

Transcending Fear

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.”

— H. P. Lovecraft



“He who has overcome his fears will truly be free.”

— Aristotle

Human beings live in fear. That is a plain fact. This is unsurprising because fear is an intrinsic part of our survival instinct. Each creature in this world is endowed with the will to exist and fears dying. Life on earth is a constant struggle for food and space. When we have a sense of outer security, such as in times of an abundance of resources, that same fear becomes a fear of becoming sick, of having an accident, of aging and mortality.



Fearing for one's survival is especially evident among less evolved species, whereas for humans it is just one of fear's many facets. In addition to the fear for survival, humans can have fears that relate to their psychological and emotional wellbeing. For instance, we can fear being hurt emotionally, which can block us from having a romantic relationship. We can also fear not being loved, accepted, or respected. Our fear of not being treated fairly by another may be experienced as a fear of rejection, of being abandoned, of being used or manipulated, and so on. There are also fears relating to self-confidence, such as the fear of self-doubt. This fear can encompass not being normal or good enough, of failing in our projects or aspirations, of not being able to meet others' expectations, or of hurting another through not adequately fulfilling their needs.

Whether people are aware of it or not, fear is their constant companion. It is at the root of our separate existence, and each being on this plane is born with it. As our emotions and thought patterns develop, this primal fear becomes magnified, and it evolves into the more complex fears and neurotic tendencies of the psychological dream worlds that we live in.

Fear of the Known and of the Unknown

Fear can be categorized into fear of the known and fear of the unknown. Fear of the known refers to everything that can somehow be identified: fear of not having what we want, such as enough money, a job, or a relationship, or of having what we don't want, such as an illness. Fear of the unknown is much deeper than that of the known because it points to being terrified of reality itself. Initially, we live in a dream. We are born without knowing who we are or even why we exist. Our minds try to patch and fill these existential holes with made-up belief systems and philosophies, but deep down there is still an acute sense of the unreality underlying our lives. For example, a Christian may believe in heaven and hell, but he has no way of knowing if there is any truth in it. Rather than confront his fundamental doubts, he buries them with rationalizations, emotional devotion, or fanaticism. Many Christians, no matter what their intelligence may be, take on board whatever the church or bible tells them. They are born Christians and they die Christians, because they never question any of this dogma or wonder who they themselves are.

A belief structure amounts to no more than a castle of sand. We could say that much of religious belief is based on fear of the unknown. These beliefs are the result of the mind's desperate attempt to create an island of certainty in life's ocean of uncertainty; while knowing nothing, religion



hypocritically pretends to have explanations for the extraordinary miracle of our existence. But belief structures have nothing in common with reality, because the former is a mere product of imagination and fantasy. Should people really begin to question their religious, philosophical, or New Age pseudo-spiritual convictions, their illusory dream worlds would fall apart and so would their imaginary security. But without this questioning, how else can we begin our evolution into reality? Unless the castle of sand is washed away by the waves of reality, our true castle can never be built.

Deep uncertainty about reality is at the root of the fundamental insecurity which fuels the arising of countless, undefined fears. Sometimes one wakes up in terror in the middle of the night, not even knowing what one is afraid of – perhaps scared of ghosts hiding in cupboards. Children have an additional dimension of fear because their conscious mind is still developing, and they are closer in their feelings and emotional sense to the unconscious, the unknown substratum that underlies this reality. In their innocence, they are still in touch with the primal uncertainty, which is the foundation and source of our conscious existence. But as their minds develop, so do various psychological strategies which repress this uncertainty with artificially constructed belief systems.

Is it wrong to be afraid of the unknown? What if the unknown is not really dangerous, and conversely, it is the known that cannot be trusted? Our fear has to be acknowledged and experienced, instead of being pushed under the carpet of the conscious mind. The moment we face our fear, we have a chance of beginning to discover what reality truly is. The only way to go beyond the fear of the unknown is to make the unknown known. The reality we live in has to be an integrated one; it must include what has until now been unknown, discovering it as our home, so it can become a place where we live with confidence and trust. Often, it is our fear that manifests negative things in our life, because fear itself gives rise to a fearful reality. If these fears are suppressed, hidden by garments of made-up beliefs, they will grow unhampered like fertilized weeds in the dark of our unconscious mind, sprouting up from the root fear – the fear of confronting fear itself.

Fear in Our Body and Mind

Fear is a poison, both spiritually and chemically. Hormones that are stimulated by fear are those of stress, and stress releases harmful chemicals in the body. So fear is toxic for both the body and the mind. Sometimes fear in the body triggers a chain reaction in the mind. The mind either



desperately tries to release fearful thoughts by making up reasons to not be afraid, or it succumbs to the fear, resulting in obsessive tendencies or other neuroses which aggravate the situation. Sometimes the fear originates in the mind first, which then immediately floods the body with stress hormones.

Most people habitually indulge in fear, unaware of how detrimental it is to their physical and mental health. While fear is justified at times, and needs to be dealt with, it is essential for the sake of our wellbeing that we minimize the experience and energy of fear. When we are aware of its presence, it is important to engage with the intention of letting it go and activate the energies of trust and inner relaxation. Because it is toxic, unnecessary indulgence in fear should be avoided. Letting our thoughts stray into anxiety and worry is foolish and irresponsible. The internal toxins generated by our own mind can be much more harmful and detrimental to our physical health than those from bad diets, drinking alcohol, or smoking.

Fear and the Solar Plexus

The actual center of fear in the body is solar plexus, which is located in the area of the diaphragm. The solar plexus is sometimes called our 'second brain' because of the highly complex network of nerves it contains. It regulates the sympathetic nervous system for life dependent organs and systems, including respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems. It is part of the pathway of nerves going to the adrenal glands, which switch on at the release of adrenaline to produce the fight or flight response. It is also a center of emotional power which governs our basic raw emotions related to survival.

When we are not in touch with our emotional power center, it might seem that fear is just in the mind. But its roots are much deeper. When fear arises, our breath and heartbeat become more rapid, and tightness and anxiety can be felt in the area of the diaphragm. As fear is best dissolved by dealing with it directly, it is important to be aware of its actual location – in the belly.

In working with fear, we must get in touch with the solar plexus and bring more attention and presence to this area. Since fear changes our breathing, by intentionally breathing deeper and slower through the belly, we change our body chemistry and activate protective hormones. When we experience a mild expression of fear, like being anxious over life's daily issues, we might not register anything in the solar plexus, and it may appear that our worries are purely being processed in the



mind. However, with a more careful examination, it will become clear that the emotional root of any thought linked to our security and safety is in the belly. The stronger our distress is, the more powerful will be the feeling of discomfort in this area. Getting in touch with our emotional power center is the prerequisite for the transformation of fear and its related feelings; otherwise, we will keep trying to repress them purely through different mental strategies. A fear that is repressed may often end up having worse consequences than one which is acknowledged and experienced because it continues as a disturbing influence both at the base of our subconscious mind and in the solar plexus.

Transforming Emotional Powerlessness into Power

For most people, the solar plexus is more a center of powerlessness than one of power. They move between not feeling anything in this area to experiencing the energies and emotions of distress. To begin transforming this, a conscious relationship with the solar plexus has to be established. The first step in this process is simply paying attention to it and feeling what the solar plexus feels. This is done without judgment, in a space of gentle acceptance of whatever is happening there. Even if one does not feel anything there initially – as a result of living in denial of it for so long – one should still make the effort to feel this area, both internally and even just in a physical way. Breathing to the belly is a great help in activating an energetic presence in the power center, while at the same time having a therapeutic effect on our emotions. In doing this, we develop a loving and healing relationship with our emotional center, and bring more peace, acceptance, and soothing energy to it. Gradually, as the solar plexus becomes more energized, our sense and awareness of this center will increase.

The diaphragm, where the emotional center is located, is responsible for the expansion of the rib cage. Most people have difficulty breathing deeply because their diaphragm has been contracted from years of holding it tight to control fearful emotions. Almost no one breathes correctly. Correct breathing is from the belly. It requires the air to be completely expelled, not by force but by letting the air be exhaled completely. More commonly, however, we almost always have some air left in the lungs, which then prevents us inhaling completely. This leads to hyperventilation, in which the body is not able to produce enough carbon dioxide, which is required for the absorption of oxygen in the cells. Hyperventilation causes anxiety, resulting in a vicious circle: because we are anxious, we do not breathe correctly, and because we do not breathe correctly, more anxiety is created. It is important to note that deep breathing is not the kind of breathing with which one tries to inhale



as much air as possible; this would lead to hyperventilation and is harmful. Deep breathing is gentle, and often imperceptible. It is called ‘deep’ because the inhaled air reaches the bottom of the lungs following a correct expansion of the diaphragm.

Through the occasional practice of directed breathing, in which complete exhalation and natural inhalation is emphasized, the diaphragm is given the chance to relax and gradually open up. However, for this kind of breathing to become natural, we need to open to the energy of being and awaken pure subjectivity on the level of being – our pure me of being. In time, absorption in being should naturally bring about correct breathing. So correct breathing facilitates the energetic opening of the solar plexus center. In addition, we also need to connect directly with its emotional dimension and go beyond its subconscious tendencies by becoming conscious of, and embodying, our emotional subjectivity.

The transformation of our solar plexus brings about emotional empowerment, replacing fear with confidence and courage. While courage as it is normally understood is actually a kind of bravado used to cover fear, true courage does not suppress fear but rather allows us to rise and live above it. Of course, living above fear does not mean we do not respond appropriately when faced with danger, but this is more a practical and logical response to the necessity of the moment, not the fear that anxiously eats away inside of us. When a car rushes towards us on the street and we move to avoid it, this is just a common sense survival response. But when we live in fear of the stock market collapsing, global warming or cooling, falling ill with a terminal disease, or being left by a partner in a romantic relationship – these are the fears that take away our power and light, bringing darkness to our spirit.

The Subjective Dimension of the Solar Plexus

The emotional power center is fundamentally subconscious. It was formed in an early stage of our individuation when the instinct for survival began to be detectable subconsciously and was motivated purely on an emotional level. Without this emotional motivation, we would not have a survival instinct. Any creature faced with immediate danger reacts instantly and instinctively to deal with the threat. As humans, we have evolved a strong semi-conscious observer which assumes some of the burden of the subconscious emotional self, but even the observer takes a back seat to our basic instincts. In order to link our primal emotions to consciousness, we need to get in touch with



our emotional me, which lives in the power center, to let it cross the threshold into conscious presence.

To be able to recognize our emotional me, we must be connected to the energetic dimension of the solar plexus, which is the first step in bringing consciousness to it. The next step is identifying the sense of me underlying our emotions. Linking this emotional me with presence is similar to the development of the conscious and self-conscious observers, but due to the primal nature of emotions, it is more challenging to achieve. We must begin to feel the ‘who’ that is the subject of the constant flux of energetic phenomena and emotional responses occurring in the solar plexus. In this way, we become more conscious of, and reach a level of autonomy from, our emotional reactions.

However, unless we embody the deeper subjective dimension of our power center, pure emotional me, even this consciousness of the emotional center is not enough. Pure emotional me can be likened to the pure nature of our emotional body; its fundamental presence is untouched by the coming and going of emotions. The awakening of pure emotional me signals the integration of our emotional existence with the soul. Pure emotional me is not itself linked directly with emotions – this is the function of emotional me – but it empowers the emotional center from within by unifying it with our true nature. It allows us, underneath our emotional existence, to experience who we are as a soul. Pure emotional me additionally bridges our emotions with the feeling dimension of the heart and with our absorption in the dimension of being.

For the power center to be transformed, it must arrive at a condition of rest, together with the peace which comes from it. Vertical absorption of pure emotional me establishes an existential anchor for our emotional body, freeing us from the enslavement to continuous emotional swings and instability. Then even if we do experience what would previously have been a disturbing emotion originating in the power center, such as anger, it will be balanced by, and anchored through, our absorption in the soul. It is no longer an instinctive subconscious reaction disconnecting us from our pure nature, but rather it is experienced with awareness and expressed consciously from our pure subjectivity.



The Balance between Courage and Fearlessness

Courage and fearlessness are not the same. While courage is about bringing more integrity and emotional empowerment to a fearful situation, fearlessness is living beyond fear. To live in fearlessness means we have embodied our light, our non-self-conscious consciousness, which does not link itself to human anxieties. Fearlessness is one of the qualities of a completely embodied soul, a state which arises when we are fully surrendered to our pure nature. However, unless we were to entirely, and unnaturally, renounce our human existence, the soul also actively participates in its human expression, which includes dealing with different challenges on the physical plane. Without choosing to die physically, it is actually impossible to renounce our human self entirely. Even sages who lived in circumstances of extreme deprivation because of their convictions could not completely sever the links with their emotional and physical existence.

Our emotional center is completely empowered when fearlessness is integrated with our psychological and physical self. And based on this, the embodiments of fearlessness, courage, and emotional integrity can come into play. Courage can be activated in situations where there are survival issues, in either the physical or psychological sense.

Psychological survival is in many ways just as important to human beings, who define their existence through social interactions. So for instance, when humans are faced with hostility, disapproval, or rejection from and by others, there is an immediate reaction in the solar plexus, where it is interpreted in the same way as a threat or physical attack would be. This also includes attacks on one's self-image, which damage one's sense of emotional security. It is natural for any sensitive human being to feel uncomfortable when faced with psychological aggression, because such aggression is energetically the same as physical aggression. Indeed, because we are struggling to maintain a positive self-image in compensation for low self-confidence and emotional insecurity, such psychological attacks can make us feel even more vulnerable.

And yet if we are able to take a step back from our attachment to self-image and see these situations from a relaxed and detached perspective, we can deal with them logically and practically. As we have said, this empowerment comes from being rooted in our deeper emotional power center, pure emotional me. In addition, we can bring courage to ourselves and cultivate the ability to discipline our mind, letting go of any fearful thoughts that may arise. While the emotional origin of such



feelings is in the solar plexus, many fears are created in the mind, and they are best extinguished there before they penetrate down into the emotional center.

A common feature in everyone's psychology is excessive self-protection, so much so it can even be viewed as a neurosis. An example of this can be seen in meditation practice, where many seekers cannot help but think about their personal desires and security. The moment a thought arises that triggers deeper insecurity or anxiety, it immediately becomes emotionally charged and sets off a chain of thoughts which feed fear. Even those meditators who do have access to their pure nature, thus possessing the ability to stop the negative chain of thoughts, typically continue identifying with their thoughts and emotions, rather than dealing with them using courage and logic. This is because they either do not appreciate their light sufficiently or do not have the courage to let go into the space of non-self-protection.

Courage is essential in situations like this so that the mind's habitual tendencies can be cut off. One has to be brave to surrender the mind. A coward cannot stop thinking because his weakness forces him to live in fear. One must use the sword of discrimination to cut through the robotic and unending cycle of anxious self-preservation which feed the subconscious emotional center. One has to learn how to live beyond the mind. The moment we have enough courage to drop the mind, we enter the space beyond courage – fearlessness. Courage is the bridge to fearlessness, and fearlessness is the embodiment of our pure nature beyond self-image. As noted, the moment we decide to attend to our human affairs consciously, and to confront and deal with whatever worries and fears may arise, the activation of courage will allow us to do so in a healthy way. True courage is experienced from our base in the soul's unconditional fearless nature.

The Wisdom in Fear

There is wisdom in fear when it is warning us of real danger. There is even a place for fear on the spiritual path. For instance, seekers all too often surrender with misguided trust and devotion to suspicious gurus when they should more advisably be cautious and even afraid. Many seekers are under the illusion that everything labeled 'spiritual' is safe, when in reality, it can be highly dangerous and is often linked to strange and dark energies. It is very naive to think that 'light' will protect us just because our intention is to experience the divine.



In another example, some people channel beings of 'light', foolishly thinking that it is safe to do so, when they should be fearful of connecting to realms of which they have no real understanding. Others enter the path of kundalini without fear of consequences, even though there is not even any basic science underlying that tradition. We need to possess the basic wisdom and discernment, and see that it is indeed right to fear such experimentations, as there are real dangers there. For instance, through practicing Transcendental Meditation and undergoing years of mantra repetition, one can effectively block subsequent progress because the constant repetition of a mantra over a long term results in energetic damage to consciousness which is difficult to reverse. Why do seekers have no fear of doing this? It is simply because they are ignorant. One of the main aspects of ignorance is not being aware of the fundamental dangers in reality, be they physical or spiritual. If one jumps into a pond full of piranhas to have a swim, one is demonstrating ignorance, if not stupidity, rather than wisdom and courage.

Caution is not the same as fear; its role is that of preempting potential dangers. When a real danger is detected, caution moves into the background and the more emotive responses of fear, or even terror, come into play. Caution alone is not enough to deal with an immediate threat or situation that demands more decisive action. These require the active participation of focused emotional energy, such as anger or fear. Fear is an energy-based emotion required for our physical, psychological, and spiritual survival on the relative plane. As long as it is not out of control and does not eliminate and replace our integrity, fear can be embraced as a constructive part of human existence. A healthy experience of fear does not prevent our being able to deal intelligently with the situation at hand. After it serves its purpose, it leaves no trace, or scar, on the psyche. In this respect, our emotional center continues to be embodied at its depth and empowered by pure me, while our whole soul is in a natural samadhi.

Living beyond Fear

As long as our lives are controlled by fear, we are not free. There is neither honor nor dignity in a life lived in fear. There is a huge difference between facing the fear of a real threat with courage and trust and that of letting our fears run rampant in our subconscious, making us victims to both the situation and our emotions. To live beyond fear means we have transcended the emotional subconscious, with its self-doubts and instinctive reactions to such threats. Internally, fear can be transcended by the complete surrender of the human to the soul. And externally, in the physical world, we can deal with threats with courage, confidence, and trust from our internal base of



integrity. Alternatively, through becoming aware of tendencies to over self-protectiveness, we also have the option of nipping in the bud any unwarranted thoughts which would otherwise give rise to fear.

Fear cannot be transcended unless we untie the knot which links our identification to the false self and embody our light. The human, along with other creatures on this planet, is a child of fear, and can only be released from this fear, in its uncontrolled primal sense, by merging with the soul. The soul's domain is not restricted to the inner realm; she enjoys and expresses herself in the relative world as well. She is where she should be, taking responsibility for her existence while participating in the real world from her base of strength and natural confidence. Unlike the human, who defines himself through self-consciousness, our soul exists beyond self-consciousness and activates self-reference only as an intermittent function of transparent intelligence. Living in the outer world from her base in samadhi in the realm of universal subjectivity, the soul expresses herself as a human from the immeasurable depth of being which cannot be touched by the energies of the relative dimension. Even when she connects through her human mind to the occasional worrying thought or emotion of fear, she experiences it from her natural detachment, in which her human expression is included, embraced, and emancipated by her transcendent presence.

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary