

How to be freed from Fear

Fear is something that everyone has to some degree or another. And some amount of fear can be viewed as healthy. It is what keeps us from being run over when we cross the street, by looking both ways for traffic. It is also what helps us be aware of our surroundings and helps us acknowledge when we are in danger. Fear acts as our warning signal.

However, when fear gains too much control of our psyche and we allow it to keep us from doing what we would like to do, then it becomes a problem. In fact, fear can become a crippling aspect of life, if left unchecked.



What type of Anxieties are there??

As I stated, everyone has some amount of fear of something. That is normal. When is it no longer normal? That is when you notice you no longer have control of your life. The fear does. You start avoiding doing the things you liked doing or need to do. Your day to day activity becomes impeded. Your mood might also be impacted and become depressed. You lose sleep.

Even various physical symptoms can start to manifest such as skin irritations and rashes.

For diagnostic assistance these various anxieties can then be categorized into one of the Anxiety disorders that are listed and described under [the DSM Manual](#).

The single largest category of anxiety disorders listed is that of specific phobias which includes all cases in which fear and anxiety are triggered by a specific stimulus or situation. For example, a very common one is fear of spiders or heights.

Then there also panic attacks that can occur. In this situation, a person has brief attacks of intense terror and apprehension, often marked by trembling, shaking, confusion, dizziness, nausea, and/or difficulty breathing.

Agoraphobia is the specific anxiety about being in a place or situation where escape is difficult or embarrassing or where help may be unavailable.^[17] Agoraphobia is strongly linked with [panic disorder](#) and is often precipitated by the fear of having a panic attack. A common manifestation involves needing to be in constant view of a door or other escape route.

[Social anxiety disorder](#) (SAD; also known as social phobia) describes an intense fear and avoidance of negative public scrutiny, public embarrassment, humiliation, or social interaction. This [fear](#) can be specific to particular social situations (such as public speaking) or, more typically, is experienced in most (or all) social interactions. [Social anxiety](#) often manifests specific physical symptoms, including blushing, sweating, and difficulty speaking.

Then there is Post-Traumatic Stress disorder. PTSD results from a traumatic experience. Post-traumatic stress can result from an extreme situation, such as combat, natural disaster, torture, rape, [hostage](#) situations, [child abuse](#), [bullying](#), or even a serious accident.

These are just to name a few of what can develop and be experienced by an individual.

Anxiety Disorders can also accompany other psychological illnesses, such as Depression or be an aberration of Drug-use, Alcoholism, or various Personality Disorders and Sleep Disorders.

What can I do to free myself???

If your fear is moderate and you want try to gain control of it yourself:

- 1.) Stop feeding the fear. Often we focus on the fear and allow our thoughts to be inundated by the fear. Our thoughts become like a hamster on a wheel, running ever faster and faster. So, to stop this, become aware of your breathing!
- 2.) Continue breathing and see how that has interrupted the fear process. Allow yourself some time to acknowledge the fear but checking your breathing and concentrating on feeling your breathing will cause the fear to lose its hold on you.
- 3.) Allow the fear its space. Imagine it as something you can keep at arms distance. Start trying to understand the fear and seeing it for what it really is. Often, our minds can blow out a fear unproportional to what the real danger is. What is the true reality of the situation you are experiencing? Keep breathing.
- 4.) Now, do the following exercise to center yourself:
Sit on the floor cross-legged (like Yoga) and back straight and head straight. Start by being aware of your breathing in this position. Where are you breathing from? How much room do you feel you have to breath from? Is there any tension in your body? Where? Just note it. Then bend forward as far as possible and feel how it is to breathe in this position. Is it easier or harder than in the central position. Feel this position for at least 20-25 seconds. Then move your upper body back to the center- straight

back/ head. Feel how it is to breathe in the center position again.

Now, bend forward again, feel this position briefly and then when ready, move your upper body 90 degrees to the right. This will cause you to slightly lean to the right on your right buttocks. Feel how it is to breathe in this position. Allow the natural rhythm of your breathing throughout the exercise. Note if you notice your breathing to stop and what is going on at that moment. Now, after 20-25 seconds leaning to the right, move back to the central position. Feel how it is to breathe in the center again.

Now, lean with your upper body back to the right where you were and feel this position once again and then move 90 degrees to the back (behind you). You will be leaning with your weight almost on your tailbone. Feel how this position is and not your breathing as well. Is it easier to breathe in this position or harder?? After 20-25 seconds, move back to center and feel the position once again.

When ready, move back to the leaned back position and feel this position once again. When ready, move your body once again, as if drawing a circle, to the left. Now, you will be leaning mostly on your left buttocks and see how this position feels and how your breathing is. Easier or harder than the last position? Is it easier than center? After 20-25 seconds, move your upper body back to center and feel this position once again.

Now, when ready, move your upper body back out to the left on the circle and feel this position once again. How is it now? Once you are ready, move your upper body 90 degrees to the front. Note- you are always going in a clockwise direction. Now you are at the position we started out on in the circle. See how it feels now. Is it easier or harder to breathe than when you started. feel this position for 20-25 seconds. Always allow your breathing to continue and be aware of how it feels. Where is the tension in your body?

Now, move back to the central position, straight spine and head, looking forward. Feel your breathing again and note if there is any tension in the body now. How is the energy in your body?

5.) Learn to meditate and clear your mind

6.) Practice Yoga. There are many different types. You need to see what suits you best.

7.) Walk in nature (unless that is one of your fears;-) Getting in touch with nature by walking in the park or forest, sitting at the banks of a lake or at the ocean is always good for the soul and for connecting with yourself. Nature has a way of putting things back into perspective.

8.) Try Biofeedback or Autogenic training, which can also be very helpful in grounding you.

What if I cannot contain the fear/ anxiety alone???

Depending on the degree of fear you are experiencing and the surrounding circumstances, it is often well advised to seek out a therapist to regain control of your life. The therapist can gauge what degree your fear is and what the best approach for treatment is in order that your fear can be reduced or totally eliminated.

If you are seeking state-insured therapy, you will have to seek out a Psychologist or a Psychiatrist. The modalities offered by state-insurance funded therapy are one of 3 types: Psychoanalysis, Deep psychological based Psychotherapy, oder Behavioral Therapy (CBT)..

CBT is the most common practice when dealing with phobias directed at a certain object (stimulus). Often the technique called exposure is used to get the client used to the stimulus at various increasing degrees until they are comfortable with the object previously feared.

What is Body-Oriented Psychotherapy??

I practice Body-oriented Psychotherapy, a form of deep psychological based psychotherapy. To understand what that means, one must understand the cornerstone of this school of thought. Body-oriented Psychotherapy is based on the belief

that all that we experience from the moment we are a 3-6 month old fetus and throughout our life is stored in our body. All the emotions and memories are stored somewhere in our body! Furthermore, if any traumatic events occurred during the first 5 to 6 years in life, these events can permanently impact our body structure for the rest of our lives. This can be visibly seen in people that suffer from a psychological based form of scoliosis, for instance. As a result, I associate the body in every aspect of the fear experienced by the client. I find that CBT has its purpose when wanting a quick solution to altering a person's behavior. However, I feel that it never addresses what underlies the fear.

How can Body-oriented Psychotherapy help me with my fear??

No matter what the fear is directed at, it is what underlies the fear that is of most interest. If you just address what is currently feared and not the underlying aspect, then another fear could and most likely will pop up again at some future time.

Fear can be felt in the body and therefore the body can be a wonderful tool in understanding where the fear is coming from and what it is associated with.

In cases, for instance, of SAD, it is important to look not only at where one feels this fear in the body, but to try to look at when it first developed. Often, the memory will appear when the fear is located in the body. The memory is awakened, so to speak, by noticing the body. It is helpful, if possible, to see if the person can recollect when they first developed this fear and what was going on at the time this was experienced. Maybe a traumatic event occurred in childhood where the child was heavily judged or ridiculed in front of his or her peers.

Even in object-oriented fear, one can always look at the body for where the fear is felt and see what underlies the fear.

To get a person more connected with their body, I use a blend of bioenergetics exercises, developed by Alexander Lowen and also Breath exercises, developed by Ilse Middendorf. These exercises not only enable a person to communicate with their body, it also enables them to release negative blockages that are stored up in the body.

In both of these disciplines, the Breath and the act of breathing is in the foreground, which is important when speaking about fear and anxiety disorders. Just note what happens to your breathing when you are highly anxious or afraid. It might get shortened with increased tempo or you might stop breathing all together, holding your breath until you are forced to gasp for more air in the next breath!

In conjunction with these modalities, I also enlist various relaxation and meditation techniques. One which is quite noticeable is the Jacobian Relaxation technique, which involves taking an inventory of the body and conducting contraction and relaxation of various muscle groups throughout the body. By the time the individual has carried this technique out, they are usually thoroughly relaxed and are able to continue with their day or are able to finally go to sleep.

Imagination techniques/ therapy can be further helpful in really understanding the fear and what is behind it. One can bring the client into a realm that they create in their mind's eye. And once they find where the fear is being felt in the body, they can bring the fear into this imaginary realm that they create and control. They have the opportunity to look at the fear and even speak with it. Understanding the fear and allowing it a space can be very helpful in dealing with fear. They can also look at the moments leading up to when the fear developed. They can not only gain an understanding of where it originated but also what they possibly wanted to do at that moment in time to change the outcome in their mind's eye. The body is encouraged here to express what it wanted to do at that moment in time and to do it.



They can also enlist allies by calling up whomever or whatever they want in managing and understanding this fear. Using the imagination creates unlimited options in the mind's eye as to what can be done. And the most important aspect of this method is that it empowers the client. They are able to look at it in their own created and controlled environment. They can choose to release the fear or even cast it out. And when the fear is gone from the body, then the client can fill that space where the fear was felt at, with something else- be that, love, light, or happiness, for example. Again, the client is empowered here to define their own healing! They gain something positive out of the whole experience! And at the end of the day, that is what it is all about. Not just healing and getting rid of the fear but empowering the individual to be feel stronger than before.

For those that cannot work so well with the imagination, I try a form of Gestalt. I first will have the client try to describe the different parts of themselves. For instance, a part of us might be the student, or the teacher. Another part of us might be an injured child, from an earlier childhood trauma. Another part of us, going back to Archetypes created by C-G. Jung, might be the judge or the lawyer, or the mother or father. It is a process of breaking yourself down into different facets. Then I will set up chairs and have each part talk with the other that wants to be present. Through this conversation, you can find out what

part of you holds the fear and what the other parts of you can do to support the fearful part. That is the beauty of this. One learns to embrace the different aspects of oneself and support oneself. This is truly empowering and can also be done as part of the imagination technique.

And that is the goal of therapy, I feel. To not only help free the person of what is plaguing them but to empower them to support and heal themselves.