



Spiritual Healing of Fear Part 4

Living in Fear

We live a fear-driven life in a fear-driven world, but what exactly is a fear-driven life?

A Fear-Driven Life

A fear-driven life is a life in which thoughts, decisions and actions are predominantly motivated by fear. Most people live a fear-driven life. Our present culture promotes a fear-driven life.

What are the characteristics of a fear-driven life?

1. In a fear-driven life, the driving force behind most thoughts and actions is fear. Some examples of this fear are fear of death, fear of loneliness, fear of poverty or fear of pain.
2. This fear arises out of a lack of understanding and faith in one's own divinity. Not believing in his own divinity and not believing that he is a co-creator of his life, man is separated from his divine nature, which is unconditional, unlimited love. The degree of fear reflects the degree of separation from his divinity.
3. This fear leads to a belief in one's own mortality, in a sense of isolation and a sense of scarcity in life, resulting in the fear of death, loneliness and poverty respectively. The more fearful we are, the more we feel the need to control our life by controlling nature and everything else so as to avoid death, loneliness, poverty and pain.
4. Fear can paralyze us into inaction. It can numb our emotion and thoughts, resulting in poor decisions and judgments. It impairs our insights. Any decision that is made out of fear tends to lead to more fear and separation. Instead of all-embracing, it is divisive and self-centered.

Fear-Driven Life versus Love-Driven Life

	Fear-Driven Life	Love-Driven Life
Freedom	No real freedom from fear of death, pain, loneliness and poverty despite having accumulated wealth and power.	There is real freedom from the fear of death, pain, loneliness and poverty. Do not feel the need to control or manipulate life.

Present Moment	Live in the past or in the future.	Live in the present moment.
Quality of life	No real peace and contentment with life is achieved.	There is inner peace and serenity, and contentment with life.
Insight	May not have good insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses, and resists looking inward to face the real self. Lacks courage.	Usually have good insight into one's own strengths and weaknesses, and have the courage to face them and act on them.

Security	Always feel that there is not enough, despite having accumulated wealth and power. Feels insecure.	Have a sense of having enough and that providence will provide. A sense of security despite having little.
Consequences	Life seems to be a constant struggle and stressful. Sense of dissatisfaction with life despite worldly achievements.	Seems to live a life without stress. Has a sense of satisfaction with life.

Understanding Fear

As have been mentioned repeatedly, we are spiritual beings. In our purest, untainted form, we are Love - limitless, luminous and unconditional.

Unfortunately, we do not live as though we are spiritual beings. In fact, we live as though we are only our body. Thus, we live with very little awareness and connection to Love.

In the absence of love, there is fear.

Trapped in our ego, we feel a sense of separation from the oneness of all things. In this separation, we feel lonely and insecure, and therefore fearful.

Fear is therefore due to the loss of our oneness with our true Essence.

The Many Faces of Fear

Fear can manifest itself in many forms and it can be directed inwardly towards ourselves or outward towards others. For example, anger and hatred are manifestations of fear that are directed outwardly at someone else while guilt and shame are forms of fear directed inwardly at ourselves.

The many faces of fear can sometimes be difficult to see in our daily lives. Most of them manifest in very subtle ways and if we are not mindful we can easily miss recognizing it.

I once bought a car through a patient of mine. He was a freelance car salesman which means he was not formally attached to any car company. The reason I decided to buy from him was because I know he was going through some financial difficulties. I thought that since I am buying a car, I might as well let him earn the commission.

I told him the car model I wanted, wrote a cheque of \$3,000.00 as booking fees and handed over photocopies of my driver's license, my identity card and three monthly bank statements.

That same night when I was getting ready for bed, it suddenly dawned on me that I had handed over too much confidential information to him without a second thought – documents that a conman could make full use of. There have been many cases of conmen who used another person's documents to apply for loans and then disappeared, leaving the unsuspecting victim to settle the loan with the bank.

When I thought about it further, I realized that I did not really know my patient very well. All I know about him is his medical problems, not his personal life. Who knows what kind of a person he is. Perhaps he may be in such deep debts that he might be desperate enough to cheat.

My train of thoughts just continues to move on from one fear to another, each thought making the fear bigger and more

terrible than the one before. By the time I realized what I was doing to myself, I was about ready to panic.

As it turns out, none of my fears were true. He was just an honest person trying hard to earn a decent living.

As for myself, all the self-created fear serves only to perpetuate this negative habit but once I'm aware of the train of thoughts, I can choose to stop it.

Most of our fear arises in the same way – subtle and unsuspecting.

It starts with one fearful thought, which leads to another and another. Before you know it, it has taken on a life of its own. If we are not careful or have very poor self awareness, this type of habit can literally create panic in us.

This fear tendency is actually very common and we can see it in ourselves almost everyday. When we are not aware of it, this tendency tends to perpetuate itself each time we allow it to manifest in us.

The good news is that we can change this tendency simply by increasing our self awareness through mindfulness. The sooner we note this tendency as it arises in us, the easier it is to stop it or replace it with something more positive and wholesome. When we do this repeatedly, we eventually loosen the power that fear has over us.

Fear of Loss

It can be said that all forms of fearful manifestation can be traced back to the fear of loss. These are some of the things we fear to lose:

- Identity/Significance (Ego)
- Control
- Security
- Freedom (Free Will)
- Health (Life)
- Abundance

**“Transforming fear-based patterns
is the road to freedom,
but recognizing those patterns
in ourselves is not easy.”**

We live in fear.

Most of what we think, say and do is a reflection of this fear. Our present society is a fear-based society. We fear for the loss of our life (death), our health (sickness), our security (poverty) and our youthfulness (aging). Our fear arises because we refuse to accept that these changes are part and parcel of our physical life.

Our physical life is temporal. It does not last. Instead, what we should be doing is to accept this physical reality and to embrace it with grace. With acceptance, fear cannot continue to exist. It fades away. Then we can go on with the business of truly living and being in the present moment.

Fear directs our attention to the past or to the future. Without fear, we can more easily live in the present. We should thus transform our fear-based society to an “unconditional love”-based society.

How do we transform our life from a fear-based living to an “unconditional love”-based living? We achieve this by eradicating our ego.

Our ego is the biggest obstacle to an “unconditional love”-based living.

By definition, the ego is that part of Consciousness that identifies itself as separate from others. Thus, the existence of ego brings with it an intrinsic sense of separation from other living beings. By eliminating our ego, we also automatically eliminate this sense of separation from Creation or God or whatever you care to call it.

(I am careful to use the word “God” because this word usually means differently to different people. Each of us has our own pre-conceived ideas about what God is. For our purposes, God refers to all of existence, nature or our true Essence.)

This sense of separation from God is what created fear and insecurity. Thus, fear and insecurity, together with the sense of separation, are inherent and inseparable from the ego. The only way to eliminate all these fear, insecurity and separation is by eliminating the ego. Eliminating the ego leaves us with only our true nature – unconditional love, luminous, wisdom, knowing, being.

Fear in Daily Life

Our daily life is a great opportunity for spiritual practice. Every moment is a challenge to be more mindful of what we think, say and do. Every response is a lesson in self awareness and letting go.

Fear is encountered every step of the way. Small fear, big fear, real fear, imagined fear - every type of fear. In reality, all fear is unreal since fear is not our true nature.

Yet we are too ingrained in our culture of living in fear.

We try to soothe our fear by doing, achieving and searching externally – basically trying to keep our mind busy and distracted from confronting fear -- and in the process we find temporary relief. We then wrongly conclude that doing and achieving can eliminate our fear.

In reality, they only distract us from our fear. When all is achieved and done, our fear remains. But doing and achieving have become a habit for us; a pattern of behaviour that we believe can remove our fear.

We are wrong in that belief, of course, but like the drug addict, we find it difficult to let go of our habit.

We are hooked!

Changing this habit requires effort – great effort – but I believe the result is worth it. In fact, if we want to live without fear, it is the only way to go.

**“Faith is believing what we cannot see to come to pass;
Fear is believing what we cannot see to come to pass.”**

The reason why I said it is *revealing* is because the definitions he gave for both faith and fear are the same. **The only difference is in what you choose to focus on.** If the focus is on something we desire, then it is faith. If instead you choose to focus on what is undesirable, then it becomes fear.

What this means is that:

Hope is expecting what is desirable to happen;
Despair is expecting what is undesirable to happen.

We therefore have to be very careful what we allow our mind to focus on.

Fear and Diseases

Clinical trials in medicine have shown that people who fall sick frequently possess certain personality traits that seem to pre-dispose them to getting diseases. That explains why, when everything else seems equal, some people get diseases like cancer while others do not.

It appears that those who worry and are constantly anxious are more likely to be ill. In other words, if you worry excessively about getting cancer, you may actually make yourself more likely to get it.

Doubts

Doubt is a manifestation of fear. Doubts arise easily in the beginning of this spiritual practice. It is one of the three main obstacles I often have to face and deal with.

This is because in the initial stage of our spiritual journey, we do not yet have the "knowing", only the believing, and believing is based on faith in others having shown us the way. We have to trust that they are not selling us a great lie.

The only way to find out the truth is to practice until believing becomes knowing – until we are able to taste the fruit for ourselves.

Our 'modern scientific' mind is familiar with and accepts only concrete observable and verifiable results. Since spiritual practice produces results that cannot be detected instrumentally nor measured quantitatively, many people take the attitude "show me and I'll believe it". This attitude is really a catch-22, since if you don't practice, you'll never see the results but if you don't see the proof you'll never start to practice it.

The loss, however, is not the believer but the non-believer.

Anger, Guilt and Forgiveness

A person who intends to lead a spiritual life must recognize, acknowledge and deal with the anger and guilt within.

Anger arises when our ego is threatened. When we scrutinize it carefully, we'll realize that anger is also a subtle manifestation of fear.

For example, we get angry at a reckless driver who cuts into our path because his recklessness endangers our life. At first glance, anger appears to be an emotion that is directed at an external source – perhaps a person or an event that displeases us. However, if we were to analyze our anger further, we realize that our anger is very often directed at our own self too.

In the example of the reckless driver, we may blame ourselves for not noticing the reckless driver earlier and getting out of his way.

Guilt arises when we blame ourselves for something we did or did not do that we believe is morally wrong.

Anger and guilt are both constrictive emotions. They are not only unhelpful to our spiritual progress, but may actually prevent us from moving forward spiritually. They create blocks and resistance to the flow of our true Essence into our lives.

Negative emotions behave like cancer cells, and if not dealt with, result in toxin that spread to our entire well-being – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Thus, anger and guilt must be recognized, acknowledged and confronted, and this is achievable through self-awareness and letting go. One of the most effective tools for letting go of our anger and guilt is forgiveness.

Self-forgiveness is, in fact, essential for self-healing.

As long as we continue to harbor anger and guilt within, we risk their malignant effects on us. The moment we decide to forgive ourselves, and those who caused us these negative

emotions, we begin to heal at all levels – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Love versus Fear

An old man said to his grandson, "Boy, I have two tigers caged within me. One is love. The other is fear. They are constantly fighting each other."

The young boy asked, "Which one will win, grandfather?"

The old man replied, "The one I feed."

Fear takes away Our Power

Whenever we live in fear and do things out of fear, we are actually giving away our power. We are basically reinforcing our beliefs that we are NOT the spiritual being we truly are. We are saying to ourselves that we need something out there to make us feel better about ourselves.

Unfortunately, we give away our power much too often in our daily lives. Whenever we make decisions out of fear and not out of love, we diminish our power and walk a step further away from our Essence of Love and wholeness. Every act, every word and every thought that arises out of fear disconnects us from our spirituality.

To regain our power, we need to consciously and mindfully do, say and think from Love and not from fear. We need courage and we need persistency. We need to know that this can be achieved. Only then can we achieve true freedom.

The only freedom you will ever need is freedom from fear.

The Cost of Fear

We have no choice but to overcome our fear if we are to live well. The truth is, fear is costly to us – costly in economic terms and more so in spiritual terms.

Fear is an expensive habit to feed.

Most of us lack courage to face it. We do all kinds of things to distract ourselves away from our fear. I see it even in myself. None of us are immune from fear, until and unless we begin to live in our true Essence.

If you think spending on unnecessary medical investigations is a small price to pay, consider the many industries that actually thrive on fear. Fear is a multi-billion dollar industry. It drives the insurance industry and the arm race. It even drives the medical industry, I must admit. Look how much medicine has been transformed by the big and powerful pharmaceutical and nutraceutical companies. The marketing technique has changed from one based on healing to one based on fear. Even the so-called natural and organic movement is beginning to use the same tactic of utilising fear to drive their sales. Sad, yes, but true.

However the real cost is to our spiritual growth.

Each time we allow our fear to manifest itself, we validate its 'usefulness' and perpetuate its tendency in our lives. As its grip on our lives becomes stronger, so is its power over us. As fear grows, love recedes for fear and love cannot co-exist together. They are mutually exclusive.

I believe this is how we fall from grace – from a radiant light being of unconditional love to a dense physical being of fear. We now need to reverse this process and to do so we need to be aware of our thoughts so that we can catch our fear and replace it with love as soon as we recognize it.

“Whatever we resist persists.”

Your fellow traveler,
TOM