

# Fear - Taming the Enemy Within

By [David Kynan](#)

"It's costing me \$500,000 a year," He said. "\$500,000?" I asked.

That's an expensive fear, I thought. In the grip of fear, he was leaving money on the table, a lot of money.

Every day I speak to managers, executives and sales personnel about what holds them back from achieving the success they want and earning the incomes they desire. Every day I hear the same thing: Fear. Fear of getting a no, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of rejection and the list goes on. Each day we sell ourselves short because we are too afraid to go out on a limb, too afraid of taking a risk, too afraid of too many things.

As humans we are biologically engineered to feel fear. At times it has been our greatest ally, protecting us from danger and reminding us of our limits. But we have not evolved as quickly as the world around us. The human brain and nervous system were not built for the 21st century and have yet to catch up. Fear is quite useful when you are faced with a grizzly bear or a scorpion, but it's not quite so useful when you need to give a speech, make a call or ask for the sale.

We feel fear when we believe our safety is threatened, but those things we fear most are rarely a threat to our physical survival. Looking off a balcony, taking a flight and giving a speech are quite safe. Social situations and public speaking pose no danger to your survival. So why does fear touch us all?

Fear is so common because of a fundamental belief about life that it holds many prisoner. What is this belief? The belief that life is dangerous. When we walk through life convinced that it is dangerous, the mind and body react to protect us. But the danger is unreal.

Some would say that fear is instinctive, but there are only two fears we are born with: fear of loud noises and fear of falling. These are part of our wiring and serve to keep us alive. All the rest are learned. You weren't born with a fear of rejection, fear of failure or fear of heights. If you are held back by fear you can look back through your life to find the source, a past event in which you learned to be afraid. After that event you practiced and practiced that fear until you became an expert. Now you can produce it at will, easily and effortlessly every time you are in that situation.

Without a belief in the danger of a situation, we are calm and collected. No perceived danger, no fear. When we look at life as dangerous, what are we comparing to? Really there was only one time when we were ever truly safe. We lived in a warm little room with our own personal water bed, 24 hour room service, a nice relaxing drum beat in the background and our every need was taken care of. Then we were born. Nothing will ever be as safe as back then!

"My life has been full of terrible misfortunes ... most of which have never happened," said French philosopher Michel Montaigne. Yet although the object of our fear is often imagined, the fear we feel is very real.

If you label something as dangerous and believe in that danger it will feel dangerous. What is in your mind will shape and colour your behaviour and communication. And all those thoughts give a signal to the amygdala to produce fear-causing chemicals that then spread through the body.

When fear takes us in its grip, it seems there is nothing we can do. But there is a secret to overcoming fear. Like every human experience, fear has a structure. If you try to understand why you have the fear, you may gain insight, but all the insight in the world won't free you of fear. When you look at how you do fear, change can begin to take place.

Fear is not something that simply happens to you. Producing the result of fear takes your participation. Fear is a process (the process of fearing), a dynamic mental sequence that can't happen without your active involvement. Without you, there is no one to play the fear game.

So how do we produce fear? To experience any fear, the first requirement is a vivid imagination. Those who are most skilled at fear imagine an unpleasant event or situation and run a rich, vivid and bright movie of it in their mind. They will often step right inside the movie so they can be the star. The body can't really tell the difference between what is real or imagined and so the nervous system responds.

When you watch a scary movie, what happens? Your hair stands on end, your eyes open wide and you sit on the edge of your seat. If you didn't feel any fear, you'd want to watch a different type of movie. When you watch fear movies in your mind, your body responds.

How do you do fear? What do you imagine? What movies do you play? How do you subtitle those movies? What do you say to yourself?

When you watch these movies, the ones in your mind that keep you stuck, how do you know to feel afraid? Why are they fears and not merely thoughts? How do you decide that a situation is dangerous and threatening? What if your mind simply made a mistake?

Since fear is learned, it can be unlearned. With the right approach, one that focuses on how the fear works, the mind can learn to be fearless just as quickly as it learned to fear.

If I were to list what I consider the keys to massive success, fear would not be one of them. If you want to give an amazing speech, imagining the beady eyes of a judgmental audience as you take center stage might not be so helpful. If you want to make the sale but imagine your client saying no, you won't be very effective. If you want to make a great impression on new people, social anxiety won't help.

In cases of fear we are paying attention to the stuff of our mind instead of what is going on around us. Besides changing our mental movies we can turn them off so we can be present and attentive to what is going on around us and respond appropriately. Is your life full of terrible misfortunes which never happen?

When we realize that sales, public speaking, and other such events are not dangerous, it becomes difficult to feel fear. Then we stop playing scary movies in our minds and walk around with calm confidence. You have survived up until now and one day it will all be over, but all the fear in the world won't make a difference.

Feel the fear and do it anyway.

Train your mind for superior performance and success with the most effective coaching methods and tools for change.

David Kynan, Personal Trainer for the Mind, will guide you to becoming the CEO of your mind and updating your mental software to produce superior results. President of Mindworks Coaching, David specializes in proven methods to unmask hidden interferences that hold you back, unlock your complete potential and achieve massive success.

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