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“Motivating & Empowering Women, in the Home for Business & Leisure”



## Niche E-Book Collections

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## Overcoming Fear!



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## Are You Afraid?

You may not recognize it as such. In fact, you may even deny you ever experience it.

But if you get a feeling of anxiety and apprehension when an object or a situation comes up, then you are demonstrating fear.

Fear is an emotion that arises from a perception that something is harmful. It is a self-preservation “device” wired into our brain. This is why we feel nervousness, panic and exhilaration coming in a sudden rush in moments of fear.

Physiologically speaking, that rush is caused by the body producing and releasing hormones such as adrenaline. Adrenaline as you may already know is an “emergency” feature our body uses to make us do things we may not be able to do under normal circumstances. Fear is a very strong trigger for adrenaline. And as its purposes are mainly for self-preservation, it is only rightly so.

However, fear comes in many forms, not all of which are motivated by the need to protect yourself. Sometimes, the source of fear could be perceived as irrational by some although for the one experiencing it, it may seem perfectly logical. Nevertheless, the more people understand the kinds of fear they experience, the better they are equipped at addressing them.

Phobia is the term most researchers use when describing an irrational, persistent fear of something. A feeling of dread can easily escalate into anxiety and then panic when a person encounters an object or situation that he or she has a phobia about. In extreme cases, a phobia may become elevated to an obsession that hampers a person's life as well as the people around them.

Phobias triggered by a particular object or situation are called simple phobias. But they are only called as such to pertain to fears triggered by a specific, and therefore, easily traceable source. It is common practice for experts in this field to interchange the terms simple and specific phobias.

Common examples of these would be hydrophobia (fear of the water), arachnophobia (fear of spiders), and acrophobia (fear of heights). There are some unfamiliar names that are used to describe quite common fears such as ophidiophobia (fear of snakes), claustrophobia (fear of closed, small spaces) or ailurophobia (fear of cats). There is even a term to describe the fear of the number thirteen (triakadekaphobia).

### Social phobias

While most people can keep their fears in check, there are those who allow fear to overwhelm them, thus rendering them unable to function normally in society. Social phobia is the term used to describe this kind of

affliction.

Agoraphobia is a kind of social phobia that pertains to the fear of open spaces. People who suffer from this are unable to go out of the confines of places what they feel are safe. The fear limits social interaction, which can impede recovery. This kind of fear, too, is self-perpetuating as it builds on the perception that those from the outside are harmful all the more keeping the person inside and closed off from human interaction.

Other examples of social phobias would be the fear of speaking in public. There are cases of people who are afraid of placing an order in a restaurant, using a common washroom and even filling out a form when someone is watching.

There are ways to address the problems of socially debilitating phobias. Two schools of thought exist in this regard, namely psychoanalysis and behavioral therapy.

Psychoanalysis maintains that specific and social fears stem from a repressed memory or feeling from one's childhood. One represses that memory or feeling because of some traumatic experience concerning it. It, however, manages to manifest itself to that person well into their adult life through phobias.

Psychoanalytic treatment is usually one-on-one talk therapy sessions where the therapist aims to detect that repressed feeling and brings it to the patient's attention where the patient can address it and come to terms with it. Once the patient has unearthed and faced these repressions, the phobias can be managed more easily if not totally abandoned. This form of treatment seems best suited for more mature patients who are more comfortable with one-on-one sessions rather than group therapy.

Behavioral therapy, on the other hand, asserts that a fear is acquired and learned, in which case, the process can be reversed through unlearning. The treatment for phobia involves gradually exposing the patient to the source of what he or she fears.

This gradual introduction is very important because it is part of the desensitization process where he learns that the object of the fears is not as ominous as previously perceived. People who prefer group therapy will most likely benefit from this kind of treatment. Young children also stand to benefit more from this as they may yet be unable to express themselves in a psychoanalysis session.

Whatever form of treatment you decide to follow to help you manage your fears (whatever they may be) they are a positive step towards mastering it. You can only be a better, and a much less afraid, person after it.

## What are you Afraid of?

The Greeks were first to develop science and human psychology, and so they were also able to define human disorders. Physical illness is an object of interest, but more along the psychological illness, for they wanted to understand and cure the disorders of the human mind. And one such disorder is “phobia,” or fear in Greek. It is the incomprehensible anxiety brought about by fearing the self, an object, event or situation that is otherwise unthreatening to others without the fear. In the previous chapter we said that there are different types of phobia. Here are three categories of phobias and how ancient and modern psychologists will define them.

### Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder)

Social phobia is also known as social anxiety disorder (SAD). It is characterized by overpowering anxiety and unnecessary self-consciousness concerning mundane situations. Those afflicted with this type of phobia have a constant, severe, and chronic fear of being seen and scrutinized by others as they are humiliated by what they do. The fear is so much that it interferes with their daily life. While the people with SAD know that their fear of being around people may be unreasonable, they are incapable of overcoming it. They usually experience this fear even days or weeks prior to the social event.

Social phobia can be as simple as the fear of speaking formally in front of colleagues or performing on stage, to as severe as being afraid of just being around other people. In such severe instances, social phobia can keep people from working or attending school. Making friends, let alone keeping them is also a big difficulty for people with this phobia.

Physical signs usually show as anxiety intensifies during social phobia. These include blushing, hyperventilation, profuse sweating, difficulty talking, trembling, and nausea. When such physical symptoms manifest, people with social phobia are devastatingly embarrassed and feel insecure, as though all eyes are focused on them.

Social phobia affects over 5 million Americans, women and men with equal likelihood to the disorder. It usually manifests in early adolescence as some theories believe that genetics influence development of social phobia. Social phobia often stimulates other anxiety disorders such as depression. There is a tendency to develop substance abuse or dependence during self-medication, so make sure to see a therapist as soon as symptoms manifest.

### Specific Phobias

An intense fear of something that presents little actual danger is a specific phobia. Examples of specific phobias are acrophobia or altophobia (fear of heights), siderodromophobia (fear of railroads or train travel),

potamophobia (fear of running water), cynophobia (fear of dogs or rabies), batrachophobia (fear of frogs), etc. As you can see, they are objects that should not be feared and thus the fear is irrational. There are those who are able to hike the tallest mountain, but unable to ride the elevator to the 3rd floor due to claustrophobia (fear of confined spaces). They are aware that these fears are groundless, nevertheless find themselves experiencing severe anxiety by just the thought of their specific phobia.

Treatment of specific phobias can be done through avoidance of the source of the phobia. Riding planes instead of trains for a siderodromophobic, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator for a claustrophobic. However, in situations that cannot be avoided (potamophobia), psychological therapies are usually advised. That is, if there is no iatrophobia (fear of going to the doctor).

Specific phobias are experienced by over 6 million Americans and are more common in women than men (by up to 2 times). The causes of specific phobias are not proven; though an existing theory is that it may be hereditary. As such, it starts to manifest childhood or adolescence and may continue to adulthood if not addressed early on.

#### Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia involves fear a place or situation that is difficult to escape from. Examples would be lygophobia (fear of being in a dark place), or eicophobia (fear of home surroundings or being outside the home). As in the previous two categories of phobias, avoiding the situation can help alleviate the fear. Else, seek psychotherapy. Close to 2 million American adults have agoraphobia.

Because "phobia" is a Greek word, the correct way to form a specific phobia is to also use the Greek root word of the object of the fear and connect it to "-phobia." Modern day neologisms combine English words with "-phobia," which should be taken only as colorful expressions of fear, and not, in fact the correct way of naming the fear. For a comprehensive and accurate list of phobias, check out <http://www.phobialist.com>.

## Childhood Fears All Grown Up!

Do you still dread the dark? Or that feeling that something lies under your bed? Do you feel a particular anxiety when someone you've arranged to meet has not shown up at the appointed time? Does the idea of a confrontation make you feel overly anxious?

If you have such feelings of dread whenever these situations (or ones like these) arise despite the logical assurances that all will be well, then it is likely that you may be re-experiencing a fear from some time in your past.

It is not uncommon for adults to be undergoing feelings of anxiety and apprehension over things and / or situations that are attached to traumatic and fearful experiences from childhood. In fact, it is during childhood where lasting attitudes and perceptions about things and situations are largely formed. And these perceptions and attitudes can be carried well into adulthood.

However, these attitudes may not necessarily be positive to your ability to function fully and productively as an adult. In fact, it may actually impede you. It is therefore important to recognize the possible sources of things you fear even if it means going back to re-assess one's childhood.

Many experts agree that for as long as these issues remain unresolved, the fear one experiences now will never truly be addressed, and so keeps a person from realizing his full potentials.

However, it is often easier said than done. It is actually easier to attribute a source of fear to something that exists and makes sense now, rather than admitting a childish fear. Nevertheless, this initial embarrassment has to be overcome in order to get to the root of one's fears. The process of recognition, confrontation, reconciliation and separation needs to be experienced for the fears to be truly resolved.

For example, feelings of excessive anxiety (if not anger) over people who do not show up at an appointed time may have taken root from a childhood experience. It might be possible that at one time, as a child, someone had promised to arrive at a given time. The child may have put so much weight in that person's arrival that when the appointed time came, it delivered a crushing blow of disappointment and abandonment - feelings that could be carried over well into adulthood.

Another situation of a childhood fear manifesting itself in an adult may be the fear of confrontations. It is likely that an individual who avoids conflict to a fault does so because of traumatic associations with confrontations. For example, this person as a child could have been witness to several arguments between adults (possibly his parents), which could have escalated into physical injury or one of the parties, if not himself as well. Much as this person, now an adult, would want to forget this experience, he / she may recall it unconsciously every time the possibility of a conflict

comes up.

These two situations are hypothetical but nevertheless still strike a familiar chord with many adults. For most people, however, the process stops at recognition. They acknowledge that something similar happened to them in their past, but they deny this ever having to do with how they behave now.

While it is true that one cannot fully attribute one's behavior now with something that happened over 10 years ago, it cannot be denied that past experiences heavily dictate our actions in the present and future. And if these experiences have, at least, the potential in hampering the full productivity of an adult, it needs to be addressed and confronted.

Behavioral therapy follows the principle of gradual exposure to the issue. As one cannot completely learn something within a brief period of time, the same can be said about unlearning or uncovering. By gradually addressing the childhood source of one's fears, the person can come to terms in manageable amounts. As his / her tolerance for facing the fear increases, a person can eventually confront the fear and address it fully.

Addressing a fear is simply the acknowledgement that the fear exists, instead of denying it. By affirming it, the person gains a tangible (something he can hold on to) foothold on his fears. This in itself is a big step. Once that first step is made, a specific response can be solicited. In the case of the abandoned child, the adult can acknowledge the fear by specifically mentioning what happened and how he felt at that time.

The next step comes in reconciliation and separation. This is where the adult establishes that how he felt in the past regarding the things he feared remain in the past. While he / she reconciles the fact that the child and him are the same person, he / she, as an adult can choose to react differently to those fears i.e. to no longer be afraid.

The duration for such a process varies with each person. For some, the aid of a therapist is not totally necessary. Nevertheless, all are positive steps towards making one less afraid of what is out there allowing one to be a person ready to realize his / her full potentials.

## Learn How to Overcome the Fear of Rejection

Fear of rejection can be a serious setback for anyone. It affects how a person feels about his or herself, the way they treat others, and even the way they view life.

Not only does it affect the individual who emotionally suffers from this way of thinking. But also the people that surround that person also become affected by the behavior exhibited by that person.

### Root of the problem

There are many reasons why people suffer from fear of rejection. The cause could have stemmed from a bad experience in childhood. Being a kid who never really fitted in well with the other children, or the one who always got picked last for softball teams can have lasting effects.

It could leave the child with a low self-esteem, and the feeling that he/she is not wanted. This could have psychological consequences to a child growing up.

This is also applicable to those children who were put up for adoption, and as a consequence passed from foster home to foster home. They develop serious emotional and psychological issues that can lead to a fear of rejection.

### Looking for signs of rejection

People who suffer from fear of rejection tend to blow things out of proportion. A simple misunderstanding can become a source of a big fight! A friend, who cancels on a night out because he/she is too busy to attend, becomes a sign of future abandonment.

Individuals who adhere to this way of thinking have a tendency to read too much into things thereby making it very difficult for the people around them to respond in a natural manner. Given that they are being made to feel that they are doing something wrong to the person who suffers from fear of rejection.

### Problems that might arise due to fear of rejection

The problem with fear of rejection is that this attitude can lead to other unhealthy behavioral patterns.

Having a fear of rejection can make a person become obsessive or "clingy" over the people they have in their lives. This could potentially be detrimental to a relationship. Given that the other person might feel the strain of this emotional baggage, or become suffocated as a result of this behavior.

This type of behavior can also turn people away. Potential friends might find this type of attitude really undesirable. Whatever wonderful traits and attributes a person might have, they can be overshadowed by the manifested undesirable behaviors driven by the fear of rejection.

Another problem that can arise from those individuals who are suffering from fear of rejection is that they reject others who want to be a part of their lives.

In their minds they are convinced with the inevitability of rejection that they do it to others first, before others get the chance to do it to them. This then becomes a vicious cycle in a relationship, and will end up hurting all of the parties involved.

#### How to get over the fear or rejection

Fear of rejection is strongly connected to a low self-esteem. People who don't have much confidence in themselves, or think that they are not good enough usually are prone to this way of thinking.

Usually they have a fear of approaching people. They are reluctant to engage in relationships because in their minds they are already thinking that at some point or another that they will be abandoned. So instead of even making an attempt, they simply withdraw from making contact.

One of the best things that individuals who are suffering from fear of rejection can do is to work on themselves. They need to develop higher self-esteem and a sense of self worth. Doing so will vastly improve their outlook in life. It will also help ease the manner in which they conduct their relationships with other people.

Individuals will benefit greatly from knowing their strengths and weaknesses. Let us face it, nobody is perfect. Accepting that you will not be the best at everything you do should take a lot of pressure off of you. People need to learn to accept their limitations.

Also, their self esteem should not be based on what others think of them. They should not alter their feelings about themselves simply because they failed to get a compliment on their appearance, for example.

People who are suffering from fear of rejection should get over this setback by accepting themselves first. Once they have learned to appreciate and bestow the right amount of self worth on themselves they will begin the road to recovery and the fear of rejection that has imprisoned them before will become a thing of the past.

## How to Overcome the Fear of Failure

Many people suffer from fear of failure. Whether they want to admit this or not is another matter.

This type of mentality touches people from all aspects of life. This is a common concern shared by many individuals. Although the degree in which they hold strongly to this way of thinking varies from person to person.

Society frowns on losers.

One of the reasons people fear failure is because they are afraid of what people would think of them. This is especially applicable in a working environment or school setting, where one wrong move might possibly mean being ostracized for life!

Also, there's a lot of pressure that comes from home. Sometimes children become worried of not meeting their parents' expectations; or not getting good grades, or winning sports competitions, etc. This type of mentality unchecked can have harmful effects on a person.

In children fear of failure has become a serious issue. Many children nowadays feel the terrible strain of this fear to the point that some of them flat out refuse to try something new. This happens when the child feels that there is a chance that partaking in a new endeavor will result in failure. So instead of experiencing new things and learning from these experiences, they choose not to participate at all!

Fear of the unknown

A lot of anxiety and anxiousness that people feel come from the idea that they do not know what will happen next. Therefore, they would be unable to control the situation. They become uncertain of themselves and stress over how they will perform in a new environment.

Also, wondering whether they would get along, or gain acceptance in a new environment also becomes a source of apprehension.

Fear of failure in business

In business it has been assessed that in the United States, over 21% of the population mentioned fear of failure as the reason for not starting a business, or a company of some sort.

It is even worse if the UK, with an estimated over 32 percent, falling prey to this same type of thinking.

Approximately 30% of individuals living in Europe claimed that they would rather be employed. Given that this provides a steady source of income,

rather than take a chance at a venture that may or may not pay off in the end. In the United States, only 16 percent of Americans agreed with this line of reasoning.

There is always a risk when it comes to starting one's own business. Since, it is not guaranteed that a person will become successful in whatever business venture he/she chooses to tackle. This is why a lot of people chose to play it safe. Taking the employment route that guarantees a paycheck each month, rather than risk being out in the cold, with no sure source of income. It only goes to show that being an entrepreneur is not for everyone.

#### How to overcome the fear of failure

First of all, acceptance goes a long way and accepting that you will not be successful in everything that you do, will take a lot of pressure off a person. Everyone fails, from time to time, it is part of life. The important thing to remember is to never give up.

A lot of people who have attained success got to where they are because they chose not to be defeated by their 'failures'. In fact, most of them don't see failures as failures.

They view them as lessons learned- a process of trial and error. After all, it is a given that everyone will make some mistakes in the course of their lifetime.

In the process, a person learns how to become patient, how to persevere, and become more determined in the face of the many hardships that he or she encounters.

Failure has gotten a bad wrap. Everyone loves a winner! But what people are forgetting to consider is that it takes a lot of hard work, effort, perseverance, and lessons learned to get to the top.

Sometimes it takes a lot of mistakes to get something just right! This is why failure should not be seen as a death sentence. Otherwise it will just ruin a person's self esteem. The ability to bounce back, and not give up when everyone has counted you out, is what determines a real winner!

## How to Overcome the Fear of Success

Here is a fact: there are people who are afraid of being successful. Fear of success! Would you believe it? Whether one believes it or not, this fear exists.

When someone feels that something makes him hold back, that's a fear of success. Even when one feels that he gets in his own way and everything is totally out of control, that's a fear of success. It sounds odd, doesn't it? But a lot of people can relate to it.

Fear of success means distraction is everywhere, focus is impossible, motivation lost and confidence undermined.

What are things to remember when one has this strange fear??

One must acknowledge first that this kind of fear exists. And why it does:

1. Change is frightening.

Sometimes people are more contented with status quo, the constant things in live. Life is more manageable if there are no drastic changes. Change has a way of jolting the person to adventure and other fearsome endeavors.

2. Once success is reached, success will be expected from the person again.

Take for example, the high school valedictorian who just made everyone proud with all his achievements. Once he reaches college, people will expect him to do well yet again. Some people cannot take this kind of pressure. Other people cannot stomach the people who are vigilant on the other's success.

3. With success, expectations are raised.

Poor are those children who have to live up to their parents as they grow old. This is one reason people think they are better off bland and not successful. The pressure is getting to them.

4. The attention is totally overwhelming.

If one is a private person in nature and is not used to being the center of attention, success is hard to manage. Sometimes other people would rather be the wallflowers whose lives are uninteresting enough to merit attention and recognition.

5. Success usually means the private life will be affected, and often, not in a good way.

The greatest examples are the Hollywood celebrities who keep complaining that they no longer have privacy. They even have to hire professional security to keep them guarded against paparazzi and other media hounds. Where's the fun in that?

6. Success imposes the question if it can be pulled off again.

What if one has pulled off the greatest performance of his life? How can he expect himself to surpass that? The pressure that comes with this success is definitely not a good thing.

7. Success usually means a drastic change in the schedule.

People afraid of success are actually those who are afraid that they might not be able to attend to their friends, families and other personal relationships. They think that the career success might be instrumental to the failure of his relationships.

8. Success sometimes leads to stereotyping.

People who are now big time Hollywood celebrities are expected to sign autographs and act accommodating to the fans. Failure to do so means they are "rude" and "hypocritical." How success sets the standards for a new personality is frustrating.

9. Remaining successful is easier than working hard to be successful.

Oh, it is hard to stay on top with more demands and obligations. Of course, it's crazy to think being successful is all sunny smiles.

10. Success often attracts enemies.

It is true. There are people who get insecure, discouraged and livid when their peers have surpassed their performances. And they will try their best to bring the successful people down.

11. Success can set limitations.

Actors who are good at playing villains are expected to portray such roles forever. The same way that rappers are not expected to act, or actors not expected to sing. Success has a way of boxing a person within a specific role.

12. Success can change personality and self-image.

Success poses the following questions: am I successful enough? Do I deserve this kind of success? These questions, when totally examined, can lead a person into believing that he is only good with the success attached to his name.

With all those reasons mentioned, who wants to be successful?

But of course, that is not the right attitude. Sure there are ways to overcome the fear of success.

One way is through redefining the concept of success, thinking what it really means to the person. He might want to check out some of the books that are available on overcoming this fear.

Self-hypnosis is also important in overcoming this fear. It is mandatory that the person visualizes himself devoid of the fear of success.

See, success is not something to be scared of!

## Fear of mental or physical abuse

Carol has just been through three years of hell with her ex-husband. With the help of her family and friends, she has finally managed to break free and get out of the relationship which has diminished her self worth and killed her trust in men in general. Despite being away from the man who has made her life miserable, she still has these nightmares, and the fear that she will never get over him, and the sufferings he has caused her.

Carol is only one among the thousands of women who have become victims of domestic violence. Like her counterparts, it took Carol a long time to finally get out of her destructive relationship. She has been making excuses for her husband, sometimes blaming herself for the verbal and physical abused that she suffered. She has gotten used to the emotional and physical pain. The problem was she was beginning to accept that it was all her fault and that it was normal.

That was when she decided to put a stop to it all, and left.

Fear of mental of physical abuse is not imaginary for women, like Carol, who has suffered in the hands of the person they trusted with their lives and who were supposed to love and protect them. It is hard to break free from such relationships because abuse is addicting. However, it is much harder to get over the fear of being mentally and physically abused.

It is easier to recognize physical abuse because it can sometimes leave a physical mark. Mental abuse is another thing because the only evidence it leaves behind is emotional scar.

Mental abuse is the fear of being subjected to acts or words that may seem ordinary. However, it takes months or years to recognize mental abuse, especially when you are taking it from someone close to you. Mental abuse can come in many forms like name-calling, yelling, screaming and threats. It can be as simple as being nagged everyday about simple things like keeping the house clean, or dressing and acting in a certain manner.

Physical abuse is recognized by the victim after being subjected to it for a long time. At first, it was just a slap on the face so it did not really matter. The next time, it was just a bruised and bleeding mouth and sore spots here and there. The third time and the succeeding abuses; the victim loses count of the extent of damage. The physical pain is erased by the sounds of crying and of the emotional stress and questions flooding the victim's mind.

The victim usually learns to accept the mental and physical abuse and even makes excuses for the abuse. More often not, the victims question themselves and their values. Sometimes, they accept the mental and physical abuse for fear that no one will accept and love them again.



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These emotional pain, suffered by victims of mental and physical abuse, remains in their minds even if they are no longer in the hands of their abusers. Thus, the fear of being abused once again keeps going back. Most do not subject themselves to therapy and the few ones who undergo treatment take years to heal. Sometimes, they never heal at all.

Victims of abuse find it hard to love and respect themselves again after being subjected to mental and physical hurt. Most of their self worth is lost, and all that remains is the fear. Fear of being abused again. Fear of rejection, and of not being accepted. Fear of causing the abuse and being responsible for the abuser's behavior.

Victims of mental and physical abuse must learn to accept their experience although such can never be forgotten. They must also learn to forgive their abusers as well as themselves for what happened. Forgiving the abusers does not mean the victim is taking the blame. It means being able to put a closure to that chapter of one's life, move on and live again.

Doing this is the first step towards healing. When they have learned to accept that things happened which they should not have allowed. And that they have forgiven themselves and their abusers for that, then they would take the first step to finally becoming fully free of their fear. It is an acceptance, coupled with the belief that they can rise above their experiences and become better persons in the end.

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## Procrastination: The Fear of Making Decisions

Do any of these comments sound familiar?

"Oh, I can't do it now I'll put it off until tomorrow"

"Yeah! I suck because I can't help procrastinating"

"What don't I like about myself? I procrastinate!"

Procrastination is evident when a high school student watches TV before studying, an employee takes an extended lunch break before beating a deadline and when a couple lounges around and lazily watches television before going out to fulfill their immediate tasks.

The dictionary defines procrastination as an action of delay. This is when things are put off until another time, when decisions are deferred until people lose the chance to make them.

Procrastination is sometimes beneficial for people who want to delay doing things they don't want to do. It also makes everyone feeling useless.

Now the question is can procrastination be a good thing? When does it start becoming an evil factor?

Procrastination happens when someone is dying to do something but stops himself from doing so first, because he is not yet ready for it. It mirrors the capacity of a person to do a certain thing and it even implies the willingness and intention of a person.

For a person to figure out if procrastination is bad or not, he must ask himself the following: is my heart and mind saying the exact thing?

Intention and will are two things that affect procrastination. Intention means the want to achieve a goal. Will, on the other hand, is the power to make things happen. So one can have the fiercest intention to say, finish homework, but he lacks the will to fulfill it. A will must be at work before the idea finally unfolds to becoming a task.

It is no wonder that procrastination means the delay or fear of making decisions. When one is afraid of making decisions, he procrastinates. When one does not know how to decide, he procrastinates.

Sometimes, procrastinating can slightly affect or tremendously stir the people. The problem is that there are things that must be done to handle procrastination. What are they?

1. The person must look back and remember a task that was completed without that annoying procrastination.

He must ask himself: why was it easy to complete? Was it enjoyable? Was he confident in doing that? Or were there other people involved in the

task's completion? One must try to get something out of this specific experience and apply it to the job at hand.

2. The person must concentrate and come up with a plan to make things done.

This means: listing the tasks, delegating them and prioritizing everything. One must ask himself: what if I start with the thing that I have been putting off forever? This task can be chunked so it will not be hard to execute. After the completion of task, one must try to draw inspiration from it.

3. One must look for a support system that will rah-rah for his success.

A friend, colleague or significant other can play this part. Anyone of them can cheer the person up and urge him to dive deep into action.

4. One must know how to encourage himself.

Sometimes, what one has to do is simply putting "I can do it!" notes all over his desk for the necessary inspiration.

5. One must get a specific time to get things done.

It is true: getting started is the hardest. But once the tasks have jumped off to a start, momentum will pick up and before the person knows it, the job is done!

6. One has to lighten up.

There is no need for a grumpy face or a heavy heart. One must perform the task happily and the moment it is done, he must reward himself. A job well done!

7. If everything else fails, one can get a personal coach.

If self-help books and self-help articles just don't work, then this might do. A personal coach can really train the person to be less of a procrastinator.

One must stop procrastinating, that's the basic thing. This leads to less problems and far more productivity. Relief comes a hundredfold once one says goodbye to procrastination.

Everything else is easier without putting things off and that's a fact!

## Fight or flight

You know you have done something wrong when your boss eyed you shrewdly as he entered the room. You knew it! Your guts told you to skip the office today for no reason at all. So this is it, another opportunity for your boss to belittle you, and your accomplishments. You hate this feeling. It just entered your mind, what if you just tell your boss straight in the face what a user he is? On second thoughts, why not just get the hell out of the office and escape whatever it is?

This scenario is a person's response to stress, also called the fight or flight response. This was the theory espoused by Walter Cannon, who said that there are two choices in the face of danger. Fight or face the risk, or flight and avoid the risk.

The body's basic response to stress is significant in how a person protects himself from perceived threats. It measures a person's chances for survival when faced with danger or a potentially dangerous situation. A person can either face the stress and fight back, or retreat and take flight.

The fight or flight syndrome is a person's reaction to stressful circumstances, even in the ordinary course of his life. Such reactions or choices, is inherent to man's fight for survival. It must have been rooted in man's need for survival as he evolved from a caveman hunting for his food to a techno man faced with the challenges of the modern world.

A man's fight or flight reaction is stimulated the moment he is faced with a potentially dangerous situation. The smell of danger keeps the adrenaline rushing through one's veins, until one feels that all his blood vessels have been dilated and the blood all rushing to his neck and to his head. He is trembling, and his legs shaking! At this stage, a man reacts; he can either become aggressive and face the danger, or be passive and retreat, to prepare his fight for another day.

Once this reaction is activated, a man becomes sensitive to his surroundings, perceiving everyone as his enemy. While the fight or flight reaction open up two choices to man, it deprives him of his reasoning. What matters now is his survival, and he will choose the best option which will enable him to survive.

A person whose fight or flight reaction is active, takes everything said to him in this context. Such a man becomes less rational, more cynical and reactionary. Every word spoken to him can have as many meaning as possible, and his action would be determined by his interpretation of such words.

The principle that an angry man should not make decisions while he is still angry and without waiting for several hours to wipe away his anger can also apply to the fight or flight scenario, albeit in a different way. A man facing stress or danger could not wait for the risk to pass him by as

opposed to the angry man, because it might mean life or death, extinction or survival, for him.

A person who is faced with a stressful circumstance makes a decision without considering the long term effects of his decision. He is concerned with the present situation no matter if his decision will have adverse decision later on. For as long as he could ensure his survival now, nothing else matters. A man constantly exposed to these situations will surely suffer burnout and fatigue sooner or later.

Allowing one's self to become exposed to fight or flight situations regularly can be stressful and dangerous to one's health. It can backlash and lead to heart ailments, migraines and soaring blood pressure. A person faced with this situation is always irritable and have no more time to enjoy life, much more his family and friends.

There are persons who are not really faced with actual threats, but they nevertheless experience the fight or flight syndrome. These are persons who suffer from phobia, or anxiety disorders, or fear of not being able to survive an emergency.

The lesson learned here is that, no matter what you fear, the more you think of it, and the more you get agitated. The more you panic and experience those fight or flight reactions. Before it develop\ into something serious like a nervous breakdown, you have to take stock of yourself and recognize your fears. This way, you will be able to see situations for what they really are.

## Creating a self-fulfilling prophecy

To modify a well-known maxim, the fear of fear is the greatest fear of all. And why not, considering that fear immobilizes a person. Fear discourages a person from doing or not doing something. It is something that makes life less easy to live with.

A person who fears for no reason is not living at all, just existing. It is like becoming a person who is physically alive but psychologically dead. A person who fears fear is the worst kind of person.

A person's fear is usually a self-fulfilling prophesy. This means that more often than not, a person's fear becomes a reality because the one who fears unknowingly and unconsciously does things that will give rise to the prophesy and will end up fearing the thing that they fear the most.

A self-fulfilling prophesy is also called the Pygmalion effect. This came from the myth involving a sculptor named Pygmalion, who believed that there is an ideal woman and so he created an ivory statue of the ideal woman and named her Gala tea. Pygmalion fell in love with the beautiful statue and asked the goddess Venus to bring her to life. His wish was granted and Pygmalion and Gala tea lived happily ever after.

This theory is often manifested in a person's belief in one's self. It can also be interpreted as reverse psychology. A person who believes he can do something, will most often be able to achieve that thing because of his motivation and determination.

Take for example the fear of aging or of growing old. Persons who fear that they will become useless and unwanted by society when they reach a certain age will most probably sulk in the corner and manifest that fear when the time comes.

Because of this belief, these persons will tend to think of themselves as useless members of the society, and they even act out that belief. Thus, when they reach the golden years or beyond they stop functioning and withdraw from society. They have fulfilled their own prophesy of becoming useless members of society.

It can also hold true to a person's expectations of another person. If you treat a person this way because you believe that he or she is this kind of person, then in the long run, that person will behave and act the way you want him to be.

A person's prophesy about another person's behavior becomes self-fulfilling when he lays down the expected behavior of the other, and then behaves or acts in a manner that will most likely bring out the expected behavior. Affected by the perceiver's attitude and behavior, the other person acts in a manner that will fulfill the other person's prophesy.

Students who perceive their teacher as strict and boring will also perceive the subject as a boring subject. This perception becomes self fulfilling when the students, believing that their teacher and subject are boring, will lose interest in the lesson. Once they lose interest in their lessons, they will not appreciate the things that the teacher will impart and will thus fulfill the prophesy that the teacher and the subject are in fact boring.

Take the case of a person who lacks self esteem. This person believes that the people around him are not really interested in him or in what he says. In a group situation, this person rarely speaks and will stay in the corner and refuse to join conversations. This made the others feel that the person does not want to belong to the group so they do not include her in the conversation or in group activities. The person's prophesy that he is not well-liked has indeed come true.

So how does behave in order to keep away from making one's prophesies self fulfilling?

A person who wants to prevent his prophesies from coming true should not, in the fist place, make prophesies. Such a person should avoid judging an event or a person, or predicting how such event will turn out or such person will behave in the future.

The principle of a self-fulfilling prophesy was brought up by a Sociology professor named Robert Merton in his book "Social Theory and Social Structure". Merton concluded that prophesy becomes self-fulfilling when the following factors are present: a false perception of a situation, a behavior that is influenced by the false perception and the occurrence of fulfillment of the false perception.

## Why Does Fear Immobilize?

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself nameless, unreasoning, unjustified, terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” This is one famous quote of the late president Franklin D. Roosevelt on his First Inaugural Address on March 4, 1933.

As the quote above implies, fears are unjustified and can paralyze our efforts to advance in our lives. But what are fears? Why can it be so powerful to stop us from doing certain things?

Fears are known to be unreasonable ideas of certain objects, events, places or feelings. Because of its irrational being, it can also be considered as a person's weakness. That is why most people do not talk about them; much less admit that they have those fears. We can get used to living with our fears and be unconscious of them.

Fear can also be a good thing. It can lead us to safety and keep us or a loved one from danger. Some fears give us signals that there is a threat or we are facing danger. We listen to these fears for us to respond correctly for our own good.

However, most of the fears that we have are irrational especially our being afraid of particular things or situations. These are the fears that can ruin our day, restrict us from enjoying our everyday activities. Sometimes we call this type of fear phobia. A person afraid of flying could mean he might be missing out a promotion at work. That is already passing on a great opportunity just because the person cannot face his fears.

Fears can be so powerful that they can cease us from doing certain things because we, ourselves, give power to them. We let fears rule our lives rather than us ruling them. These are negative scripts that we programmed ourselves with, or allowed somebody to, and tell us what consequences will happen should we be involved in certain situations or behavior.

Because of this authority we have given to our fears, we suffer negative consequences from them. One of these consequences is the ability of fear to immobilize us. Fears can prevent us from having sensible problem solving and decision making skills. These restrict us from letting us go beyond our comfort zone and change things that can help improve our lives.

These results of protecting our fears and letting them rule us are not healthy. As early as possible, different steps should be taken in order for us to overcome these fears and be able to face them.

### Overcoming Fear

The first step in order for us to overcome our fears is to be able to identify and label them. This way, we will be able to know the correct steps to take



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to properly resolve them. A systematic plan on how to go about these steps will help in a better and more successful journey of overcoming these fears.

Affirmation is also one good thing to do. Letting go of our insecurities and just learning to trust ourselves and others will gradually lessen our dependence on our fears.

Aside from these self-help strategies, one can also seek professional help in dealing with fears. This is most recommended when these fears already get in the way and interrupt us from doing our day-to-day activities. The most common technique professionals do to help their clients is the exposure therapy. They expose their clients to whatever they are afraid of gradually until they can face those fears on their own. This has been proven to be the most effective and efficient technique among others.

People who are trying to overcome their fears must also allow for set backs and relapses. This is common to any condition being treated. Getting rid of these fears is not an overnight thing. It will definitely take time but the results would be immense.

Since fears are something that we learned or developed, they can definitely be unlearned as well. Even those intense ones can be reduced and possibly be eliminated. Believe it or not, fear is something that we can take full control of. Though, this may take time to learn, it will surely be beneficial once we discover how to manage and manipulate these fears.

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## Re-programming Your Self-Talk

When one is faced with a challenge, a fearful situation, it is not common to react by talking to yourself and “commanding” yourself to overcome the fear and succeed on the challenge. This is in fact, a proven effective method for overcoming fear. One theory of addressing the fear is to enhance the individual's concept of success. When an individual is able to imagine and believe that he can be successful at a certain event, encounter or situation, then the fear can be overcome.

There is one theory by a psychologist from Stanford University that overcoming fearful behavior can be addressed by self efficacy: the person's belief that he can overcome his fear. In effect, the person addresses fear by “talking” to himself and believing that he can overcome it. There are various ways of convincing oneself or doing “self-talk” to overcome fear and are as follows:

### Taking Action

An effective way of overcoming fear is to face the fear and interact with the fearful situation. Most people, when they are able to act on their fears, successfully surpass them. Taking action against one's fears may involve live exposure, participation or practice. Having successfully approached and touched a snake, even with aid and support, or having tolerated a session of intense exposure at a shopping mall by an agoraphobic, is very strong evidence that it can be done again. Seeing your ability to do those actions against your fear is self-effacing, and thus will help overcome your fear.

### Shocking Experiences

Observing others perform a feared act provides a second source of self-efficacy and thus a way to overcome your own fear. Although seen by the patient as providing less clear evidence that the observer can perform similarly, these vicarious experiences can enhance efficacy expectations. Seeing multiple others that gradually, but with persistence, overcome their hesitations and are able to perform the feared act can create expectations in the observer that he or she can also perform the act. Joining a bungee jumping activity for an altophobic can be self-effacing when the subject observes the rest of the group enjoying the jump and remaining alive and bruise-free after the experience.

### Self-talk

Though the previous two experiences are means of talking to oneself, a direct verbal persuasion to overcome fear is effective as well. The main objective of self-talk is to get you to initiate the process. Note that there are some people who cannot be “talked out of their fears” and so this method maybe weak, but as far as getting yourself to try, it is very effective.

This technique requires practice and full understanding of oneself. To be able to shut the world outside, including the cause of your fear and to talk to yourself and convince yourself to take the first step towards your fear is a skill that one should master through practice.

The degree of success in self-efficacy with “self-talk” depends on the success of the first attempt. A successful first attempt assures a clear path towards overcoming the fear. While a failed first attempt does not immediately guarantee failure, it definitely does not immediately clear the path towards overcoming the fear, but may take longer and iterative to overcome it.

For a more effective “self-talk” support from others can reinforce the individual's persistence to overcome their fear.

### Emotional Arousal

The last source of efficacy expectations is how people observe their physiological reaction to fear. When confronted with a fearful situation, the degree of fear and avoidance behavior that is shown may be partly a function of one's perception of the physical arousal that is experienced. If your heart races, you are likely to label yourself as afraid. On the other hand, if there is no physical arousal, then you are not afraid. Thus, the cues provided by yourself manifest your tolerance of the fearful situation. Treatment, therefore, should focus on reducing physical arousal then can contribute to one's sense of self-efficacy. These include relaxation-based procedures, such as hypnosis, or breathing retraining are useful for managing physical arousal. Drug treatments to reduce anxiety are also useful in this situation.

The bottom line solution in overcoming one's fear is talking to oneself. Master the ability to reprogram yourselves when faced with a fearful situation and your life will never be overshadowed by fear again.

## When Fears Become Phobias

Are you afraid of the dark? Are you afraid of heights, blood, or bugs? These are just some examples of things most people are afraid of. These are things that they fear about.

Let's review some of what we have learned and how to put it work in our everyday lives.

As we discussed, fears are common to everyone. Each individual has his own fear, in one way or another, though some may say that they are fearless. Fear is just okay, rational fear that is. This is a fear that came about for the survival of an individual or species. Rational fears serve as our defense mechanism against things that pose danger in us. Examples of this kind of fear are fear of falling, fire, snakes, spiders, which are all just based on your instinct to react against them in order to survive.

The other kind of fear that is not good to have is irrational fear, or more popularly known as phobia. Irrational fear does not really help an individual in any way. It can even disrupt our daily activities. Those who have phobias can even miss out on a great opportunity ahead. Fears such as going to the dentist, riding an elevator, or going to an event are examples of irrational fears or phobia.

People who have phobia are aware that these kinds of fears are irrational but just can't afford to control it. Ross, director of the Ross Center for Anxiety, describes phobia as the fear of fear. It is the fear of being in a place or a situation, or with an object, where a person is afraid of the terrifying fear and do not know how to react.

Remember the different categories of phobia

A phobia can build up in reaction to different objects or situations. There are three general categories of phobia specific, social and agoraphobia.

### Specific Phobia

This type of phobia is the extreme, unreasonable fear of a specific object, place or situation. Examples of this are excessive fear of height, bridges, enclosed places, flying, small insects or spiders. Among the most common are claustrophobia, which is the fear of being in an enclosed place like an elevator, and blood phobia, which involves fear of blood, doctors, needles, wounds, or any other situation that links to blood.

### Social Phobia

This kind is also called the social anxiety disorder. This is characterized by the overwhelming fear of being embarrassed, humiliated, or scrutinized in everyday social activities.

### Agoraphobia

This is the type of phobia where the fear comes about from the thought that

escaping or getting help from a certain situation seems impossible. This might be experienced in huge crowd, while driving or just standing in line. To some extent, some agoraphobics only feel safe when they are at home.

Phobias do have symptoms as well. Some symptoms are also the same as when facing actual threat that would result in either a fight or flight reaction.

There are some, though, that are beyond the normal response to fear. A symptom commonly seen is the anxiety reaction which includes excessive sweating, nausea, quick heart beat, trembling, and terror.

Other symptoms to identify phobia are intense fear of an object that does not pose any danger, intense fear of being judged or watched, uncontrollable reactions to something, and use of alcohol or other substance just to get rid of the feeling of anxiety.

### Causes of Phobia

#### Classical Conditioning

John B. Watson, a psychologist and founder of behaviorism, was able to prove that fear of specific objects can be learned. He showed this by doing a case with Little Albert, an 11 month old baby. Before his experiment, Little Albert had not been afraid of the white rat. He even runs after it, catches and plays with it. So what Watson did was to show the baby the little rat and made a loud bang on a metal pipe. The little boy had shown fear to the loud noise prior to this. So when he saw the rat and heard the loud noise together several times, he learned to fear the rat even without noise.

#### Biological Causes

Some studies show that genes may have a part in having phobias. Another reason can be that adults unknowingly teach their children to avoid or be fearful of something. Other studies have linked a part of the brain called amygdala in being responsible for the body's response to fear.

Amygdala is a part of the human brain that connects memory with emotion. When in danger, the body sends signal to the amygdala, which then memorizes the fear associated with the object or situation and sets the body's reaction. Scary experiences can create a fixed memory of fear, and the amygdala triggers an automatic reaction to the fear when a similar situation arises.

Fear is something that we really cannot control at most times. It is our body's way of keeping us from danger. However, when these fears become irrational, which is phobia, they can have an impact on our lifestyle since phobias already interfere with our daily routines. If the fear seems to be really unreasonable already, one may even need to seek help in facing the fear and overcoming it.

## When You Should Seek Professional Help To Overcome Fears

Now we understand that fears are common to every individual. Be it the fear of speaking in public, fear of flying, driving, or other specific objects, almost every person has something that he is afraid of. Fears are just normal though. This is our body's own defense mechanism against threats and dangers. Fears can even be controlled by most people especially when they become aware that their fears are getting unreasonable.

Though fears can easily be controlled, there are still some that just can't help but be afraid of something that does not really pose any danger. These people have irrational fears, also known as phobia, which can get in the way of our daily living. Intense fear of heights, enclosed places, water, and spiders are just some examples of phobia. When these fears and phobia become uncontrollable and affects certain aspects of your daily routine, it is high time to seek professional help.

A person may have anxiety disorders if any of these things are exhibited:

- Feeling of incapability to cope with the normal behavior and appearance
- Inability to socialize and cutting off communication with families and friends
- Failure to do basic things such as bathing, sleeping, and eating
- Inability to work

There are also events that can trigger the intensity of phobia and prevent a person from coping with the anxiety. These events can cause worsen the feeling of anxiety and make it seem more unmanageable. Some of these things include abuse, abandonment, death, job loss, divorce and trauma. When one or some of these things happen, and you feel overwhelmed or unable to move on, then it is an indicator that you need to seek professional help.

### Treating Fears and Phobias

Once you have realized that you need to seek help, it is also crucial to choose the right person whom to seek help from. A professional who specializes in phobias and anxiety disorders is your best bet. These professionals suggest different kinds of ways to overcome your fear.

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT. This is, by far, the most effective kind of psychotherapy in helping patients with phobias. Among the several techniques this therapy includes are gradual testing of irrational behaviors, monitoring of thoughts, actions and feelings, and thought-stopping.

The most commonly used technique of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in treating phobias is desensitization or commonly known as exposure therapy. This is done by having the person exposed to the feared situation or object with the help of a professional. Of course, it is done gradually so as not to shock the person seeking help. Exposure is done thru

imagination first then gradually into reality, until the person can show tolerance to the feared object or situation without exhibiting several symptoms. This method is great for kids who developed fear of simple things such as dogs.

- Relaxation Exercises. Someone with phobia can be very anxious and feel tense when faced with their fear or just even at the thought of it. Relaxing helps the person face the fear in a more peaceful state. Some ways on reducing the symptoms of anxiety include meditation, muscle relaxation, and deep breathing. Relaxation styles are usually combined with desensitization for a more successful therapy.

- Medications. If the phobia is extremely problematic and uncontrollable, certain medications like anti-anxiety drugs or anti-depressants may be prescribed. However, these medications should only be a temporary source of relief for fears and phobias as CBT is still the most efficient.

- Support Groups. Just like any other condition, there are also support groups for phobias which are formed by other people who also experience phobias. This is a good way to reduce the feeling of isolation and get engaged in activities in a safe and supportive environment.

Other than the things already cited there are certain methods that the person with phobia can do to overcome his fears. The most important thing one can do to help himself is being knowledgeable about his condition. There are several books, online sites, and workshops that talk about these phobias and how to fight them. Being strong in confronting your own fears, even through imagination, can also be the first step in making the change.

Phobias and fears can really be disgusting as it has its way of preventing us from enjoying our day-to-day life. The good thing is there are several ways on how we can overcome this fears and move on with our normal lives.

This is when depression can be moving into a serious mode. The person begins to feel that he has nothing to live for and unworthy of being loved and appreciated.

6. The person starts losing hope.

Gone is his optimism to live another day. He is already hopeless and no amount of "hope springs eternal" can pull him out of this rut.

7. The person feels guilty without any reason at all. The person stops himself from being happy because he feels he has no right to be one. He harbors guilt for no apparent reason.

8. He becomes indecisive.

What used to be a firm decision-maker suddenly becomes fickle-minded and too indecisive. Depression occurs when one is too insecure to come up with decisions.

9. He is suicidal.

This is such an alarming sign that medical help must be provided as soon as possible.

10. He experiences melancholia.

Melancholia is that sadness that completely engulfs the person and is characterized by the following: waking up two hours earlier than the usual, languidly moving in the morning and walking slowly.

11. He becomes mentally disturbed.

He suddenly thinks of morbid things, detaches himself from his usual mindset and starts hallucinating.

12. He develops physical aches.

A depressed person gets stomachaches or muscle pains with no physiological basis at all.

13. He obtains that "My life is passing by" feeling.

Other than assimilating the "Life is unfair!" and "what has gone wrong?" drama, a clinically depressed person also feels that he is just simply watching his life deteriorating from afar.

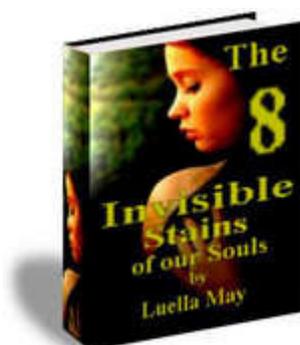
14. The person becomes antisocial.

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