

THE OBJECT



OF FEAR

By Brian Germain

Everyone has fears. Depending on our past experiences, we each have developed pattern-recognition programs for specific things that catapult us into an emotional response. It is true that we must shed the light of our awareness on these triggers, but it is ultimately not these realizations that allow us to fully transcend our neurotic tendencies toward over-reaction in these contexts. Fixating on the problem is not the same thing as creating the solution.

The perception that results in fear can be any number of things. Regardless of the context, when we begin to experience the emotion, our immediate focus becomes the object of our fear. By hyper-focusing on the idea that is making us afraid, we are catapulted into one of the three primal defense mechanisms: fight, flight or freeze; the realms of thought and action that come naturally when we allow negative emotion to carry out a hostile takeover of our consciousness. Rather than softening the feeling of negativity, however, this further reinforces the feeling of powerlessness that spurs the emotion to higher levels of negativity.

By focusing on the object of our fear, we hope to use this awareness to create a change in our environment that will reduce our perceived danger. Unfortunately, the changes necessary to increase our level of perceived safety are often inaccessible to us when we are in the contracted state of fear. Either the solutions cannot be implemented at the time, or the panic itself prevents us from finding and executing the answers.

The emotional state of fear results in a completely different set of thoughts than the state of creation and epiphany that makes us feel empowered and safe. When we are in the negative state, we only see limitations and danger simply because we have become contracted in our consciousness, and have let go of the possibility that we can solve our problems. We have let go of the best-case scenario, and thus are unable to make it happen. Worse, when we try to think our way out the fear state, our unproductive thinking only increases the

magnitude of our emotional response. It does nothing to diminish the emotion itself.

The problem is, so it turns out, the parts of the brain that generate the physical escalation are not soothed by thought alone. The simple brain structures that comprise the emotional “limbic system” speak only two words: Escalation and De-Escalation. In order to alter this course of events within ourselves, we must address the physical symptoms of fear: the uncontrolled speed and power kicked in by the structures of the old “reptilian brain”. Thought doesn’t accomplish this goal; only an alteration of our overt physical behavior can do that.

Regardless of the content of our thinking minds, the limbic system is mostly unaffected by cognition. This realization, originally postulated by visionary philosopher and psychologist William James, is a radical shift from the natural tendency that we all share in fearful moments. Believing that intellect will be our knight in shining armor, humans try to think our way out of fear. As many of us have realized, this does not calm us down.

The only way to turn the tides and alter our course toward emotional escalation is to speak the language of the reptilian brain. Simply put, we must slow down. This will send messages of de-escalation to the limbic system via physiological pathways. When the brain begins to cool off and shift gears out of the panic mode, new possibilities come to light. When we are no longer driven by fear, we start down a completely different path of reality.

Our ability to negotiate all objects of fear stems solely from the higher brain functions of the “neo cortex”, or “new brain”. This is the part of the brain that is lost when we are in fear. Fear causes internal speed, which results in disorganized thoughts and actions. In our panic state, we point our awareness toward the object of our fear with negative expectation, assuming that we are in danger and out of control. It is this mental state that draws us closer to danger, simply because we are no longer considering the possibility that things are going to be OK. We are on the “bad trip”.

Even when things are not OK, and we are required to take action to improve the situation, the negative mindset cannot create answers. Our solutions come from a completely different realm of thought; a realm that we easily lose access to when we are in a physically escalated state empowered by negative emotion. When we notice that we are speeding up beyond our mind’s ability to think clearly, we must remember the following:

Slow is Fast

This mantra reminds us that when we speed up, we make mistakes. These mistakes lead us to use more time than is necessary to accomplish our goals. In situations involving real physical danger, excess speed can result in injury or even fatality. Slowing down when we are moving too fast is how we remain aware of our surroundings and act appropriately. In short, feeling slow

on the inside is how we allow ourselves to go fast on the outside, no matter what the context.

The world of human experience is filled with real dangers, real objects of fear. The most powerful tool to shift our relationship to the object of our fear from paralysis to productive action is not action at all; not at first. Our first response to fear must always be physical, one of deceleration of mind and body. This will result in non-attachment to our fixed patterns of thought and action that we normally associate with such situations. Then and only then will we wake up to rediscover our clarity of thought so that we can act consciously, without the compelling momentum of negative emotion.

Instinct will only bring about what has thus far manifested in human history: attacking, retreating and hiding from whatever scares us. When we go beyond our innate responses to fear, we create a new realm of possibility for our world. This is how humanity will demonstrate its true prowess; not through impulse and old patterns of behavior, but through intelligent appraisal, logic and ultimately, compassionate action. It is only when we go beyond fear as a motivation that we begin to transform our world.

We are heading into a brand new realm of possibility on this planet. We are beginning to understand that fear takes away our power to create. It robs us of our connection to authentic inspiration and motivated action. Fear distances us from who we truly are, and it replaces us with an imposter that is a mere shadow of our true being.

Who are you when you are not held back by fear? This is your true persona, and your ultimate destiny if you decide to take on the path of fearlessness and expand into your higher self. You have gifts that have been suppressed and hidden from the world. It is time to get past your fear of failure, your fear of success, and your fear of fear and break the inertia of fear-induced limitations and step into the light of who you really are.

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