

Conquering Fear

> The fear of bodily injury is not unusual. But there are other fears, though less intense, that are even more common. These fears imprison thousands of men and women in unhealthy, dysfunctional and even abusive personal and work-related relationships.

First is fear of change and uncertainty. Believing that “the devil you know is better than the devil you don’t,” people infected with this fear think bad relationships and jobs are better than nothing and their self-image is so low they can’t imagine something better coming along.

Second is fear of disapproval. Some people dread embarrassment or rejection

so much they are unwilling to do anything that risks the disapproval of others.

Third is fear of failure. Many people are so frightened by the possibility of failure they accept whatever they have as enough.

Last is fear of financial insecurity. Some people worry so much about how they will survive financially that they chain themselves to unhappy situations.

The common thread is an abiding but false feeling of inadequacy concerning the ability to handle challenges. There is no chemical antidote to fear and it’s usually futile to lecture fearful people about replacing apprehension with self-assurance. We can’t change

timidity to boldness by edict or exhortation, but there is a strategy that can work. We can’t simply manufacture courage and confidence, but we can force ourselves to act courageously even in the face of fear.

Don’t wait to feel unafraid or certain. Think of yourself as an actor and act the way a brave person would. Fake it if you have to, but get moving! Each time you look fear in the face, you gain power over fear. And whether you believe it or not, you will survive—and in taking over your life, you will eventually thrive. ■

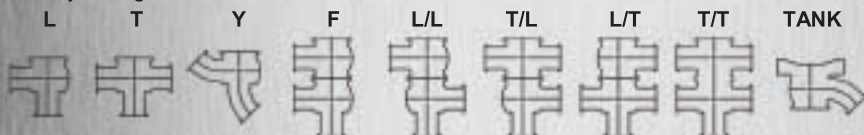
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