

# Fear

*“If we wait until we aren’t afraid of failing, we’ll wait a long time before we do anything worthwhile. We must learn not to let the fear of failure make us fail, and not to let our fears make our failures final.”*

*-- Richard L. Evans*

Take a good look at the bravest person you know. Deep down inside, you can be sure that he or she has a fear or two.

In fact, the main difference between those who seem to be fearless, and those who seem to be paralyzed by fear is that the fearless have put their fears beside them.

Think about your life. If you were to let every dangerous thing you do paralyze you through fear, you probably wouldn’t do anything at all. Why, at its very core, one of the most dangerous things we do every day is drive to work; there we are, mere inches (or centimeters, if you prefer) away from other vehicles, separated only by a line drawn on the pavement. When we drive, we are within mere seconds of having our life taken – and yet we drive all over without ever giving it a moment’s thought.

Why are we no longer fearful of driving? Because we have mastered the fear. Our danger might be higher or lower than it was when we first learned to drive – but the actual danger doesn’t matter to us anywhere near as much as dealing with the fear that the activity might provoke.

There are among us individuals who haven’t learned to manage their fears. These people, typified by the TV character “Monk,” live in mortal fear of everything and everyone. They are the extreme end of a condition that can affect every one of us, to some extent – having irrational fears that may impact our lives for the worst.

Let’s consider a good example. A person, confronted with a job search, becomes convinced that no company will ever hire them. The mere fear generated by this keeps the person away from the job search – and thus becomes self-fulfilling.

Another person might be fearful of failing at a particular job – and by that fear is paralyzed into inaction – thus guaranteeing the failure. A third person might be worried about an event that “might” happen – although the likelihood is that it won’t – and that worry can affect their life every bit as much as the malady might have.

Fear can be a motivating thing, I suppose, when it provokes positive action – but most of the time, when we let our fears begin to rule us, we're unlikely to make much of a difference at all.

It's normal to have fear. In many cases, rational fear keeps us from doing stupid things that might harm us. But irrational fear can keep us from doing beneficial activities that can vastly alter our life – and the lives of the people we meet – for the better.

Put your fears behind you. Do the thing you fear.

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