

Worksheet for: Understanding The Problem In Clear Terms

Part 1: Letter to Fear - 10 Minute Exercise, in 3 Steps

1. Write a letter to fear, telling fear exactly how you **feel** about it, what you **think** of it, and when it shows up what you **do** about it. However, I want you to refer to fear from now on though, not as it, but rather as "you." It's important that you personify fear as an individual in your life, to get the most out of this exercise.

What this looks like is:

To Fear,

I've hated you for a long time. You hold me back. You prevent me from being the person I want to be. You keep me awake at night. You drain my energy. You're embarrassing and I hide you from my friends. In fact, you're the enemy, and I'm taking a stand, I won't let you control me any longer! I'll medicate you away if I have to!

Keep writing- paragraphs can turn into pages- as long as you feel there's something more to say.

2. Next, read the letter you just wrote back to yourself, as if it's a letter that someone wrote, to YOU.

Notice how it makes you feel to be talked to this way.

Also, reflect on how would you treat a person, who wrote you such a letter. Note: if you think you'd treat them with loving kindness, ask yourself for how long you'd do that if that individual continued to treat you that way, without your efforts being returned in kind?

3. Last, here's the turn around.

Replace all the references to 'you', with instead the words 'I', 'me' or 'myself' and the like, until it reads well. What that looks like is, using our example letter:

To Myself

I have hated myself for a long time. I hold myself back. I prevent myself from being the person I want to be. I keep me awake at night. I drain my energy. I'm embarrassing, and I hide myself from my friends. In fact, I am the enemy, and I'm taking a stand, I won't let myself control myself any longer! I'll medicate myself away if I have to!

It won't read perfectly, but you'll get the picture.

Notice how this new letter changes your perspective, in likely a few ways. You do realize, if this is how you talk to fear, it's also how you talk to yourself. The noticing is the most important thing.

Part 2: Changing Your Language Around Fear – Ongoing Exercise

Here are some suggestions for changing your language around fear, which is a *crucial* shift to make if you want to re-align with fear at a higher level.

Re-aligning with fear at a higher level, is the very thing that will either completely end or at least dramatically ease up a problem that you have in your life. The bonus is, it's also the best thing you can do to live from a place of honesty, integrity and freedom. Start here, change your language around fear, and let me tell you, problem resolution is just the start, you will also now be on course to being your most creative, magnificent self, and fully on course to be the person you were meant to be.

Now, I can't be there to hold your hand, so it'll be up to you to navigate this on your own. But I'll get you started with some suggestions, trusting you'll get the hang of it on your own.

I have separated this into four categories. They are:

1. Talking about your own fear, to yourself, in a healthy way
2. Educating friends / family on how they can support your new way of talking about fear
3. How do deal with society in general, when they come in contact with your new way of talking about fear
4. Helping others talk about their own fear (i.e. to children, and perhaps to adults but *only* if they're interested) in a healthy way.

1. Talking about your own fear, to yourself, in a healthy way

Here's how I'd like you to talk about fear, moving forward.

Fear is never to blame for holding you back. Fear is never something to be conquered or overcome., controlled, understood or analyzed.

Instead, view it as something to be honored, felt, listened to, and appreciated.

Below is a dictionary for you to follow. Study it to change your language around fear. This is the single greatest thing you can do- to not disrespect fear anymore. I cannot emphasize this enough. You have got to stop insulting, being rude to or disrespecting fear. Instead, speak about fear the way you would speak about your husband or child or best friend.

In short, find a way to talk about fear in a positive light.

Suggestions:

If you're used to saying, "Fear holds me back."

Instead, learn to say, "My unwillingness to feel fear, holds me back."

Another option might be, "Fear is very helpful for preventing me from doing something stupid." Or, "Fear is making me pause and prepare, before I proceed."

If you're used to saying, "I overcame my fear."

Instead, learn to say, "Fear helped me overcome a difficult situation."

If you're used to saying, "Feel the fear and do it anyway." (Can you see how dismissive words like "overcome" or "anyway" are to fear?)

Instead, learn to say, "Feel the fear, and use it to my advantage."

Other suggestions:

If you're used to saying:

"I won't let fear hold me back." Change to: "I won't hold myself back by being unwilling to feel fear."

"I am not afraid." Change to "I am afraid, but am pretending not to be."

"There's nothing to be afraid of." Change to "There's much to be afraid of."

"Fear is keeping me in prison." Change to "I am keeping fear in prison."

"Fear is lying to me." Change to "I am lying to myself. I am not living my truth, which is that life is a scary experience."

"Fear is just in my imagination." Change to "Fear is real. And I'm feeling it, right now."

"Fear must be conquered." Change to "Fear must be considered."

2. Educating friends / family on how they can support your new way of talking about fear

I would like you to start admitting to yourself that life is a scary experience and that yes, sometimes you feel fear (actually, all the time.) Unless you're a social recluse, this is going to require you to be transparent not just with yourself, but also to the people in your life. (Within reason though, of course. If your career doesn't support such a thing please don't do this at work or other inappropriate places.)

Now, this can be difficult to navigate, as likely your friends and family are also in some form of avoidance pattern themselves, with regard to fear. They may feel very uncomfortable to hear you say out loud, "I feel afraid" or "there's much to be afraid of" whenever it strikes you, which is what I want you to do. So it's important to let them know in advance, 1. that you have a new fear practice, and 2. when you say such things, you hope they will be supportive.

How they can be supportive is this. When you say "I feel afraid," request that your friend or family member not say in response, things like "there's nothing to be afraid of," or "you need to let that go." These kinds of responses are what I call **Fear Shaming**.

Fear Shaming is whenever we send a message to ourselves or each other that it's not ok to feel fear. When you or someone does that, you set in motion the cause of a lot of trouble, by prompting the repression of Fear.

Ask them to say no to Fear Shaming!

Instead, request that when you say “I feel afraid,” they ask or say one of the following in response:

- Good. Fear is important.
- Tell me more. What’s going on such that you feel afraid?
- What does it feel like to be afraid?
- Okay. Your job is to be afraid right now.
- Do you need anything from me?
- Let me know when it passes.

And if they refuse, make fun of you, or never come around, if you can please distance yourself from this person while you work through your issue, as they are trying to sabotage you and your efforts. Please also have some compassion for them, though, for their own habitual patterns around fear have just been revealed, and know that they can be very sticky.

3. How do deal with society in general, when they come in contact with your new way of talking about fear

It’s also important, even though you’ve had this conversation with your friends and family, to expect that even if they seem supportive, they will almost certainly forget. Fear Shaming is that rampant. Also expect that society in general won’t support you, and find your admission of fear to be confusing.

Instead of getting frustrated though, here’s how you handle these inevitable situations.

An example. My own mother, who knows what I teach, before I was about to give a keynote about fear in front of a large audience, asked me how I felt. I said “I feel afraid.” Imagine my surprise when she chimed right in, intending to help, “Oh no! There’s nothing to be afraid about! You’ve done these a million times. You just put that out of your head.” I laughed. My own mother!

Here are a few choices of what I could have said back to her:

“Please stop trying to talk me out of feeling this way. Fear is here for a reason.”

“You know, it’s natural and normal for me to feel this right now.”

“Fear helps me feel alive, so please, just let me enjoy it ok?”

“Please don’t ask me to squelch this important emotion. It’s here to help me be magnificent.”

“Please don’t try to rush me through my emotions in order to make you feel more comfortable. Let me have my experience.”

Ok this last one is a bit harsh, but do you get the point?

Bottom line, when you encounter Fear Shaming, be armed with such key phrases to get yourself (and them, if they’re interested) back on track.

4. Helping others talk about their own fear in a healthy way

If you're used to saying to others:

Don't be afraid.
There's nothing to be afraid of.
Don't let Fear control your life.
Drop your Fear.
Leave your fears behind.
Push through your Fear.
Don't feed your Fear.

Change to:

What does it feel like to be afraid?
This world is a scary place, isn't it?
Don't let the avoidance of Fear control your life.
Embrace your Fear, and see what happens next.
Bring your fears with you and they will be helpful.
Merge with your Fear.
Don't resist your Fear.