

Move beyond Your Fear to Achieve Success

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Expert & Success Coach



The cost of living in fear is great. Fear is the source of stress, anxiety, and procrastination. There is no joy when living in fear. It feels heavy and burdensome to be worried and concerned, to be unable to relax, paralyzed, to hold back from doing what you want to do, what you know you can do...

There are many fears that keep us living small, shallow lives: fear of happiness, success, failure, making mistakes, being insignificant, not being good enough or not having enough. You may fear not being liked, being controlled or losing control, not being loved or lovable, being alone or being abandoned. Whatever your fear, it permeates every fiber of your being and impacts your life in a myriad of ways.

Fear is based on a thought, a perception of your mind from your life's experiences and from your expectations which are also based on thought. When you allow your mind to wander in thought through the fear, you are taken on a ride through fantasy land of the worst possible scenarios of what could happen if you act. This only serves to intensify the fear causing anxiety, worry, and feelings of impending doom. By learning to unearth your fears and challenge them, you can choose new, supportive thoughts and take different actions. You can choose to act in spite of feeling fear and learn to control the thoughts that have you fantasize worst-case scenarios; you don't have to go there. That way, YOU are in charge of your thoughts, of the experience you have even in the privacy of your own mind. You don't have to experience that heightened level of anxiety and all the drama that leads to inertia. You can choose a different inner experience that leads you to success and happiness.

Fear as Motivator and as Suppressor

Fear is one of the greatest motivators and one of the greatest suppressors. As a motivator, fear forces you to act – or to *not* act. Either way, you are not at choice but rather, you act to avoid what you perceive to be painful. Many people use fear as a tool to motivate or control others; it is a leadership style. This leadership style reduces productivity by stifling creativity and innovation of the person being controlled. Fearful of speaking up and sharing ideas, the employee keeps his ideas to himself. This leader often is disliked and although he may be effective at producing results, morale is usually poor. Unfortunately, this leader does not understand the impact his behavior is having on others and is completely unaware that he is operating from fear himself.

At home, parents can wield fear as well, creating uncomfortable environments which not only stifles the growth of our youth but can lead to depression, anxiety, addiction or suicidal thoughts. As spouses, fear creates hostile environments. You don't feel safe to be yourself. You're always worried about what you do or say. Living on eggshells all the time takes a tremendous amount of energy. This might be why you stay late at work and spend your days wishing life were different.

Living in fear, self- or other-imposed, you shrink and suppress your brilliance, live beneath your capability, avoid taking risks, and live an unhappy life. Fear robs you of your greatness as your talent lies hidden beneath its cloak. The fear you feel seems real. It seems like it would be the worst thing in the world if you were to walk through the fear and act. But that is how the brave do it. Courageous people experience as much fear as anyone else. They have just learned to focus on the goal and their purpose for achieving it. They act in spite of the fear. It's the difference between letting *fear* be in charge or YOU being in charge.

Fear is sneaky. It can force you to behave in ways that produce certain positive results. For instance, if you fear being alone, then perhaps you build a strong community through networking and that has enabled you to be very successful in your field because you are well-liked and well-known. This is good, right?

Yes, it is good. However, being driven by fear has its limitations. You are driven to behave a certain way in order to avoid your fear rather than face it. Constantly trying to live up to some ideal, you stress over avoiding unpleasant outcomes. And no matter what you do or how many people you meet, you continue to feel alone,



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it's not enough, and your feelings of dissatisfaction continue. Perhaps that community of people is more social or collegial; they are acquaintances not deep friendships, and during a rough time, you wonder who you can lean on for support. It is impossible to experience true intimacy when you fear being alone because you are coming from a place of neediness and that shows up energetically. Oftentimes, fear of being alone shows up as a fear of intimacy and you avoid having people get to know you because if they knew the *real* you, my goodness, what would they think!? If you are not a very social being, fear of being alone can show up in other ways such as carrying debt or chronic borrowing. You might do this so that you build long term, albeit superficial, relationships with institutions or people who will never leave you.

Fear as a Message

Fear is normal. It helps us to know that we are on the right path. When you experience fear, it signals that you are moving toward the edge of your comfort zone, meaning you are expanding your horizons and stretching yourself to become more of what you are capable of becoming. The fear *feels* real, as if we are experiencing the fight, flight, or freeze mechanism, our body's natural reaction to danger. When we are in danger, the body responds with hormones making us stronger and more alert. This physiological response can occur to something real *or* something perceived in the mind, making it difficult to discern whether you are really in danger or if a belief or thought pattern is being threatened by what you are about to do. Either way, your body reacts as if danger is imminent, causing you to question your actions. It is in this moment where you can find your power. You can choose to act and push through the fear or you can succumb to the fear and hold yourself back.

Uncover Your Greatest Fear

Look at the places in your life where you feel stuck. Look at the patterns in your life. If you fear success, then you will act in ways that have you avoid being successful or you may be successful but no matter what you achieve, you feel as though it will never be enough. If you fear being good enough, then you might act in ways to prove yourself and you may be unwilling to see your own goodness which, again, perpetuates the cycle. If you fear making mistakes or being wrong, then you will constantly look for ways to prove you are right. You may get into fights or debates, or only spend time with people who are not as smart as you so they don't question or challenge your perspective. If you fear being alone, then you will be alone, fearing that anyone you might get close to will leave or hurt you so why bother? OR you have so many friends that your time is taken up completely by others and you feel resentful that you have no time for yourself. You keep looking for love in all the wrong places.

Fear has been said to be false evidence appearing real. In recovery programs, FEAR is an acronym for Face Everything And Recover. If you want to improve your circumstances and move beyond your stuck points, then become aware of your fears and how they control you and limit you. It's one thing to be afraid, it's quite another to let that fear run your life. YOU can decide for yourself how you want fear to impact your life. Be in charge of your fear by creating awareness around it and give yourself the freedom to choose.

Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN, CSAC is named one of the TOP 100 THOUGHT LEADERS in personal leadership development. Your happiness and success is her business! Her coaching clients experience dramatic and profound results in their productivity, level of confidence, and their relationships. As a certified coach, accomplished writer, and motivational speaker, Julie empowers your personal best and teaches you simple, practical tools for meeting your goals, communicating effectively with others, and enjoying yourself at work and at home. Visit www.NurturingYourSuccess.com to learn more about coaching with Julie or contact Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com to have her speak at your next meeting or conference. Subscribe to her blog at www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com.



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