

Transforming Fear

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We live in a fear-driven world. By this I mean that most of what we think, say or do are moved or motivated by an underlying fear within us. It is a fear that most people do not even recognize, mainly because they are not really consciously aware of its presence.

One of the reasons why fear is so prevalent is because it gets things done, often according to what we want. For example, we threaten punishment to our kids for misbehaving. We threaten loss of job for the employee who does not performed. The government threatens fines and imprisonment for those who break the laws. Politicians and marketers are especially skillful in using fear as a motivator to get our votes or sell their products and services. The insurance industry highlights fear in the forms of loss of life or health to sell their products. Even the healthcare industry, particularly some doctors and pharmaceutical companies, uses fear to promote their services and products.

It is important for us to realize that fear begets more fear. The more we focus our lives on fear, the more fear appears in our lives. It becomes a never ending vicious cycle.

The way out of a fear-driven life is to focus our thoughts and intentions on love, the opposite of fear. To achieve this goal, we need to cultivate our mind, to become more mindful so that we can catch our negative fear-driven thoughts before it fully manifests in our reality.

This booklet takes a closer look at fear, its nature and manifestations, the costs of fear to our happiness and peace of mind, the root cause of fear, its solution and the methods or path to the elimination of fear in our lives.

The Problem Solving Process

Before we delve into fear, I would like to share with you a simple and effective 4-step approach that is universally applicable in solving life problems.

1. Identify the Problem

In this first step, get a clear understanding of what the problem is. What is the nature of the problem, how it manifests itself and how is it costing you in diminishing your life. To be able to have a clear understanding of the problem, to be able to recognize the problem and to accept the reality of the problem is the first step to finding its cause. Seeing how it is costing you provide the motivation to change or seek a solution.

2. Find its root cause

Once we have a clear idea of the problem, it is usually quite easy to identify its root cause. The root cause here means the real cause of the problem, not simply a superficial or cursory look at the secondary causes or triggers to the problem.

Here's an example of what I mean by identifying its root cause.

You came back from work, feeling tired and wanting to take a well deserved rest. So you make yourself comfortable, picked up the newspapers and lie down on the couch to read it. Suddenly, your kids ran into the living room where you are and raised a ding with their noisy play. You snapped, and started scolding them.

At first glance, the cause of your outburst of anger may seem to be due to your noisy kids disturbing your rest. However, if you care to look deeper, you might realize that they were only the trigger. Your real anger was because your **perceived** needs, wanting, desires or expectations were not met. In this case, it was your perceived need for a quiet moment of rest. When you looked even deeper, you realized also that this was not really a need, just a simple desire for peace and quiet, and you can clearly see that what you initially thought was a need was nothing more than an intense desire or wanting.

There is a difference between **need** and **desire** or wanting. A need is something you required to live, such as food, air, clothing, shelter and even medicine. A desire, on the other hand, is something we want but can actually live without.

So, continuously looking deeper within in this manner will eventually lead us to the root cause of our problem.

3. Determine the solution

Once we have identify the problem and its root cause, then we will have to see whether there exists a corresponding desired state or situation that is achievable. That desired state will be our goal or solution. For example, if fear is our problem, then a state that is free from fear is our goal or solution.

4. Work towards the solution

Finally, we will have to work out a path or process, or commonly called action plan, that will lead us from the initial state (the problem) to the desired state (the solution). Needless to say, once we have worked out an action plan, we need to execute the plan until the final goal is achieved.

This 4-step approach is a generic problem solving approach that is applicable in almost all life situations. Whenever you encounter a problem in life, try out this approach and see how well it works for you.

Now, let us get back to fear. We will adopt this problem solving approach in dealing with fear.

The Nature of Fear

Have you ever wanted to change your life but could not? No matter what you do, you cannot seem to overcome your fear?

The Costs of Fear

Fear is a HUGE stumbling block for a lot of people. It is a huge obstacle to your personal growth and greatly limits your ability to achieve your fullest potentials in life.

Fear can prevent you from making positive changes in your life. Sometimes even the smallest changes in life can seem like a big struggle because of fear. Each time you try to change something, anxiety and stress creep into your system, and you simply gave up.

You may want to change your job or buy a new car or house but the thought of change, and the anxiety that accompanies it, soon discouraged you from even trying. So you end up stuck in the same situation and condition all your entire life.

Because of fear, you may not even be able to take small risks, such as making new friends, joining a fitness club, start a relationship or just being friendly with your neighbors. Fear can be extremely crippling. Some people are unable to live an ordinary life because of fear.

Fear can also prevent you from breaking destructive habits. Despite knowing the damage smoking is to your health, you may not find the courage to stop. The same goes for your eating habits, drinking and even the habit of procrastination. All these destructive habits are symptoms of underlying fear that had not been resolved.

Fear is one factor that prevents most people from achieving their goals in life. It is likely that it is the same for you. You may want to take a course in public speaking or be a successful writer but fear becomes a stumbling block and stops you on the track.

But fear is only crippling to our life if we allow it.

That's right!

We do have a choice whether to allow fear in our life or not. Most people do not know this fact and so they live their lives taking fear for granted as part and parcel of life.

It may take a long time to eliminate all forms of fear in your life but at the very least you can reduce most of them, and start to live a life of joy and freedom, and feel a sense of liberation and bliss.

I am telling you this is possible because I have done it. I used to have quite a number of big fears. One of them, the fear of people in uniform and authority took me years to overcome. Another was the fear of public speaking - the mother of all fears!

Today I am happy to share with you that I have overcome both these fears. By this, I mean that I am at least now functional. There is still fear within but in a manageable degree. Eliminating fear from your life is a continuous life long process.

As I learned to understand fear, its nature and root cause, and how to overcome it, I have collected quite a large armory of tools that can effectively eliminate fear. Some of these, which I discovered later, are so powerful and effective that they can literally remove your fear instantly.

I will be sharing more of these methods with you later.

Here is a simple exercise for you:

Write in less than 500 words whether you believe the universe you live in is a benevolent universe or a hostile universe, and why you believe so. Your answer may give you an insight into your belief system.

Later, you will realize that a large part of our fear is due to our belief systems. We literally programmed fear into our lives without consciously knowing that we are doing this to ourselves. The good news is that once we become aware of it, we can do something positive to change it.

The Many Faces of Fear

Fear comes in many forms.

In its mildest, you may experience it as mild unease or discomfort, a feeling of heaviness in your heart area or funny feeling in the stomach. It is vague and difficult to pin point or name.

At the other extreme end, fear can manifest as outright rage, such as road rage, that can literally kill or cause one to kill. It may also present as extreme fear, as when your life is threatened or calamity strikes. Such fear is often seen in war zones or concentration camps, arising from the fear of dying or the threat of being inflicted with physical, emotional and mental pain.

In between these two extreme, there is a wide spectrum of presentation of fear. Disappointment, frustration, irritable, anger, sadness, shame, blame, regret, anxiety, depression, obsession, compulsion, paranoia, phobia and destructive habits are all various ways fear manifests itself. When you look deep within for the root cause, you will find that they are symptomatic of our fear.

Even so called normal and socially acceptable behaviors and emotions such as impatience, envy, jealousy, greed, procrastination, always in a rush, non-tolerance, dogmatic, loneliness, the desire to belong or be accepted, the need to be in control or to control and the need for security are all fear in its many forms.

To understand how this is so, we need to look deep within ourselves with openness and honesty. We need to have the courage to face up to our own shadows and fear. Only then we will see it for what it really is.

The Root Cause of Fear

What causes fear?

Is there a root cause to all our fears?

Despite the many forms of fear, it can be gathered into 3 main groups:

1. Fear of insecurity
2. Fear of loneliness or non-acceptance
3. Fear of loss

Fear of Insecurity

Fear of insecurity manifests out of a need for safety. When our safety or security is threatened or compromised, this fear arises. Safety here refers not only to physical safety but also emotional and mental safety. We take great pain to protect ourselves from emotional and mental hurts and harms.

Fear of Loneliness

This fear includes also the fear of separation and arises out of our need to be accepted and included. We fear being excluded, forsaken, shunned, rejected, ostracized, ex-communicated or abandoned.

The sense of loneliness can be felt even when one is physically present in the midst of a crowd of people. What we want is not merely physical closeness but emotional and mental acceptance. This is one of the reasons that drive us into forming relationships with others. We longed for approval and acceptance.

Fear of Loss

This fear arises out of our need to hold on. We fear loss of our life, our property, our family, our money, our reputation, our fame, our freedom, and just about anything you can think of. We cling on to things we like and run away from things we don't. This fear of loss is the fear of losing everything we considered dear and near to us.

In fact, we can even include our fear of loneliness and fear of insecurity into this group. After all, fear of loneliness is just another expression of fear of loss of acceptance and inclusiveness. Likewise, fear of insecurity is another expression for our fear of loss of security and safety.

Thus, we can say that every fear is somehow a fear of loss of something.

Yet even these 3 basic fears can be traced back to a root cause, which is **the belief that we are merely physical being**.

The more we hold on to this physicality, the more we fear, for there is nothing that can be permanent or secure in this physicality. No amount of money or properties we hoarded can save us from the destruction of a tsunami or hurricane, for example. Our physical body also must one day decay and die. Our physical life must come to an end in death.

There can be no certainty and guarantee in this physicality, and it drives us mad that our need for acceptance, security and control can never truly be fulfilled.

The only way to reverse this fear is therefore only possible if we begin to **believe in our spirituality**, that we are indeed spiritual beings. Our spirituality offers us continuity, security, permanence, love and completeness. Only when we operate from this perspective can we begin to release our fear and embrace the love, peace and completeness that have always been there.

Therefore, to eliminate the root cause of our fear, we need to change our beliefs.

Beliefs

Do you know what a belief is?

I would bet that even if you do not know what a belief is, you do know that you have plenty of beliefs. Many of these beliefs are so entrenched in our mind subconsciously that we are not even aware of them.

A belief is something we do not know. If it is something we know, then it would not be called a belief, would it? It would have been called knowledge or fact instead. So a belief is something we do not know for sure, yet this belief propels us to think, say and do things on auto-pilot. Some people even kill for their beliefs.

Can there be anything more illogical? Yet we do it, all the time.

A belief is merely a perception of our reality. It is not an absolute truth. It can change, just like our belief in a flat world in the past has changed. We also used to believe that the earth is the center of the universe. Now we know that is not true.

So a belief is something we do not know for sure but we take it on in good faith, assuming that it is true. A belief can change with time. Yet a belief is so powerful that it literally drives our lives, how we live and behave.

Scientists once believe very strongly in the predictability of the universe. We were certain that we can, with great precision, determine the nature of all things - stars, planets, plants, animals and even men.

But now quantum physics is challenging that certainty. At the quantum level, there is a degree of uncertainty built into the system. Everything is only a potentiality, not a certainty. Our observation itself changes the nature of reality.

If beliefs are so uncertain and unreliable, would it not be wise to not hold on too strongly to any beliefs? Should we not give ourselves some allowance for errors?

Instead of being dogmatic about whether our beliefs are right or wrong, should we not choose beliefs that enhances life and discard those that limits life?

I prefer to classify beliefs into life-enhancing beliefs and life-limiting beliefs. These classifications help us to select beliefs that are more likely to enrich and expand our lives in beautiful and abundant ways, and easily discard the life-limiting beliefs that constrict and rob us of the beauty of life.

Having said that, are you aware that **you can choose what to believe in** and what not to believe in? Yes, you do have this freedom to choose your own beliefs, so make sure you choose wisely.

Know that whatever you choose to believe in will manifest in your life, be it good or bad. As the saying goes, whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve. In fact, your present life right now is the external manifestations of your inner belief system.

Reflect on this:

Are you having problems with money, or the lack of it? Don't you wish you could have all the money you ever need so that you can live the life of your choice?

If what you are doing right now is not getting you the life you want, what are you doing about it? Nothing? Why not? Because you don't believe it can make any difference? There lies a belief that is stopping you!

When you are mindful of your thoughts, you can catch yourself believing in all kinds of rubbish, beliefs that are obstacles to your ideal life.

Want to live a life without fear, one that is abundant, peaceful and happy? Then choose to believe that you are a spiritual being, indestructible, complete, free and pure love. Then **live** in accordance with this new belief!

How Beliefs Work

Have you ever bought a car and then all of a sudden you see the same model everywhere on the road? When I first considered setting up my own clinic many years ago, I discovered that all of a sudden there were clinics everywhere I went. There have been there all along but I did not see them until I started to focus my mind on setting up my own clinic. The outer reality has not really changed but what has changed is my inner thoughts and focuses.

Beliefs work the same way.

Once we have decided to take on a belief, most of the time unconsciously, our brain seems to re-configure itself, re-arranging the neural pathways, and we ended up turning our focus on things and events that further validate the belief. We literally attract these things into our lives.

That is why Dr. Wayne Dyer said, "Believe it and you will see it" instead of the usual "I'll believe it when I see it". He wrote an entire book on this concept.

So when you hold on to a belief of lack or a belief that the universe is hostile, then you will "see" the evidence in your life validating those beliefs. Believe you are not worthy and it is reflected in your low self esteem and other self esteem issues, in the way you avoid relationships or commitments, or in experiencing people in your life who continue to take you for granted or look down on you.

Believe in a benevolent universe and a universe of abundance, and you will begin to see evidence of abundance and generosity, kindness and compassion.

The good news is that you get to choose what you want to believe in.

The bad news is that you can choose your beliefs only if you are highly mindful and aware of your thoughts. This is because beliefs are most often taken in unconsciously and as long as you continue to live your life unconsciously you will continue to take in beliefs without being able to filter them.

Fortunately, there are many ways and tools to remove unwanted life-limiting beliefs and consciously accept life-enhancing beliefs.

Being aware that there is such a possibility is already a step forward. To be able to learn the methods and to apply them in your own life would be truly transformational.

The Solution

Is there a state in which there is no fear? Is it possible to live your life without fear? If such a fearless state does not exist, then it is not possible for us to achieve it.

However, there is such a state that is without fear.

Fear, like all other emotions, is preceded by a thought. It is in fact a mental state. In cognitive behavioral therapy, the therapist helps the client to change his emotional and behavioral responses to external triggers simply by making him aware that there is a thought that precedes his emotion. When we are not aware of this, that thought becomes an automatic thought. It appears by default through our habits or mental tendencies.

Once we are aware of this automatic thought, we can train ourselves to become more mindful of the entire process, and thereby stop negative automatic thoughts from arising or replace them with more positive thoughts.

Is it possible to train ourselves to achieve that?

The answer is "YES".

Ordinary people are capable of training and cultivating their mind to achieve a higher level of mental awareness with regards to our thought processes. In fact, many are even able to master their thoughts, and you can see the evidence in the way they carry themselves and live their lives. Their words and actions are not motivated by fear. Their lives are love-driven instead of fear-driven. They live their lives in peace, at peace with themselves and everything else, and they radiate peace and equanimity wherever they go.

Such are those who truly live a spiritual life, knowing, recognizing and fully accepting their spirituality and living in accordance with that knowing.

The Path to eliminating Fear in our lives

So far, we have discussed about:

1. How fear limits you from living your fullest potentials
2. The root cause of fear
3. How changing your beliefs can change your life
4. How beliefs work unconsciously to influence your life

In this section, I will show you how to live a life without fear. If you follow my advice and suggestions, at the very least, you would have reduced your fear significantly in your life even if you were not able to completely eradicate all fears.

If you put in all the time, effort and persistence, I can assure you that you can eradicate all fears eventually.

We have learned in the earlier sections that fear arises from a false belief, a life-limiting belief that we are only physical beings. The step to rectify this is to replace that limiting belief with a life-enhancing belief, which is that we are spiritual beings, which is indestructible, complete, pure love and peace. We lack nothing and need nothing. We are already complete.

That is the essence of our being. That is who we really are.

When we truly **live** from this perspective and **in accordance** with this new belief, then we will attract into our lives evidence and circumstances that validate this new belief.

We will begin to see things that we have missed before, even if there had been there in our lives all along. The truth is that nothing externally has changed. What has changed is our inner thoughts and focus. With the change in our beliefs comes a change in our total physical, emotional, mental and spiritual vibrations.

It is this inner vibrational change that will begin to attract new possibilities into our lives, opening new doors and attracting new opportunities. We will begin to attract new people into our lives, experience new events and circumstances, and gradually transform our own lives by the new choices we make.

**When you believe you can, you are right.
When you believe you cannot, you are right too.**

Such is the paradox in life.

Here is a word of caution.

Even though the concept is simple to understand, putting it into practice in our lives is not as easy. This is because we have already accumulated tons of old limiting beliefs in our lifetime, and we need to clear as much of them as we can, and replace them with new life-enhancing beliefs.

As you walk along this new spiritual path, you will encounter doubts, skepticisms and inertia.

Due to our conditioned mind, it will take some times to overcome these doubts and skepticisms that constantly arise to dampen your effort. It is at this early stage that you will need some form of faith but as you progressed this faith will give way to personal insights, realizations and conviction.

The early inertia that tends to resist change in you will require a fair amount of determination, persistence and effort to overcome. Like moving a huge boulder on top of a hill, the initial effort is great but the going becomes easier once the boulder starts to move and eventually it will reach a stage where it has picked up enough speed to role easily onward on its own.

Tools for Transforming Fear

Our goal is to transform fear into love – unconditional, all inclusive love. Such a love can only arise from a state of total peace and equanimity within.

Since fear has been conditioned and imprinted into our mind, what we need to do is to remove these negative beliefs and replace them with positive ones. It is like a computer program that has been infected with viruses. To restore the program to its original pristine condition, we need to run another program or tool to find, identify and remove these viruses.

In my experience, **mindfulness** is a powerful tool that can help you find and recognize these negative beliefs within. It is also heartening to know that the very process of being aware of the presence of these negative beliefs can make it easier for us to let go of our attachment or clinging to old limiting beliefs that have been imprinted in our mind for ages.

The best way I know to increase your mindfulness is through daily and regular meditation. However, meditation need not be the only tool to help you transform fear into love.

There are many other equally effective tools that can produce the same result. Some of these may include work introduced by other teachers. I personally like the work of Byron Katie, Michael Ryce, Lester Levenson and Dr. Hew Len. There are also a variety of workshops that helps you to look within, explore, recognize resistance and modify mental habits and behavior. Used together to complement each other, they can be a powerful arsenal for you to hasten your transformation.

In addition, each of us is different in personality, tendencies and orientations. One method may be more effective for one while another may require a slightly different approach. For instance, those who are artistically inclined may find journaling and arts to be more effective therapeutic tools. You will need to explore and find out for yourself what works for you.

We should not also forget that in this modern age of technology, we have the additional options of using technology to assist us in cultivating our mind. Methods like affirmations, subliminal messages, hypnosis, brainwave entrainment and visualization are now easily incorporated into audio and visual aids that we can use to enhance our mental training.

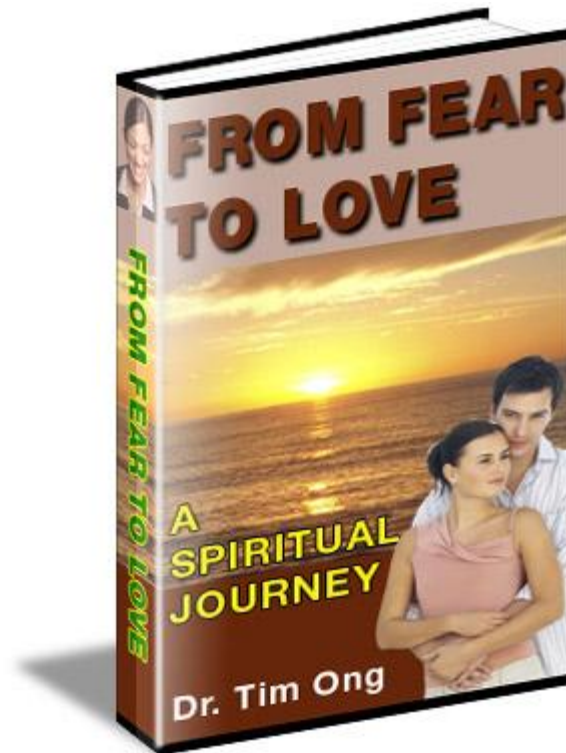
Finally, I wish you the very best in life and hope that this book has been enlightening to you. To get the very best out of your life, YOU will have to work on your personal transformation. No one else can do the job for you.

If you have not yet started, I urge you to take the first step on your spiritual journey now.

From Fear to Love

A Spiritual Journey

Dr. Tim Ong



In this book, Dr. Tim Ong shares his own personal struggles with fear and how he overcame them. He also includes lessons and insights from his medical work with his patients, and shows how a fear-driven life can be transformed into a love-driven life that gives you peace, health and abundance.

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