



Embrace And Rename The Fear

By Lyn Carman

Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway – something I chose to do often and one of my favourite books by author Susan Jeffers

We have a choice in every moment to allow our emotions to hold us back and block us from moving forward. Or we can choose to think differently.

What purpose does that little voice we hear inside our heads, the 'Mini Me' voice, serve? The one that sometimes has the ability of holding us back from our goals if we let it. What holds us back when we unpack the feeling is quite often fear.

In the limited space we have here, let's have a quick look at fear and how it can drive our actions ...

The limbic system in the brain controls our fear response – the emotional circuit of the brain that evolved in mammals and includes the amygdala and hippocampus. Many people call it "The Lizard Brain" because the limbic system is about all a lizard has for brain function. It is in charge of fight, flight, feeding, fear, freezing-up, and fornication.

The limbic system comprises regions of the brain that are all connected to the hypothalamus and control the body's stress response. As humans, we have evolved a "fight or flight" response to potential dangers. It's what helped our hominid ancestors decide whether to do battle with predators ... freeze in the hope of not being noticed or flee quick smart up a tree.

Designed to protect us, and for basic survival, we could argue there is little real need for this response in our modern world as we don't face wild predators and life and death situations on a daily basis. So how do we change the impact of fear on our everyday life decisions and choices?

Fear stems from a feeling of lack of control and therefore perhaps there are things we can control. Most people can easily recognise the physical effects of feeling fear such as racing heartbeat, sweaty palms, increased breathing rate, clamminess, dilated pupil and so on.

If you chose to go in a small plane, 15000 feet high in the sky; jump out with a parachute on your back; strapped to an expert sky diver who you are trusting with your life... **you may encounter fear, excitement or both.**

Interestingly, what happens physically in our bodies is the same.

Think about a time when you felt really excited to be doing 'a thing'. Think about how it felt and the physical feelings you felt – the increased heart rate; the butterflies in your tummy; the clammy palms ...and notice the similarity with another feeling?

The important thing to notice is that if fears are holding you back from achieving your goals and seeking your dreams ... and fear stems from a feeling of lack of control, let's focus on what you can control.

As I touched on earlier, the chemical release in our bodies when you encounter fear, excitement, or both is the same.

So what changes fear and anxiety into excitement and anticipation? The chemicals themselves only have meaning when we notice the sensation and then give it a name. So, if we notice the sensation and name it "fear", it becomes an unpleasant feeling. The words we use are what we can control, and this can shift how we experience the feeling.

This knowledge gives us awareness of how our unconscious mind works. That little Mini Me voice can have the ability of holding us back ... if we let it. Knowing these fears for what they are, we can choose to feel the fear & take action anyway, when it serves us to do so.

There is power in being fearless and mastering your own emotions when times get tough, or when you feel anxious, frustrated or afraid. Feeling afraid from time to time is entirely human. Feeling the full range of emotions is human, though we always have a choice. Recognising and acknowledging the fear and then by changing our language of the feelings we can change how we experience the situation. For example – "I am really nervous right now" to "I am really excited right now."

So, choosing not to let our fears hold us back and having the power to express the feelings as excitement or anticipation, we can have a different experience of life and perhaps even overcome the pattern of fear which has presented in our lives. So in the words of Susan Jeffers go ahead, "Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway"

