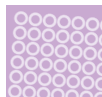


# Fear, Our Teacher

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 Fear is an important emotion. Like all other emotions, it is here as a valuable teacher, and, unless understood and properly processed, will have a heavy toll on our health later on as adults.

Fear is a teacher in self-preservation and survival.

“*Fear does not prevent death.  
It prevents life*”  
*Najib Mahfouz*

Everybody feels fear. For most people it is an undesirable feeling - fear feels 'fearful' if we may use the pun —yet some people seek it in certain sports and extreme activities for the thrill it gives them, like a dose of adrenaline in an expresso cup!

## Fight or flight

What happens to us when we feel fear? Fear causes our awareness to be heightened, our body alert and filled with a natural chemical known as adrenalin. This prepares us for action - either fight or flight, unless we choose to freeze.

## The here and the now

Fear centres our attention to the here and now in order to address whatever is threatening our physical existence and our focus is outward (to what may be threatening us). Our body 'looks up' to the eyes and ears for perception and alerts to the brain for decisions and mental activity in order to know what to do next.

Physically, fear causes our breathing to become more rapid, our heart rate to increase, the peripheral blood vessels in our skin to constrict, the central blood vessels around vital organs to dilate so that oxygen and nutrients can flood in.





“ Fear is a teacher in self-preservation and survival ”

Our muscles are pumped with blood, the levels of glucose in our blood increases, providing enough energy if the reaction is to either 'flee or fight'. We also go through a heightened level of calcium and white blood cells in our bloodstream.

It is said that even the muscles at the base of each hair become tighter, causing the hair to stand on end, which is what we experience as goosebumps. This is, by the way, what also happens when certain animals feel scared. Their hair stands on end, which helps make them seem larger vis-a-vis their opponent, giving them a larger appearance to hopefully scare the opponent away.

Dr Joe Dispenza uses a great example: In the animal kingdom, if a cheetah chases a deer, fear causes the deer's survival instinct to kick in to run away. If the deer outruns the cheetah and the chase is over, the deer's body goes back to 'homeostasis', helping the deer to relax and go back to life as it knows it. The deer does not think about it anymore!



If, for the sake of this example, that cheetah turns around and decides to chase a human being and the human being also manages to outrun the cheetah and gets away, chances are that the human being will be talking about that experience for quite a long time.

Our thoughts get in the way, constantly reminding us of our stressful experience, making it impossible to forget, therefore causing all of these physical stages and reactions to continue for hours, weeks, perhaps months after the



event ended. Unlike the animal kingdom, our thoughts get in the way, not allowing us to let go nor relax!

### Fearing fear

When we feel fear, we become hyper-vigilant, anxious, unable to settle or relax. It is as if we are ready to jump right out of our skin. If we grow up in a dangerous environment which threatens our physical existence, then that energy will have a frequent presence in our life as we grow older and, as paradoxical as it may sound, the sense of fear becomes our feeling of safety!

As children or infants, if the fear is not overcome, the body will simply adapt and live with it as 'the norm'. So, 'our body will feel safe when we feel fear!' We become uncomfortable when we try to relax. Please read that again and again until it sinks in. Since energy attracts energy, we will keep on attracting fearful experiences in our lives.

### Mental and emotional exhaustion


Intense fear may lead to a number of physical issues such as high blood pressure, heart problems, stomach problems, immune system depletion, weak adrenal glands, insomnia, chronic fatigue, constant anxiety as well as mental and emotional exhaustion.

To work through fear, we need to first understand where it comes from. Secondly, we need to release the fear once we know how it made us feel: Did it make us wish to run away and hide, or did we become angry but felt we had no right or power to retaliate?



### Releasing trapped energy

When we connect to the feeling, we need to know if it is a feeling of activation, paralysis, or confusion. We then need to release the energy still trapped in our bodies which has not stopped responding to the original trauma. That can be achieved through several ways such as: keeping a journal of how we feel, speaking to a professional who will help us 'feel our fear out', attend sound healing sessions and practising mindfulness in everything that we do in order to become used to living in the moment and not in our thoughts.

Once our mental and emotional work is on its way, then we can slowly, physically, learn to relax as the fear gradually gets released. 



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