

A Fear-Driven Life

For the past few days I have been keenly aware of how fear used to run my life and how wonderful it is that I am free from all that now. I don't mean that I never get fearful; I do. But it doesn't last long and this is largely because I've had some wonderful teachers along the way who taught me how to manage my mind and my emotions.

When I remember how I used to feel, it is as if I'm recalling a movie I once saw. If a movie had been made about the worst part of my life, it would be about a young woman in her twenties who is judged by most to be fearless. She has bravado and is unafraid to express her opinions and to challenge you on yours if they differ from what she believes. She lobbies for equal rights for women. She pursues men she desires. She rejects most social rules, thinking them outdated and certainly not applicable to her. Her defiant mantra is, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

And every night she drinks because with alcohol in her system, she doesn't feel the fear:

Fear that she is out of control.

Fear of being ordinary.

Mostly, she is afraid to be found out, exposed as the coward she is.



When fear runs you, your stomach never feels quite right. If someone says, "Can we talk?" you're sure you've done something wrong. The phone ringing makes you jump. An unfamiliar letter in the mail is cause for trepidation. Not to mention using a credit card at the store and waiting, terrified that the transaction will be rejected. You're always wondering when the house of cards is going to come crashing down.

Climbing out of the fear was a long process for me. It started with applying what I read in a lot of self-help books, then therapy, then getting sober and finally learning how to apply The Law of Attraction in my life. Over the course of about 15 years I went from constant fear to mostly to sometimes and then to occasional. Today I am happy to say it is rare that I feel fear.

The daily application of the Law of Attraction is my formula. I believe strongly that you get more of what you focus on and so, when I realize I am feeling fear, I shift my focus as quickly as I can. Sometimes I do it by distraction—watching TV or playing online Scrabble. Other times I have to take the time to figure out what it is I'm focused on that's causing the fear and then choose where I'd rather place my focus.



If it's a real-time fear I use self-talk. For example, the first few times I tried stand up paddling here in Hawaii, this is what I was saying under my breath, "You're doing great. Keep going. If you fall, the water is soft. Just stay with it. Isn't this fun? You're doing it! Who knew you could do this?!? Wow, this rocks!!!" (Glug, glug, glug.)

Kind and loving self-talk is the best way I know to handle fear when it arises. What techniques do you use?