

UNDERSTANDING FEAR

Situations of extreme tension create:

- Sensation of being vulnerable
- State of alarm
- Feeling of impotence
- Altered sense of reality

Try to move from...

- Paralysis
- Obsession
- Blaming yourself
- Denial/rigidity

Consequences of fear:

- Bodily reactions
- Fantasies
- Fear feeding itself
- Disorganized behavior
- Guilt

To...

Defense mechanisms which allow you to take precautionary steps against threats.

Fear is a normal reaction to situations of extreme tension or stress. It can be beneficial when we use it as a red flag, warning us of risks which lie ahead and giving us time to prepare ourselves accordingly. For this, we should be ware of our body's reactions to stress and recognize palpitations, an upset stomach, "frog" in your throat, drowning sensations, etc. as *normal* in such situations.

However, it is important that we opt for action over paralysis. Remember that fear and its consequences often feed off each other in a vicious circle, augmenting stress and tension, if they are not addressed promptly.

Ways to live with fear:

1) Stay active

Confront your fears and identify:

- a) the situations which produce fear
- b) Their consequences

Counter with:

- a) security measures
- b) relax: don't let it get to you

2) Know your fears

Recognize them: What do I feel? What am I thinking?

Analyze them: What are the *real* possibilities?

Socialize them: Share your fears with others.

Dissect them: What parts are there to each and what can you do?

3) Avoid taking rigid positions: denial, cover-up, fooling yourself into believing the risks aren't really there

4) Share your feelings

NOTE: Be sure to mark out blocks of time to adequately deal with each of these!

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WAYS TO HANDLE FEAR

A LIST OF OPTIONS FROM PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS

- Reach for inspiration;
- Believe victory is possible: Hope!;
- Praise those who show courage;
- Group unity controls fear;
- Organize mass demonstrations into affinity groups, then train with your group;
- Be calm, and do what increases calm: sleep, eat, sing, distance ourselves from fear;
- Chanting with drum, praying, meditation, music, bands, singing;
- Breathe. Focus on breathing while being aware of the fear. Mindfulness;
- Humor;
- Play games to loosen up;
- Assist others who feel fear;
- Take risks in personal life;
- Take risks in the group;
- Take action to gain confidence;
- Preparation and regular training;
- Role play being hit, being arrested;
- Physical training (builds confidence);
- Use catharsis to release the fear (with friends or via counseling);
- Recall stories of heroes, history of nonviolent struggle;
- Have exemplary leader to demonstrate courage;
- Study and understand what we fear;
- See our opponents as human beings (with mirror neurons!);
- Admit own fear and explain how I will deal with it;
- Recognize the fear; get used to it;
- Experience surviving it;
- Envision positive outcome; envision worst possible outcome; acclimate to both;
- Teach disadvantage of fear (how it is used as a weapon by the oppressor);
- Determination to win your goal no matter what it takes;
- Remember that death is ordinary, a part of life;
- Prepare self to die; use images like "My body is a temple where my spirit dwells";
- Battle cry: tell comrades, "Better to die than live under dictatorship!"