

A Pilgrim in Your Body Jim Gilkeson

... fear is part of our survival, provided by nature to warn us when there is a threat to our well being. But, as with fight or flight, we were never intended to live permanently in a state of fear. When left unattended, fear gets in the way of communication within your body and psyche; it restricts the expression of who you are.

Each of our “negative” emotions has its roots in the soil of fear, and like the quintessential twin structure that it is, fear is typically right there to meet you when you are about to cross an inner threshold into something new. When you pay mindful attention to the sensation of fear, however—neither indulging it, repressing it, nor running away from it—a curious thing happens. It acts like any other internal sensation or obstacle that arises. You find out that fear, too, has its way of shapeshifting and revealing its twin structures of love, openness, and even wisdom. That is when fear becomes an ally.

Inner work is a dance back and forth between direct and indirect pathways of action. With a direct pathway, you take action and do some small or large thing that expresses your qualities... By contrast, an indirect pathway means doing something about the impediments to expressing your gifts... Getting at your fears and facing them is a prime example of such an indirect pathway. Indeed, facing and allowing fear to transform into an ally might be the spiritual practice... Turning toward your fear as it arises is an indirect pathway into everything we are after in spiritual practice because when you are able to face your fear and allow it to quiet down, love and compassion have a place to work, and your spiritual qualities have a much better chance of flowing all by themselves. Then the processes of enlightenment... are able to unfold unimpeded.

Fear involves closing ourselves off to some degree to life as it presents itself to us, narrowing the channel through which we interact with life... This tightening or contraction is something we all know, and transforming fear when we encounter it means learning to do something that we don't usually do.

Wane Muller... once said something very interesting about sadness, and it also applies to fear. He said he uses sadness, when it arises in him, as a compass that points him to something worth paying attention to. Instead of turning away from it, as most of us are wont to do, he learned to turn his attention toward the feeling and follow it. In the act of following, a transformation occurs, all by itself. This comes from attending to the sensation mindfully, rather than pushing it away or trying to make it change into something else.

... When you turn your attention toward the sensation of fear within you and relax with it (easier said than done), you have an opportunity to see how mindfulness works. It is like holding an ice cube in your hand. At first, the ice cube is cold and hard. It has sharp edges and stings your skin. But if you hold it awhile—no need to do anything else—it will undergo a change of state. It will melt... Fear can work the same way when you hold it in your awareness without trying to change it.

The sensation of fear can be extremely useful as a compass because it points your attention to what your system deems significant. It will point out where clumps of frozen energy and feeling are lodged. If you let it, fear can become your ally, because facing it the same way we “face” the ice cube when we hold it in our hand will bring about a change in its state, little by little, back into the fluid energy of life.

Spiritual Partnership The Journey to Authentic Power Gary Zukav

Love and fear are the two great commitments of the human experience. They are mutually exclusive. Frightened and loving parts of the personality sometimes become active simultaneously (this is the experience of a splintered personality, for example, I love my brother but I don't like him), but your commitment determines which one you act on. If you are committed to fear, you react. If you are committed

to love, you respond (choose responsibly). If you are committed to love and you react instead of respond, you will return to the experience in your mind, learn from it and use what you learned to help you respond with love next time.

Love and fear are the poles of the human experience. Together they encompass every possible human action. They are the signature experiences of the Earth school, requiring each individual to choose between them at each moment. Only the commitment to love allows you to choose love when the magnetic attraction of fear is great... Only the commitment to fear can prevent love from filling your life and bringing you together with others who are committed to love.

Without the commitment to love you cannot choose love when a frightened part of your personality is active. You will shout, withdraw, exploit emotionally, sexually, or psychologically, drink, over eat, smoke, or take a drug instead. In numerous familiar ways you will mask the pain of powerlessness with an obsessive thought compulsive action, or addictive behavior... When you commit to love, the Universe assists you. Support for your healthiest choice is always at hand. Even if the part of your personality that wants health is a very small part, it is the part that the Universe backs. That is why commitment to love always transforms, heals, and opens new avenues of creativity.

Changing your perspective from fearful to loving is the operative dynamic in the creation of authentic power. It is the shift from anxiety to appreciation and from pain to joy. You cannot change your emotions at will, but you can choose what you will do when your emotions come... When you are angry, depressed, jealous, thinking critical thoughts, or having any of the familiar, painful experiences of frightened parts of your personality, you can choose to shift your perceptions to those of a loving part of your personality.

...Will you accept, wallow in, and drown in the perceptions of a frightened part of your personality, fortifying yourself in its familiar painful experiences, or will you acknowledge them, feel them, and challenge them by shifting your attention to other perspectives, other possible ways of understanding, and other intentions? When you choose to remain in the experiences and distorted perceptions of frightened parts of your personality, you pursue external power. You create authentic power when you use your volition to explore elsewhere and make the healthiest choices that you can, even while the frightened parts of your personality call magnetically to you.

A Course in Miracles

The more you look at fear the less you see it, and the clearer what it conceals becomes.

You too will laugh at your fears and replace them with peace. For fear lies not in reality, but in the minds of children who do not understand reality. It is only their lack of understanding that frightens them, and when they learn to perceive truly they are not afraid

Very simply, then, you may believe you are afraid of nothingness, but you are really afraid of nothing. And in that awareness you are healed.

The presence of fear is a sure sign that you are trusting in your own strength. The awareness that there is nothing to fear shows that somewhere in your mind, though not necessarily in a place you recognize as yet, you have remembered God, and let His strength take the place of your weakness. The instant you are willing to do this there is indeed nothing to fear.