



## Fight the Fear Devon Harris

In the movie *Cool Runnings*, during the team tryouts, they showed old film footage of crashes to a room full of potential bobsledders and by the end of the screening, the room was empty. In reality, on the first day when they showed the footage there were about forty potential bobsledders – and about half turned up the next day for the trials.

The crashes they showed us that day were far worse than anything depicted in the movie. There was blood and mayhem everywhere. There were sleds flying out of the track, crashing into trees. Brakemen flying out of the sled, slamming against the side of the track and then skirting over the edge into the crowd. And of course, the usual crashes where you are trapped between the sled and the walls being pounded as the sled drags you down the track at 80 mph. But the crash that stood out in my mind was the one in which I saw four bodies strewn along the track covered with blood. Three of the guys were unconscious and the driver's head was lying on the ice about 30 feet from his body. I remember sitting there, ashened faced, wondering what I was getting myself into. It's obvious that the other guys didn't turn up because they were fearful. The truth is that there is nothing wrong with being afraid.

There are some healthy fears that serve us well and that we need to have. We need to have a healthy fear when operating around a hot stove and you should definitely have a fear of stepping off the curb in New York City without checking to see if there is a Yellow Cab in your immediate vicinity. However, for the most part, fear is an irrational response to the challenges we face in our lives.

I have often heard it said that FEAR is an acronym which stands for False Evidence Appearing Real. In other words, the fears that we have are baseless. They are a figment of our imagination. We embrace and imprint them on our mental disks and replay them so often that they become the tunes we dance to every time we set out to do something great in our lives.

Many of us are not living up to our full potential because we allow these irrational pieces of evidence that seem so real to cripple us. What fears are influencing and controlling your behavior to the point that they prevent you from living the life of your dreams? What pieces of false evidence are you holding onto, behaving as if they are real? Do not take counsel of your fears for as Rudyard Kipling said, "Of all the liars in the world, sometimes our fears are the worst."

## **Fear walks with change**

Please don't get me wrong. It is not shameful to have fear. There is no human being without fear. Even the most accomplished, confident people experience fear. In order for you to achieve the goals you have set for yourself, earn that college degree, re-enter the workforce or start your own business, it means that you will have to experience some kind of change. Growth and success are born of change. It is impossible to grow without change; whether that change involves learning a new skill, dropping an old habit or moving your life in a new direction.

Accomplishing these things can be challenging, but oftentimes the biggest challenge is a fear of the unknown - the fear of not knowing whether or not things will turn out the way we intend them to.

## **Fighting the fear**

As outlined above, experiencing fear is quite normal. However, you should never allow it to cripple you. Whenever you feel fear you should FIGHT BACK! Here are some ways in which you can do this.

- 1) **Act.** The best antidote for fear is to act. Most people think that to be courageous means that you have no fear. On the contrary, courage is to act despite the fear. One single act of courage spawns other similar acts. As they say, do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain. In other words, when you feel the fear and act anyway, the fear will lose its power over you.
- 2) **Knowledge and preparation.** Lets say you're about to start your own business. This is your first foray into entrepreneurship. Naturally, you will be worried about your lack of experience as a business person. Will you lose your investment? Will you be able to run a business? These are in fact normal concerns. However, if you decide to thoroughly research the venture and gain all the knowledge you can, your mind will begin to find ways to make everything work instead of focusing on what can go wrong. This will in turn leave you more confident and help reduce your fears.
- 3) **Affirmation.** An affirmation is a statement of belief. They are words that you say to yourself or that others say to you that you've come to believe. Simply start telling yourself things you need to hear to help you get over your fear. Once you start believing those statements you will start getting over your fear because you always act in a manner consistent with your beliefs.
- 4) **Visualization.** Start imagining things working out the way you would like them to. Picture yourself strutting across the stage getting your diploma or attending the grand opening of your business.

Life does not provide us with the security we crave. Instead, it gives us abundant opportunities. While ever present, these opportunities will only bear fruit by taking risks and facing your fears. As Dale Carnegie once said "All of life is a chance. So take it! The person who goes furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare."

## ***Keep on Pushing!***

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