

What "Spooks" You? A Study Of Fear And A Lesson In Truth

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Happy Halloween!! Isn't this an amazing time that we live in? For some strange reason, terror, the most frightening of emotions, is something we pursue in October. We even pay money to experience it! Think of all the movies, television programs, carnival rides and feature events that promise to terrorize you in some way...as if the evening news doesn't! At this time of year, we seem to be actually fixated on the battle between good and evil, right and wrong, earthling and alien. And since "terror" sells, the bad guys have more than a fifty-fifty chance of winning, or at least returning for a sequel. Those that support the "good guys" may be the marketing genius behind NO FEAR tee shirts!

Fear is defined as the unpleasant strong emotion caused by the expectation or awareness of danger, an anxious concern. As infants we are born with only two fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. They are a sort of alarm system given by nature as self-preservation. So what are the first games that every parent plays with their child? Holding the baby overhead and peek-a-boo with great startle instinct responses. The baby soon learns cues from the parents that he is safe and taken care of, so these games begin to be experienced as excitement rather than fear.

Your parents, relatives, teachers and those in your environment who influenced you in some way, gave all other fears to you. Not all fears are harmful. In fact, many of them are useful. A child who has not been conditioned to fear traffic is at great risk for being struck by a car. Fear often is beneficial and useful for personal safety. Even if a fear is useless, that doesn't always mean that it is harmful. Many people develop fears of snakes, spiders or dogs and can function in life perfectly by merely avoiding the one object, animal or situation that produces the fear. The fear does not interfere with their emotional, social or work life.

To determine the degree that your fear is affecting you, ask yourself some simple questions:

- * Is my fear taking up a lot of my time? Am I obsessively thinking about it?
- * Is my fear making me do things the hard way...like drive miles out of my way to avoid a bridge or tunnel?
- * Is my fear affecting my relationships? Do I avoid intimacy because I fear being hurt?
- * Is my fear affecting me physically - hands shaking? rapid pulse? lots of headaches? blurred vision? nausea? depressed?

If you responded yes to any of these questions, you may want to get help to ease the fear or be rid of it altogether.

A fear may have such a hold on you that it seems impossible to unlock or even understand. Regardless of what produces the fear - thunderstorms, dentists, public speaking, cancer, fire, death - the majority of fears come from one of the following five causes:

1. Severe Stress. Stress can be repressed into the subconscious mind and then resurface as an irrational fear. This is also called a "displaced phobia". Often the person selects something that can be avoided, rather than fearing the true stimulus that is difficult or impossible to avoid. An example would be a person who is very nervous in social situations may develop a fear of driving at night. The fear of driving prevents social encounters (the actual fear).

2. Series of experiences occurring over several years. Many fears related to your own performance and personal history can cause you to build a gigantic fear. Not only may there be an accumulation of dreaded events, but the mind may have replayed them over and over again to epic proportions.

3. Fear of a fear. "We have nothing to fear but fear itself" is truly accurate. If you have a fear of panic, your fear can be associated with anything and everything because you believe you will lose control. By anticipating panic, you raise your stress level and create a very destructive cycle.

4. Transmitted to you by another. If you continuously saw someone react in terror to something, you probably will respond in the same way.

5. A severe past trauma. A painful experience from the past can produce an unreasonable fear of the same situation, object, person or place. We call this "post-traumatic stress syndrome".

Despite the origin of your fear, there are several powerful things you can do to get rid of it. All of these interventions involve using your imagination, for that is where the fear first got its power. These suggestions are most effective when used in hypnotherapy - either self-hypnosis or treatments with a skilled therapist.

You may want to identify the specific event that caused your fear and sever your emotional ties to it.

You may want to use your imagination to rewrite the past event.

You may want to confront your fear while experiencing it as a non-threatening experience - smiling because the fear has lost its strength and its importance; you no longer need it and you no longer want it.

You may want to increase your self-confidence and inner strength.

You may want to reprogram your subconscious mind using a specific posthypnotic suggestion in regard to your fear. Pair bonding a past positive experience with the present negative experience can cause the negative stimulus to produce positive pleasant emotions. By linking the two experiences together, the positive one can counteract the fear and change your reactions.

The things you fear do not really exist except as thoughts in your mind. Thoughts are creative - be careful what you think!! Look at your fears and hold them up to the light of reason. Learn to laugh at your fears - that is the best medicine. Fear is man's greatest enemy. It is behind failure, sickness and bad relationships. Love casts out fear. Love is an attachment to the good things in life. Fall in love with honesty, integrity, justice, good will, and success. Live in joyous expectancy of the best, and invariably the best will come to you.

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