

Beyond the Obvious

What is Fear, Really?

By Brian Germain

Fear is wisdom. It is our subconscious minds sublimating an inner realization about something in our environment that is the opposite of what we want. Our inner wise-self is speaking to us in the only way it can, by triggering our amygdalas, the watch-dog of our brains, and stoking the fire of our limbic systems to get our attention. The trouble is, we often obsess so intensely on the emotion itself that we become lost in the negative mindset that fear entails. If we are to uncover the information that our guts are telling us, we must consider the fear itself to be a hindrance to that goal.

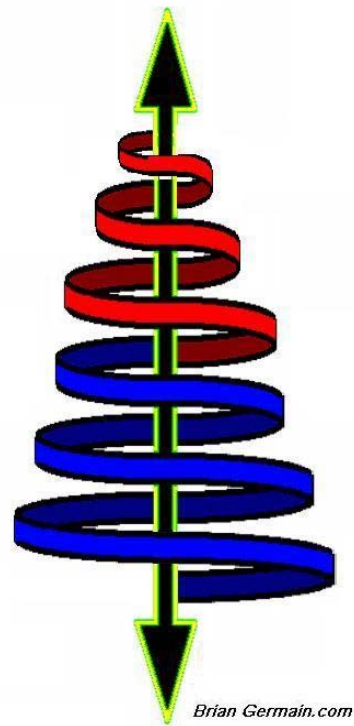
Fear is the bad trip that gets worse the more scared we feel. For indescribable reasons, we magnify the likelihood of the negative possibilities that lie before us. These doorways are real, but only as options for which we have the choice of exploring to a greater or lesser degree. Although our first thought may lead us to conclude the worst, most often we have the option of discovering an alternative set of possibilities. If we do not choose to de-escalate ourselves and create a different feeling, we will find ourselves walking a path that we do not enjoy at all. If we become afraid enough and for long enough, repeating our thoughts about the things that we do not want to see happen, we will inevitably bring these things to pass.

This is why the alternative to fear is the only real option for those who choose to champion the best case scenario. So this obviously introduces a new question: What is the alternative to fear?

Before one engages in the proliferation and elaboration of the possible answers to this question, we must first sit with it. We must shift our minds from the topic of fear entirely, and remember what it is like to have a good time. What does that feel like? Can you remember this when you begin to feel afraid? If you can, you will never be ruled by fear. Often we cannot. When this is the case, we must first negotiate our negative emotions by choosing to deliberately place our thoughts on things that bring us back to that feeling, and only then can we pursue the specifics of the problem to create solutions.

The second part of this process is the element that many of us have come to place the most focus upon. We skip the first step, controlling our vibe, and we go straight to problem-solving. The trouble, most of us have discovered, is that it is the mood that we are in when we shift into the pursuit of solutions that ultimately determines the elegance, and indeed beneficality of the solutions that we choose to carry out; not to mention the competence of our execution of that intended solution. If we are still carrying too much internal speed when we go into action, we are likely to botch things up royally.

The answer lies in slowing down the situation from the inside out. This is how we take charge of what is happening. We command energy only through deceleration, provided that we do so in a sustainable manner. We cannot slam of the brakes of a dynamic situation that has a great deal of inertia, just as we cannot slam on the brakes of our minds. We must do it slowly,



and based of what make sense to us at the time. We must work with the dynamics of our specific situation, and use that system to gradually bring things down to a sustainable speed.

This always begins with a breath. We take the few seconds necessary to take a deep breath in, and then a bit further, and then gradually, gently, release it back into the wild. As we do so, we begin to feel connected, centered, and clearheaded. Everyone knows this. We learned it when we were little kids, when our parents told us to slow down and take a deep breath. It is very simple, yet how often do we actually do it in a moment of heat and speed?

This is the skill that we need to move forward through fear. We must use it whenever we think of it. The truth is, we need to do it more than we currently are. This is almost always the case. If it were not, you would not be reading this page. You would be in a state of meditation. You are, perhaps, quite relaxed reading this article about transcending fear through slowing down, but you probably would love another deep breath right now. I'll bet it would make you feel even better than you already do.

If you can connect with this feeling, of being safe and secure, slow and content; if you can conjure the feeling that everything is going to be alright, whatever fear you are experiencing will melt away. That is because this feeling, what many have called many things, is the opposite of fear. Fear and this feeling cannot coexist in at the same time. It is that Law of Emotional Opposites.

When we realize that we have allowed our emotions to take control over our thoughts, we always have the choice to change our angle of attack. We can take things head-on, with negative emotion driven by fear, or we can finesse the situation to an even better outcome. The choice is up to us. We are the only ones that can redirect the course of our experience.

This choice is about more than just becoming braver people so we can expand our lives because we now are less afraid of challenging our fear. Yes, that is a fantastic benefit. Even more than that, we must consider the state of the world, and our role in this affair.

We are part of a climate of emotion, and we each have a part to play. Beyond our immediate surroundings, when we choose to walk with fear, we do nothing to change the feeling of our world. When we choose to allow ourselves to feel anything but appreciation and happiness, we are not being part of the solution that, if we think about it, we enjoy being part of. Feeling good, after all, is better than feeling bad.

Imagine you walk into a grocery store. You collect your goods, and you pay the clerk, avoiding eye contact and remaining anonymous, lost in your worries, lost in your thoughts. How have you helped this clerk to be in a happier state? You have not. When the next person walks into the door and pays for their groceries, the clerk is likely to assume that they too want to remain anonymous, and so does not strike up a friendly conversation. Now the world behind you is deflected in a negative, or at best neutral direction.

Now imagine that you are entering that same store on Christmas Eve. You bring your last minute items to the counter, and you smile brightly at the person behind the register. You ask them if they get to go home soon. You sympathize with the fact that they are not at home with their families, and you feel genuine thankfulness for the job they are doing, and you tell them so. You are in the zone. When you walk out that door, how do you expect the clerk will act toward the next customer? You have deflected your community in the general direction of up.

This is how worlds get transformed. If we all agree that this is something that we want, and I think I am safe in stating that this mostly the case, we will find that every day can be like Christmas. Isn't that the point of transcending fear anyway?

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