face our fears, walk towards them rather than retreat — in retreating fear grows!

## INSPIRATION

"I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection.  
'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death"

THOMAS PAINE

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear"

ROSA PARKS

"The first duty of man is to conquer fear; he must get rid of it, he cannot act till then "

THOMAS CARLYLE

"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot"

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

"No power so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear"

EDMUND BURKE

"If you are the person you should be, you would set the whole world on fire"

CATHERINE OF SIENA

When anger and fear, and pleasure and pain,  
and jealousies and desires, tyrannise over the individual, whether they do any harm or not,  
I call all this injustice.

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## STORY

*In a remote mountain village, the head of the village died and leadership was passed on to his son. Now the people had lived many years under the control of a huge monster who loomed like a shadow over the village. Whenever anyone **tried to find freedom** this large shadow appeared with a loud voice echoing through the mountain. The villagers always retreated at the sight of the dark image.*

*The young man who was now the leader, realised the time had come to confront this monster. He went out with a group of villagers and as soon as they appeared at the edge of the village the huge shadow appeared. They stepped back in fright.*

*The young man observed how **the shadow became bigger** and the **voice louder as they retreated**. He paused and then bravely took a step towards the shadow. It seemed to become slightly smaller. He stepped again and his view was confirmed, **the shadow became less and the voice less powerful**. He continued moving towards it until at his feet was the source of the shadow. He plucked up this small ephemeral object in his hand and asked 'Who are you?'*

*'Fear' was the weak feeble reply. He closed his hand and it disappeared entirely.*

## PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS

Ask: If I wasn't afraid what would I say/do?

Resolve to step over small fears daily.

Prepare with trust not with fear.

Stop, listen and return to the present, remember the present is without fear.

Examine any imagined outcomes and ask: 'Is this reasonable?'

Never act (yes) or refrain from acting (no) out of fear – watch out for both.

Ask: What would I advise my best friend?

Stop assuming that you know what others are thinking.

Remember when we move towards fear it shrinks, when we retreat it grows.

Remember that fear is in the imagination and not in the experience.

Trust that whatever challenges you find yourself facing, whatever the event, you are equal to it.

To cultivate endurance, adopt the following mantra - never ever, ever, ever, **ever** give up.

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