The Cure For Fear

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Introduction

Welcome

In my work around the world as a success coach running workshops such as the Elite Performers Series and the Awakening Best Self weekend (see www.robinsharma.com), I have yet to meet anyone who is without fear. To be human is to have fear. And when we push through fear, we achieve true growth. Interestingly, the path to our best lives runs right through our fears.

In this workbook I offer you a complete system that will help you to transcend your fears. In this workbook I will explain how fear sabotages you and how it manifests itself in your life. I will share with you the 12 Core Human Fears and the value of fear. Finally, I will detail the 8 Cures for Fear along and present exercises that will help you to master each tool.
How to Use this Workbook

At the end of this workbook are eight tools that cure fear. Try to complete all of the exercises in each section before moving to the next—they build on each other. Remember that successful people consistently practice simple fundamentals, so dedicate yourself to getting the most out of each exercise. Take the time to reflect deeply and ensure that these fundamentals make it into your daily practice.

This workbook includes several kinds of exercises. Some are simply questions for you to reflect on and answer. Others ask you to list goals or insights. Some ask you to take action on what you have just learned. Be sure to take some action on each day of the program. This is great practice for developing a “Do it Now” mentality.

Journaling

Keeping a journal is a proven and powerful way to make changes in your life. If you do not already have a journal, go out and buy one now. It does not have to be elaborate. You just need a notebook in which you can write down ideas and lessons from this program, your daily reflections, and your responses to the exercises contained in this workbook.
### Learning Goals

The first step is to clarify what you want to learn from this program. By writing down your goals for this learning experience, you increase the value of the program exponentially. Complete the learning goals exercise below and return to it after you have finished the workbook. In the left-hand column write down what you hope to improve as a result of this program. In the right-hand column jot down a brief description of why this is important. The more emotional and personal the “why” is, the more powerful your motivation will be.

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Fear Keeps You Small

Fear is the primary obstacle to human greatness. Fear keeps us small. Fear prevents us from living our dreams. Fear stops us from being authentic. And the sad thing is that most of our fears are not real. They are pure fantasies. They are mental constructs or hallucinations. Our fears are stories that we tell ourselves about how the world works. And they are not based on truth.

I must confess that one of my greatest fears was public speaking. That may surprise you given that that’s how I spend most of my days. However, when I was in university and law school, I structured my entire curriculum to avoid standing up on my feet and giving a speech. That fear kept me small. And it really was a story that I told myself. The story went something like, “If I get up and share what I have to say, I may fail.” Or “People won’t like what I have to say.” Or simply, “I’ll look foolish.”

We see the world, not as it is, but as we are. That mental chatter was just a story that my fears were telling me—an inaccurate story. The fact of the matter was that I was a good speaker. Eventually, I got to a point where I was able to say to myself, “I am bigger than this. I’m going to deal with my fear.” And soon I was speaking to larger and larger groups. Now, I regularly speak to thousands of people at a time all over the world.

The point of the story is this: What you resist persists. But what you befriend, you will transcend. And the day I began to get to know my fear and stand in my fear and befriend my fear was the day that I began to beat it.
The Master and the Dogs

One day a wise master went to visit a remote mountain temple. As he approached the temple he saw a pair of ferocious dogs chained to the entry gate. Upon seeing him, they barked and pulled against their chains. The monk accompanying the master said, “I know these dogs look scary, but don’t worry; they are chained to the wall and cannot harm you.” As he passed the entrance to the temple, he looked back to see that the dogs had broken free from their chains and were racing directly towards him. Then the master started to run—directly towards the dogs. The dogs were so surprised to see the Master running at them that they turned around and ran away.

The story of the Master and the Dogs is a powerful metaphor for how to handle fear. If I continued to run away from my fear of public speaking, that fear would own me to this day. I would still be limited by it. But the day I ran towards my fear, I began to transcend it.

That’s one of the strategies of the wildly successful entrepreneurs and CEOs with whom I work. They feel the fears (because all of us have fears), and they run towards them. Courage is not the absence of fear; courage is feeling the fear and still doing the things that scare you.

Here’s another example of a limiting fear: the entrepreneurs who won’t take their business to the next level. “What if it fails?” they ask themselves. Behind that thinking is fear—fear of failure, fear of not being good enough.

Here’s another example. How about the managers who put on a social mask and talk in a certain way because they think it makes them look successful? I call it Airport Lounge Syndrome. I spend a lot of time in airport lounges, and it never ceases to amaze me how people speak in airport lounges. It’s not real. It’s not authentic. It doesn’t ring true. Why do they say, “Bob, you need to outline the implications of this strategy going forward in light of the incipient merger and acquisition?”
I believe that they talk like that because, at a core level, they are afraid to be themselves. They are afraid of what people will think if they take down that social mask and share more of their humanity in the workplace. The irony is that people are crying out to see the human side of you at work.

The best way to connect with another human, whether it’s a co-worker, a child, or your life partner, is to be real. When you have the courage to take down your social mask (yes, I know, it is scary), you give the person in front of you permission to take down their social mask. Then you have two human beings being real with each other, and that’s when the magic begins. That’s when you get true connection, when you get true understanding.

You might be wondering about the word I’m using, fear. So often when I’m coaching people and I look at their limiting patterns and behaviours, I’ll say, “It looks like you may be in fear around that.” And they’ll say, “No, I’m not afraid of that.” And that’s because we think of fear as that state of complete terror. But fear comes in many forms. It can manifest itself as anxiety, frustration, or even anger.

As I mentioned, avoiding being real at work is a form of fear. The constant need to be in control is also a form of fear. It could be fear of the unknown or fear of being controlled. Or what if your organization and your industry are going through a lot of change? Maybe you’re in sales and your territory is being changed. That causes anxiety. You become frustrated. Behind that anxiety and frustration is fear. It’s a fear of change, a fear of the unknown. It could be a fear of failure. It could be a fear of letting go of everything you’ve known about your organization.