

The Benefits of Confrontation

By Brian Germain



Why must we take all of our fears head on? It is simply a matter of happiness. When something is holding us back from feeling good, we cannot explore and profit from all of the joy that life has to offer. We can, in short, be happier than we are, but the only way to get there is to shed more weight from our balloon. We must lighten our load.

We all have them; little avoidances that we have been carrying out religiously from the birth of that aversion. That beginning may have been a specific experience, it usually is. That does not matter. We all have a story about why we avoid certain things. The question is, do we take the time to revisit these tendencies and explore their current validity in the light of the new information gleaned from life experiences since the incident that birthed the fear? We must. The truth is, we can avoid these things for a very long time, and often do. We steer a wide birth around these subjects and challenges, and thusly in our overcompensation, we close doors before us. Often, we surrender the possibility of doing something that would bring us great happiness. We must never pass up on an opportunity to devour the scrumptious things that life has to offer.

This feeling is the fuel that our lives run on. While our cars run on gas and our cell phones run on batteries, our souls run on joy. We can substitute fear for joy, and allow ourselves to be motivated by our desire to avoid negative consequences, but we all know where that road leads. When we run our airplanes on automobile gas, they do not perform quite as well. They will fly, but they will not produce the level of performance that the best fuel for the job will offer. We need to run on the good stuff.

If you are afraid of snakes or heights or public singing, then go do exactly that. Do it well. Do it with a smile on our face, and squeeze every bit of fun out of the moments of your greatest fear. This path, the one less taken due to its emotionally challenging nature, is where we unravel the knot in our mental carpets, and shed the magnetic repulsion that is steering us away from new experiences. In the end, we will find ourselves discovering that such a lifestyle motto suits us. We are adventurers after all.

It is true that there will be a good deal of friction as you gradually increase your exposure factor, little by little, to this area of aversion. But as you continue to confront this fear, you will find that it gets easier and easier. Eventually, you will become increasingly desensitized to the context, until one day you have the experience: you flow with the moment and actually have fun under those circumstances. You will have broken through to the other side; you are free of that particular burden once and for all.

One fear at a time, we lighten the weight in our emotional balloon basket, tossing out sandbag after sandbag, until we take the biggest risk of all. We use our new powers to

bring light into someone's life, perhaps even a perfect stranger. Even though they may be experiencing an unhappy moment, we are able to maintain our inner smile, and we shine it on them when they most need it. In doing so, we bring them up to our level in what Dr. Richard Alpert termed a "Contact High." We have applied our new found emotional intelligence to maintain our own happiness, and we uplift them without jumping into the water with them. When we take on the daring task of helping others in this way, we make the world a little bit better in that one small way. When that happens enough, it will be a great day for all of us.

Fear Specialist Brian Germain is an acclaimed author, entrepreneur, inventor, test pilot, personal coach, radio personality and keynote speaker. He has written several popular books including Transcending Fear, Green Light Your Life, and The Parachute and its Pilot. He is currently developing a television reality-series entitled "Transcending Fear".