

# ***Fear of Uncertainty***

By Brian Germain



At the very root of all human fears is the fear of uncertainty. When we dig deep enough into the source of each of our fears, just before we expand upon our feeling of fear and take its dark journey into that which we least want to see happen, we find a moment in which we do not know. Knowing what is the truth, knowing what is next, this is the limb to which we cling in moments of uncertainty. Despite an infinite array of possibilities, we swiftly solidify our understanding of a particular reality, and our apparent “knowing” makes us feel safer, even if the conclusion to which we have come is an unpleasant one.

When we cling to what we believe is true, and draw conclusions from the existing information and direction of motion of a situation, we derive our answers from the framework of what we have considered thus far. When the state of affairs is headed in a direction that is not to our liking, we go straight to experiencing fear, helplessness and aggression. When we instantly interpret an unwritten, infinite set of possibilities as a singular direction of reality, the game is over. This is the way in which we have been trained to handle our difficult situations, based on the examples of others. Fortunately, there is another way.

What if we were to allow ourselves to remain in the space of uncertainty a bit longer? What if, upon realizing that we do not know, we were to stop trying to know, and simply be fine with the feeling of not knowing a bit longer? This ability, the rarest of skills among humans, is what allows the mind to climb the tower of possibility to the best possible answers, the ones that are rarely attained with the initial pass of consciousness. This place of amorphous prospects is the scariest of all conditions.

When we consider how fleeting our moments of inner silence are, and how swiftly we fill these spaces with thoughts and experiences, we find the reason for our hasty conclusions that lead us into fear and aggression. We simply do not practice the skill of remaining in emptiness. “Ah,” you say: “another hippie trying to get me to meditate. Been there, done that, got the prayer beads. Go sell your flowers to somebody else.” See how quickly we snap to conclusions and judgments? If you truly desire to live without fear as your motivating factor, you will want to hear me out.

Inner silence is not just for attaining enlightenment. Many pursue a peaceful mind for such purposes, but when one views the thought-processes of daily life, the ability to allow a bit of mental space for alternate considerations to enter into the picture affords us the freedom of mind to appraise the situation from a larger perspective. Knee-jerk conclusions are the workings of Stage-One-Mind. This is where fear comes from in the first place: the animal instincts looking for danger to run from or opponents to fight against. “Meta-Thought”, on the other hand, is Stage-Two-Mind. This is the process of taking a second pass over the data, and looking for better answers than biting people’s heads off and selling all our stocks. The only way

to get there is patience, and that can only come from ignoring the impulse to react, and remaining in the uncomfortable place of *not knowing*, but *feeling* that there is a better way.

Being able to remain in the space of not knowing requires a bit of faith. It requires a connection to all of the successes you have attained in the past. Mostly, however, it requires a deep breath. When we choose to focus our attention away from the problem long enough to slow down and get ourselves feeling better, we change everything. By helping ourselves to feel physically better, we discover the new way. We must always remember that our thoughts come from how we feel, and if we feel scared, all we can do is draw conclusions based on that.

Likewise, when we breathe fully, one good breath, all the way in, and then slowly rolling over the hill into the exhale, letting it out gently and smoothly, we shift who we are becoming. We open the door for our Higher Self to enter, simply because we have changed how we feel. First feel good, and then good-feeling thoughts can enter.

The more often we practice this skill of remaining in emptiness, the more we will be able to utilize it when we most need it. It is easy to sit quietly on a mountaintop, and be happy without thinking. Letting go of the impulse to get angry or scared when the people around you are angry or scared, now that is another matter. This is the purpose of mental training. You sit on the mountaintop, so-to-speak, and grow increasingly comfortable with the silence so that when you need to push in the clutch of your mind (or your tongue), you are able to do so, and your inner wisdom flows into the situation to resolve any apparent obstacle with eloquence and grace. Your thoughts did not do that; it was the spaces between them that did it.

My ninth grade English teacher, Mrs. Church once said: "If you have a jar that is half-full of jelly beans, it makes a lot of noise when you shake it. A jar that is full, on the other hand, makes no noise." It would seem that an empty jar, Mrs. Church, is even better.

