



Own your creative power by conquering your fears

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Because of our ability as human beings to come up with new and creative solutions to the problems we face in our lives, we can come up with some very different and interesting solutions. Sometimes however, as we think of a solution, we immediately go into panic mode and start thinking, “there is no way I can do that”. And what was such a great solution gets discarded, because fear rears its head at the same time as our creative solution, and we think “no way”.

Fear holds us back in life. And it can hold us back a lot. Some fears are good. Otherwise we would find ourselves dead quite quickly. We would be engaging in risky and dangerous actions regularly, consequently shortening our lifespans considerably. Mostly, however, our fears hold us back from living. And in particular, they can hold us back from thriving.

We all have fears, some reasonable, and others imagined. Some people have lots of fears, others have less. There are books that have been written about fear. Mostly they all advocate the same thing. If you want to get over a fear you have to face it. The more you avoid fear the more the fear grows. This is because the brain learns fear very easily. If you are afraid of elevators, the more you avoid taking an elevator the more the fear grows. When you take the stairs and get to the top safely, your brain tells you, “you see, you were right to take the steps, as you are now safe.” It is only once we step into our fear, do what we fear, and our brain learns that there is nothing to fear because we come out safely the other side, that we get over our fear. When you ignore your fear it mostly grows. When you face it, it shrinks.

So let’s imagine you have come up with a really creative way to solve a problem. And say the problem is how to get another job. However, the solution involves taking steps that scare you and so you are hesitant to go ahead. How can you conquer the fear so you can take the actions you need to?

Overcoming Fear:

1. Identify your fear. And I mean get as specific as possible. Know exactly what it is that you fear. Name your fear. Say it out loud.
2. Check whether it is a real fear or imagined fear. A real fear is something that might kill you. An imagined fear is not going to physically harm you. If it is a real fear, then maybe you don't want to do anything about it.
3. Write down your fear. Write it down in detail. Then share your fear with someone else. Discuss it with them. Maybe it is not so scary after all. Sharing fears can sometimes take away a lot of their scariness.
4. Check the evidence for the fear. What is the probability of what you fear happening? Has there been anyone else who has faced this fear and done okay in the end. Understand what are excuses and what is real fear.
5. Think of and write down the short and long-term benefits of facing your fear.
6. Educate yourself. Often fear is based on lack of knowledge. So learn more about what you fear and you may find some of the things you thought would be so scary are not.
7. Break facing your fear into mini-steps. You are going to take one step at a time. You can make these steps tiny. For instance looking up a phone number could be one step. Practicing what you will say on a phone call could be another. Actually making the call could be another. Don't try and eat the elephant all at once.
8. Visualise being successful at each step. Try and reframe some of the fear into excitement at facing and potentially overcoming a new challenge.
9. If you can, prepare, practice and role play. If you are giving a talk or going to an interview you can do this. Have a buddy with you to encourage you if that sort of thing works for you.
10. When you feel you have practiced enough take the actual steps. Breathe deeply at the start of each step if you feel scared. Don't drug yourself. If you do this, for instance you have lots of alcohol, then you will in future only be able to face your fear if you have had a lot to drink.
11. If it helps you, tell others about the actions you will be taking to face your fear and have a support buddy with you.
12. Reward yourself once you have faced your fear.

Fear is one of the most debilitating experiences we can have as humans. We even fear, feeling fearful. Fear is also a challenge. If you spend your life avoiding what you fear then your fears grow. Fears can generalise quite easily. If you fear going to a party, and so you never go, that fear could extend to fear of going to movies, going

to shopping malls, etc. And pretty soon you have a very small life. There are people who create goals to conquer fear. They clarify what they fear and set a goal to overcome it. As we do this more and more, so we get less fearful and more confident. When you work on overcoming fear, instead of the fear growing, your confidence and belief in yourself and your capabilities grow. And eventually you find that you can do more than you ever thought possible.