

Moving Beyond our Fears

It is impossible with finite minds to know how many dreams were unfulfilled, how many ideas were stillborn, how many great and transcendental feats were never accomplished because of fear. I recently read an article about two friends driving in a car past a cemetery and one remarked to the other **"You know, that place is the richest plot of land."**

When asked to explain he replied, **"It is filled with unwritten books, plans that were never achieved, scientific ideas that were never patented and cures for sicknesses that were never revealed. People died with these ideas and, for fear of failure, never acted upon them."**

Multiplied millions have never achieved their goals because they feared the consequences of attempting them. We receive so many creative ideas, so many thoughts that could revolutionise our lives, transform poverty into wealth, sickness into health, sorrow into joy, and yet we never venture out of our comfort zone to attempt these things because of fear.

Fear is an interesting thing. It is a necessary component of life. Not all fear is bad. Fear causes us to pause to assess danger and to take the necessary steps to minimise risk. Fear should cause someone not to swim across a crocodile-infested river, but it should not prevent such a person from crossing the river at all. If you need to get to the other side, you choose to ride in a boat. Fear becomes crippling and debilitating when, even though you have access to a boat, the fear of crocodiles prevents you from crossing the river at all.

The paradox of fear is that it can become a phobia, a crippling, disabling part of one's life, something that acts as a damper to any new idea, or venture.

Some people have a fear of failure and so they never try anything new even things that others take for granted. There are people who trap themselves in dead-end jobs, not even venturing to send out a job application. They want another job, but they fear leaving the one they have. They fear risk, but life is a risk. Every successful venture was once a risk. There is a risk of failure, but there is the opportunity to succeed. It is impossible to achieve the success without taking the risk. Without taking risk there will be no profit for profit is the reward for risk taking.

Fear is a spirit, which will possess you if you allow it to and make your life wretched and miserable. It will prevent you doing what you want to do and going where you want to go.

Fear will cause us to sin and to fail God.

1 Samuel 13: 5 – 14, "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a straight, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal: and the people were scattered from him. And Samuel said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, what hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

Fear will cause us to disobey God.

Jeremiah 38:17 – 23, "Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burnt with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. And

Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hands, and they mock me. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the Lord hath shewed me: And behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house shall be brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those women shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: thy feet are sunk in the mire, and they are turned away back. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou shalt cause this city to be burnt with fire."

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah and he wanted to know the will of God but failed to obey it. What were the consequences?

Jeremiah 39:6 – 8, *"Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before their eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem."*

Paul encouraged young Timothy in **2 Timothy 1:7**, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

Someone who wants to aspire but is afraid of height will never get any higher on the ladder of life than he/she is until he/she is prepared to let go of the rung they are on and reach for a higher one. People who are afraid of height will sometimes freeze and become paralyzed with fear.

Author Susan Jeffers suggests that we **feel the fear and do it anyway**. We need to recognize the fact that fear is natural. Whenever you begin a new venture, start a new project, enter a new job, confront an unusual situation, there is fear, and this is where there is a dividing line between successful people and those who do not achieve their goals. Successful people feel the fear like the rest of us, but it does not prevent them from doing the things that they want to do, or have to do.

High achievers sense the fear we all sense, but they plunge ahead because the reward to be gained is a stronger motivation than the fear they feel. If your motivation is stronger than your fear, you will take action.

If we never try anything new we will never grow. It's when we do what we are not used to doing or fear doing that we grow.

"We pass this way but once. We can either tiptoe through life and hope that we get to death without being too badly bruised, or we can live a full, complete life, achieving our goals and realising our full potential."

Sometimes God allows situations to confront us to take us out of our comfort zone because He knows that left to ourselves we would never move.

Sometimes we cry like a child being weaned from its parents. Left alone most children wouldn't go to school, but stay home in their familiar environment. Although the child may cry when they have to leave the comfort of the home, the parents have to be cruel to be kind, though it may break their hearts. It's the same with God who likens his relationship with us to that of the eagle and its young. The eagle was created to fly. Can you imagine an eagle that is afraid to fly? They say when it's time for a young eagle to fly, the mother stirs up the nest and make uncomfortable for the young ones otherwise they would never want to leave. Sometimes when things become uncomfortable and unbearable for us, could it be that God is trying to stir us to action and to get us out of our comfort zones?

Here's an extract from a short poem by Guillaume Apollinaire: **"Come to the edge, He said. They said: We are afraid. Come to the edge, He said. They came. He pushed them, and they flew."**

Like the eagle God wants us to fly.

Jesus said I have come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly. Life is a journey and He wants us to enjoy the journey and not to live a life of fear and trepidation always wishing our lives away.

Message by Philip Bennett