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THE FEAR ISSUE

Our Second
Anniversary!

THE SECRETS
OF BREAKING
THROUGH

Rhonda Britten gets
clear about fear



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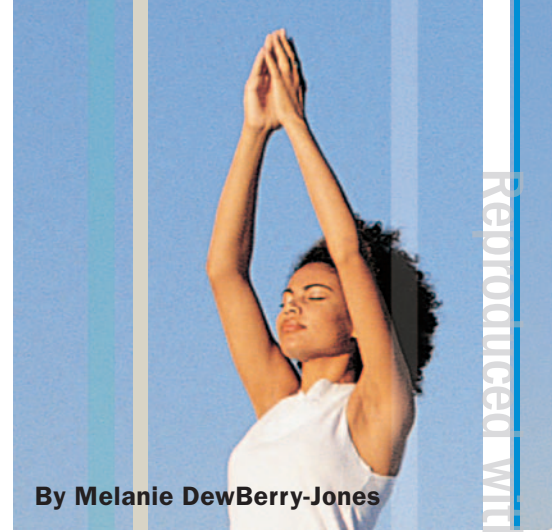
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Life's Companion— Fear

Are our moments of joy derived from a fear-based perspective?

By Melanie DewBerry-Jones



Fear is the number one thing that runs our clients' lives. Fear is omnipresent. From feeling just a little afraid to actual terror, all fear is the same size if it stops a client from moving forward.

What is interesting about fear is our commitment to it. Have you experienced the depths to which people will go to fight for the right to have their fear? They rationalize, use logical reasons, note the importance of the fear and what it serves in their life. The attachments go on and on. We are addicted to our fears. Like junkies, we create more of the same circumstances that allow our fear to flourish and even to take over.

Our outer world is manifested by our inner world. What we produce, what we do, even who we are on the physical plane, all this is dictated by what we believe, what we say to ourselves, and what we choose to nurture or to ignore in our inner world. The intangible informs and forms the concrete. Our challenge as people is to remain aware of this. Our mission as coaches is to highlight this connection for our clients.

The ongoing promotion of fear

Why do our fears play such a predominant role? Many themes answer this question. The following are my top four.

The first theme is the way in which we first encountered fear through our child-adult relationships: "Don't touch the hot stove!" "Don't talk to strangers!" "You should stop singing, someone will laugh!" "You can do better than this!" Often our fears stemmed from what was said. Fear was the file installed to keep us safe as children. As we grew, fear stopped keeping us safe and shut us down instead. As adults, ninety percent of our internal work will focus on undoing ten percent of our life's experience—childhood.

Second, people commonly want a quick remedy for historical experiences. Yet experiences accumulate a lot of supporting evidence for their existence. Significant amounts of effort and time are required to rewire our beliefs and therefore our results. In fear-based analysis, we label that signifi-

cant effort "hard," and we humans don't like hard. We have a tendency to give up. Personally, I've given up on more diets than not, discouraged by what I believed was my lack of progress in the timeframe I established for results. But results don't always happen in our designated timetable.

This brings us to the third factor: familiarity. The irony of resignation is that we return to what is truly hard yet familiar: struggle and suffering. We are creatures of habit. We love having "things as usual," because we believe we can control what we know. We become more facile with routine. Our facility makes us better at what we do and that makes us feel smart. Unfamiliarity breeds contempt—toward change, that is. Familiarity is where we base our identities. Who will we become if we change?

Last, as a society, we receive a lot of support to keep the status quo. Many structures—jobs, educational institutions, relationships—prefer us to live in neutral. In neutral we are no threat to anyone's belief or identity. In neutral, we conform to the lowest common denominator. In conformity, we belong—and everyone wants to belong.

Of course, we do have a measure of happiness or satisfaction or even joy in our lives. Unfortunately, compartmentalized fear in one part of our lives (such as career success) bleeds into other parts of our lives, no matter how we try to keep it separate. Segregation never works. Our psyches, like people, become hostile to separation. Our natural state is integration. Like a computer, the parts of us that were highly functioning become corrupt with the virus of fear, and our beautifully structured systems begin to fail, eventually even crashing.

Fear is a good thing. Really!

We shouldn't try to get rid of fear or eradicate it. The idea is to orient from a more powerful perspective than fear. Fear has its uses. It can signal change, danger, desire for input or response, action, inaction, calling on help, appropriate vulnerability, and more. Coaching our clients to invite life in



(from a perspective of growth) allows them to hear the true information of fear without defaulting to old associations.

The body-mind connection

We cannot underestimate the power of body. As our feelings come from our emotions (and most decisions are based on emotion), it is crucial that clients make the body–mind connection. Physical sensation is a natural intelligent system, one we consistently ignore. Our bodies tell us what’s going on before our logical mind grows aware.

Fear and power share this characteristic: They can be felt in the body before our minds have processed them. Try this experiment. Take a moment, close your eyes, and bring forward to your conscious mind a time when you wanted to change something big in your life. Feel your body’s physical associations with that fear—and now feel your body’s parallel associations of excitement and possibility. You can feel that, right?

When we can feel our way into it, we are empowered to choose what we want to experience and thus redirect our outcomes. Choice is power. Should your client feel fear in their body, this awareness can be utilized to select a powerful perspective to replace the initial (probably default) fear mode. Most of us are more familiar with feelings of fear than with feelings of power. Part of our role as coaches is to demonstrate how to integrate a “program override” from fear to power, thus opening a space for choice.

Eliciting commitment

Query your client in a way that helps them articulate their depth of commitment. Learn what excites them to that commitment. When you know their level of commitment, you will know if it’s time to forge ahead. There’s a huge difference between wanting to change and being committed to change. Moving forward before they are deeply committed will only serve to reinforce a pattern of frustration and resignation.

The following are some queries to explore with your clients. You can go much further than this. Experiment!

- What percentage of your personal resources are you willing to allocate to change?
- Regardless of what you do, are you willing to take whatever amount of time is necessary, every day?
- Will you keep your senses open for evidence that you are living in the flow or in the struggle of life?
- Will you hold this commitment like an investment in the stock market, investing in your mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being without expecting major gains every day? Will you commit to long-term results?
- Will you have a bit of faith that even when you fall, you will rise again?
- Who will you count on to remind you who you really are? Who will help when resignation comes knocking?
- What additional processes are you open to? For example, meditation, neurolinguistic programming, therapy, or a spiritual or religious practice can be valuable aids.

Coaching is a wonderful technology to hospice our clients’ fears. It isn’t necessary to spend much time delving into what the fear is about or from where it came. In reorienting to a fresh, dynamic perspective of power and choice, clients elect to be on the “cause” side of the equation, leaving the circumstance to the “effect” side, where life happened to them in the past.

Coaches give clients the gift of regular reminders of their progress and courage. We assist our clients in making the connections between what they do in the moment and how that informs all aspects of their life. Holding them in the big picture, illuminating the influential relationship of the microcosm to macrocosm, serves to empower their daily lives.

As our clients become fully empowered, it’s a benefit to all. By living on the “cause” side, clients transform themselves and they transform the planet.

And so it is! •

Melanie DewBerry-Jones, is a speaker, writer and coach. She is a twice-certified coach and a member of the National Speakers Association.