

The Experience of Overcoming a Fear

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To have fears is human; it is as simple as that. You can't go through life without the feeling of fear. So what is it like to overcome fear; what does it feel like? There has been a great deal of research devoted to the sensation of fear and how to overcome it. A popular textbook, devoted entirely to the subject, is The Psychology of Fear and Stress by J. Grey. In this textbook Grey talks a great deal about commonly held beliefs with regards to fear (Grey, 1987). The book talks not only about common beliefs about fear but common misconceptions. One misconception is that to conquer your fear you must face it. While this is somewhat true, it certainly isn't the whole truth. The truth is, you have to build yourself up to face a fear and the process needs to be well constructed and guided. If you are scared of something and you are overwhelmed by it, you will continue to be scared of it and in fact your fear will probably build. Thus, an important component of overcoming fear is to have gradual exposure to it. Another common misconception with regards to fear is that there is something wrong with people who have fears. In the textbook The Psychology of Fear, by P. Gower, the author stresses the notion that fear is natural and a built in survival mechanism (Gower, 2004). If humans didn't have suitable responses to fear we wouldn't have evolved because fear keeps us safe. Fear has many important adaptive components. Not only is fear a normal sensation, it is abnormal not to feel it. Thus, one should not feel stigmatized that they have fears. Fears are natural but if they become debilitating then it is important to take steps to overcome them. While fears are a very normal part of life, it is imperative to realize when they become over controlling and begin to ruin your life.

In the book Conquering Fear, by Roger Frye, the author develops a thirty one day procedure to follow that should allow anyone to overcome a fear (Frye, 2006). The book takes the reader through a gradual process that allows a person to understand their fear and gradually

overcome it. The steps are all based on scientific research and follow a gradual escalation that can be stopped at any time if the person feels overwhelmed.

So what does it feel like to overcome a fear? When asked, most people, more than anything, felt a sense of relief and calm. They felt as though they became stronger and more confident. Once you overcome a debilitating fear your sense of confidence in attacking other tasks grows. Well, conquering a fear is not an easy thing to do but it can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. Simply put overcoming a fear can change your life and enrich it. It can give you a new found sense of self-esteem and confidence as you take on other challenges in your life. In retrospect, people say they felt certain fears haunted them but now they feel a sense of freedom.

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References

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