

### **Dream Ingredient #3: Confronting Fear**

Willingness to confront your fears is critical to mental programming. Great persuaders have mastered their fears. You will be tempted to leave your fears buried, but they will invariably come back to haunt you. It is much better to deal with fears directly, especially considering that whatever we fear most is never as bad as we think. Human infants are born with only two fears: fear of falling and fear of loud noises. A newborn baby fears nothing else. All other fears are learned. The good news is that if we can learn fears, we can unlearn them.

How do you unlearn a deeply ingrained fear? You must face it. That's right—you must deliberately put yourself in the situation where you are confronted with it and there is no escape. Any new skill comes only through extensive practice. There is no way around it. Let's say you have a terrible fear of public speaking. If you want to be a brilliant public speaker, then you've got a lot of public speaking to do. You must force yourself to present to others over and over again. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld jokes about how people are more afraid of public speaking than of dying. He says they would rather be in the casket than delivering the eulogy! The truth is, we usually find out, once we've stepped up and faced a fear directly, that it wasn't so bad. Most of our fears are exaggerated doubts or they are based on unrealities. How will you ever come to this realization if you don't look your fears in the face?

Very closely related to fear is worry. While "worry" may seem a lesser emotion than "fear," it should still be avoided like the plague. Worry expends energy (needlessly), distracts you from your goals, disrupts momentum, and sets you back. It also welcomes negative thoughts that can undo all the good mental programming you've done. Research tells us that fully 92 percent our worries either will never come to pass or can't be changed. Why spend time and energy fretting about the things that we are the least likely to be confronted with? It is much better to deal with the realities in front of you than with imagined obstacles.

Finally, even if you've had painful experiences in the past (and who hasn't?), your future is always a clean slate. Don't allow yourself to be immobilized by past mistakes. You are better off for the knowledge and experience you have gained from them. I know you wish you could see the future so you could feel assured that you wouldn't get yourself into a mess again, but unfortunately there are no crystal balls. Careful and effective mental programming is your best crystal ball. Once you've programmed your mind toward your true goals, you must learn to trust. Trust that things will fall into place and follow the best course of action. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step."

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