



FACE FEAR AND ANXIETY

NO MATTER HOW BRAVE, STRONG, OR LEVEL-HEADED WE ARE, WE ALL GET SCARED

Fear: an *anxious* feeling, caused by our anticipation of event or experience



Like all emotions, fear and anxiety are basically real-time information (whether we listen to it and accept it or not). **No matter how brave, strong, or level-headed we are, we all get scared or anxious.**



Life is full of highs and lows and twists and turns. Even for those of us who enjoy unexpected thrills, it's frightening to suddenly find ourselves heading for a deep plunge. Fear is a very real emotion that can render us powerless. **IT IS TIME BE EMPOWERED BY FEAR, INSTEAD OF REACTIVE.**

Learn practices that encourage you to overcome fear by uncovering it, understanding it, and ultimately embracing it by finding its gifts. Overcome fear in the moment, ignite confidence and embody courage.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT FOR REAL-TIME THREATS TO SAFETY THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION.

How many times have you felt yourself *shrink*? Or made yourself small enough to fit into some role? Kept your mouth shut when you wanted to speak out? Have told yourself, "I can't" or "I'm not strong enough." OR overreacted with *fierce* anger? Or *sabotaged* a relationship or goal by pushing away or acting out?

THE ONLY FEARS WE HAVE (5 BASIC FEARS)

NOTICE HOW ALL FIVE BASIC FEARS CONNECT INTO WAYS OF RELATING WITH OTHERS, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.



CEASING TO EXIST: No longer being; a primary existential anxiety in all humans. Feelings: terror, "emptiness," panic. This **ties in with fear of separation and rejection as getting kicked out of the "tribe"** is impending death; we are not designed to survive alone.



MUTILATION: Fear of losing integrity of part of bodily structure or **physical boundaries invaded**. Feelings: disgust of being sexually violated, or creepy creatures such as spiders, and snakes



LOSS OF AUTONOMY: Immobilized, restricted, overwhelmed, entrapped, imprisoned, smothered, or controlled by circumstances beyond our control. Feelings: powerless, helpless, **"Fear of Commitment" or "Engulfment," controlled**, or claustrophobic



SEPARATION: Fear of **abandonment, rejection, and loss of connectedness**; of *becoming a non-person*—not wanted, respected, or valued by anyone else. The "silent treatment," especially when imposed by a group, can have a devastating psychological effect



EGO DEATH: Fear of **humiliation, shame, disapproval** that threatens the *loss of integrity of the Self*. Feelings: Shattered or disintegration of one's sense of lovability and worthiness.

Many emotions we name are just aliases for these primary fears. If you track them down to their most basic levels, the basic fears reveal themselves. **"JEALOUSY** for

example, is an expression of the fear of separation, or devaluation: 'She'll value him more than she values me.' At its extreme, it can express the fear of ego-death: 'I'll be a worthless person.' Envy works the same way.

SHAME and guilt express the fear of—or the actual condition of—separation and even ego-death. The same is true for **EMBARRASSMENT** and humiliation.” (Albrecht, The (Only) 5 Fears We All Share, PsychologyToday).

STEPS TO RESPOND WITH RATIONALE, WITHIN YOUR VALUES, AND YOUR HIGHEST GOOD - RATHER THAN IRRATIONAL REACTIVITY



1. IDENTIFY TRIGGER(S): We all have five basic fears (summarized above), yet we also have unique triggers based on our life experiences, personality, traumas, temperament, reactivity type (Four F's) and our programming from early childhood. See **“Identifying Triggers”** in [DEDICATE DAILY](#).



2. FEEL FEELINGS: Giving ourselves permission to feel fear along with the sense of anger and/or helplessness that may lay beneath it (instead of popping into reactivity, outbursts, or denying/repressing anxiety), allows us to understand the real “what” and “why” within. And thus, you learn the ability to respond ideally, based on your genuine needs and authentic, unique desires.



3. EMOTIONS ARE INFORMATION AND SOME ARE “ALARMS”: Think of the stinging, burning sensation of anxiety or the heat of anger, as alarms going off at your house. It is your job to decipher if it is a false alarm (misperceived threat) or a burglar (real threat). Your mind **NEEDS** you

to identify the threat, as either real or perceived before it will allow you to turn off the “alarm system.” **YOUR ANXIETY AND ANGER ARE NOT THE PROBLEMS, THEY NEED YOU TO BECOME SELF-AWARE AND LEARN WHAT THE THREAT IS.** Attempting to avoid or deny the alarm won’t work. In fact, the more you attempt to deny or resist your anxiety, the more it will likely persist and become louder!



4. DECIPHER THE REAL REASON FOR THE “ALARM”:

Within the context of relating, there are many subconscious misperceived threats based on past rejections, disappointments, let-downs, heartaches, traumas, and even feelings of powerlessness and unworthiness. In order to identify the “threat” you must feel feelings, focus within and understand the deep meaning beneath the trigger. Many times, anxiety, hypervigilance, fear and anger stem from past experiences... and have more to do with the PAST and PERCEIVED THREAT than reality in the present moment.



5. TURN ALARM OFF AND DECIDE WHAT ACTION TO TAKE (RESPOND INSTEAD OF REACT):

In order to choose a response, based on rationality, we NEED to accept and understand the deep meaning beneath the trigger, allow for calm and then, and only then, shall we come back into the relationship or situation with rational action.

SHARE FEARS WITH THOSE WORTHY OF TRUST: Sharing our apprehensions **with people we trust** can make our fears less overwhelming because we are not letting them grow inside of us as pent up emotions. Sharing our fears also can lighten our burden because we are not carrying our worries all by ourselves. Remember that you are not alone. This is one of many reasons therapy and coaching helps.

OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITHIN RELATIONSHIPS: Understanding your own triggers and fears provides you with the opportunity to connect through communication, vulnerability and authenticity. **Being genuine with what you are really feeling and fearing provides space for your partner to see the real you, listen and connect, understand and provide reassurance, protection, guidance and more.** The intention is not for your partner to “fix” your emotions or make your fear go away! The intention is to connect, share, listen and learn to what your partner has to say. **For example, if we felt ignored by our partner, we could state our genuine feelings with clarity, “I felt ignored when you didn’t text me back all day.”** Communicating when calm is key.

USE YOUR JOURNAL TO REPLY TO THE FOLLOWING:

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT FOR REAL-TIME THREATS TO SAFETY THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE PROTECTIVE ACTION.

Describe a time you yelled or were passive aggressive... and regretted it later (includes texting). **FIGHT MODE**

Describe a time you shrunk into being too nice/accommodating/lacked boundaries due to fear. **FAWN MODE**

Describe a time you “self-medicated” (alcohol or substance) to escape anxiety or emptiness. **FLIGHT MODE**

Describe a time you “escaped” painful feelings or emptiness with a process (over-spending, over-working, over-texting, over-indulging, over-eating, attention seeking, or extreme cases, such as extramarital affair seeking, etc.). **FLIGHT MODE**

**WHAT WAS THE REAL REASON YOUR EMOTIONAL “ALARM” WAS GOING OFF?
FOR EACH EXAMPLE PROVIDED ABOVE, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:**

Identify which of the FIVE basic fears, or combination, you were likely experiencing.

Describe the feelings beneath the fear: disrespected, misunderstood, rejected, ignored, controlled, unworthy, unseen, violated, etc.? Use feelings wheel as needed.

How would you have responded differently once calm and rational?

How will you use this knowledge of fear to allow for calm and rationale before reacting next time?

What skills do you feel you are missing to respond rather than react? What strengths do you have?

You will explore processing additional emotions in more practices. This is specific to fears and anxiety. Realize that working into your fear and responding rather than reacting takes PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

This is not about being perfect... it is about having the intent to learn and respond with authenticity, communicate and connect from this place, rather than reactivity.

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