



How to Deal With Fear, Stress and Anxiety

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I spent some time with a client last week who talked of his fears for the state of his business, how he was afraid of what others would think of him if his business collapsed and how he was afraid of where his marriage was going as a result. Although he believed his problems to be unique, the conversation reminded me of many that I have had over the recent past. It reminded me of the proliferation of media commentaries at present that “markets are gripped by fear”, people are “fearful for their jobs” and that people are “afraid they will lose their homes”.

All these problems are, indeed, real problems. However, it is one thing to experience such difficulties and entirely different thing to be consumed by them, fearful of them or feel in some way victimised by them. And, although the author, Susan Jeffers has, for many years now, suggested that you “Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway!”, you and I need to be fully mindful of the fact – the scientific fact, that fear is not real. Fear is a useless thought. Fear, like beauty, is in the mind of the beholder! Thoughts like “fear” disable us from taking action – so that we end up reacting and making matters worse.

Many years back, during a two-day workshop, one of my now longstanding clients took exception to my saying that I had a problem with his statement that “after my Dad’s business failed, we had to sell our house and move into a rented flat. We couldn’t even afford heating oil that winter and we were all freezing and I was so upset that we were all freezing”. In a recent conversation with the same guy, he understood what I had been saying many years previously. Sure, he was freezing – a statement of fact. But acknowledging the fact and then feeling sorry for himself, wallowing in it, victim-like, are two completely different things. The “victim mindset” disabled his ability to pick himself up, dust himself off and do his very best in the face of undoubted adversity.

Again, clients have said to me that it’s all very well for me, living comfortably high in the French Alps, to suggest that we shouldn’t react to bad things happening, we shouldn’t be afraid of what might happen or shouldn’t fear the consequences of actions we really need to take. But let me point out that I’ve been there, done that, got the T-shirt! A few years back, with a wife and three young children, after we’d been done over by some unscrupulous “investors”, we found ourselves with €18.58 in the bank with no immediate source of income. Whilst the temptation would have been to react and go into a self-induced decline, feeling sorry for ourselves was not an option and would only have made a desperate situation a whole lot worse.

We all have a choice in life – moment to moment – whether we will react like a so-called normal person, a moronic rabbit caught in the headlights – or whether we will take real action, dealing with the situation in which we find ourselves, regardless of how desperate it might actually be.

Fear – a useless reaction to the ups and downs of life – paralyses people. If you are afraid, you have lost control of your mind. Your mind is controlling you. Eighty years of research proves that, when we allow our minds to control us, we are unable to pay attention to the reality of the moment, unable to notice the potential for opportunity and completely unable to act appropriately. The same research also confirms that the average adult has 50,000 random thoughts each day, most of them useless, some of them, like “fear”, toxic.

The only way we can take appropriate action in the face of adversity is to calm our minds and come to our senses. You have five senses, you need to use them to enable you fully understand and experience what’s going on in the present moment. In that calm state of mind, you can take appropriate action and, as a result, even out of adversity, create the kind of effortless success that you really, really want. This is not some kind of positive thinking crap that I’m peddling. The research that I mentioned earlier has proved that our subconscious minds create our version of so-called “reality”. Dwell on useless thoughts and that concoction of “reality” will become very real for you.

The very real alternative is to harness your subconscious mind – so that you control it, not the other way around. In doing so, regardless of whatever you might currently fear, you will overcome. You will change everything, straight away. You will be able to create the life that you really want.