

THE NATURE OF FEAR

ENDING THE ILLUSION



INSPIRED BY J. KRISHNAMURTI
SILENT PERCEPTION

The Nature of Fear

Ending the Illusion

A meditative exploration of how fear is created and how it can be ended.

Inspired by the teachings of **J. Krishnamurti** and the philosophical clarity of **David Bohm**.

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Written by Silent Perception

“Fear emerges from an inevitable process of thought and must be ended by a deliberate act of perception.” — *Silent Perception*

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Introduction

Fear shapes our lives in countless ways. It governs our choices, it dictates what we avoid, and it often becomes the unseen force behind many of our habits, decisions, and beliefs. To live with fear is to live with limitation — a life spent trying to evade discomfort, danger, or loss. Yet few people deeply question what fear truly is.

This book is an inquiry into the nature of fear.

It begins with a clear distinction between physical fear and psychological fear. Physical fear, such as the fear of drowning or falling, arises from a lack of skill — it has a clear cause and a practical solution. Psychological fear, however, is more subtle and pervasive. It is born from imagination, sustained by thought, and often disguised as something inevitable or rational. Both forms of fear originate from experience, yet they require different forms of understanding to be resolved.

Throughout these chapters, you will be invited to observe how fear is born, how it spreads through your life, and how it conditions your behaviour. You will see how fear often begins as a momentary belief — the sense that you cannot handle a situation — and how this belief, if left unchallenged, becomes a powerful force shaping your future actions.

This book presents a careful examination of the mechanics of fear, showing you how it emerges, how it sustains itself, and how it can be dissolved through clear perception and direct understanding.

The aim of this book is simple:

To show that fear is a malleable condition that is created, modified, and ended through the understanding of ourselves and the world.

Structure of the Inquiry

Chapter 1 — The Structure of Fear

Fear is the anticipation of danger. It appears as two forms: physical fear and psychological fear. Physical fear comes from a lack of skill, while psychological fear comes from imagined situations believed to be real.

Chapter 2 — The Creation of Fear

Fear is born from experience. It begins when distress overwhelms you, leading to a belief that you cannot handle a situation. This belief creates fear, which then shapes future reactions.

Chapter 3 — The Expansion of Fear

Fear spreads through avoidance. The mind builds escapes to avoid fearful situations, but each escape creates new fears. The root fear remains untouched and multiplies through these escapes.

Chapter 4 — The Core of Fear

Fear is conditioned at the moment you believe you cannot handle something. This is the point of terror. By directly questioning this belief, fear can dissolve before it becomes entrenched.

Chapter 1: An Overview of Physical and Psychological Fear

What is Fear?

Fear is the process of anticipating danger. The anticipation of danger in the future causes us to become distressed in the present.

There are two types of fear:

1. Physical fear
2. Psychological fear

Physical Fear

Fear is built through experience.

We enter a situation, become distressed, record it into memory, and fear it happening again.



figure 1. the creation of fear

Fear has two purposes:

1. To avoid a situation that causes distress.
2. To prepare ourselves to experience distress, when the situation is unavoidable.

Fear is a learned behaviour, and it is justified through what we know about ourselves. To understand this, let's take the example of no-fear and compare it to fear.

Example of No Fear

I swam from a young age, and have developed into a strong swimmer. I can swim, and I know I can swim, so when I go in the water, I feel comfortable.

Example of Fear

I never learnt to swim. I cannot swim, and I know I cannot swim, so when I go in the water, I feel distressed.

This shows you that fear is made up of two parts.

Part 1: We lack the skills necessary to feel comfortable in a situation.

Part 2: We know we lack those skills.

The root of physical fear is a lack of skill.

The fear of water arises because the person believes they cannot stay afloat, and the reason they believe that is because they know they lack the skills to stay afloat.

So, the fear is rational.

The solution to physical fear is to learn a skill.

The solution to this fear is to learn how to swim. As they learn how to swim, the belief that they will drown reduces, and so too does the fear.

Psychological Fear

Like physical fear, psychological fear is built through experience.

The distinguishing characteristic of psychological fear is that the experience is not based on a real event, but on an imagined one.

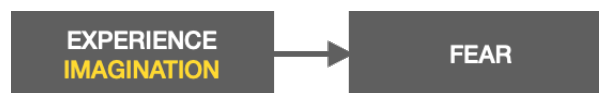


figure 2. the distinguishing characteristic of psychological fear

For example, my fear arises because I have an exam tomorrow and I am imagining a future event in which something bad happens.

While in the midst of fear, the mind experiences the imagination as real. This sense of reality makes the mind emotionally and intellectually invested in the imagination, so it becomes vital.

The root of psychological fear is an imagined reality, so the solution to the fear is to stop the imagination.

What is required to stop the imagination is to realise the imagination is not real.

The tool that facilitates this realisation is attention. When the mind gives attention to the imagination, the imagination is immediately seen to be imaginary and not real. At that moment, you experience 'popping out of the illusion', and the imagination begins to lose its vitality and disperse.

This enables the mind to return to a state where it can think rationally.

For instance, when there is no fear, you may rationally decide to revise a section of your course that you are uncertain about to best prepare yourself for the exam tomorrow.

Synopsis

Physical fear originates from a lack of skill, and is solved through acquiring skill.

Psychological fear originates from an imagination that we experience as real, and the solution is to realise the imagination is not real, but imaginary.

The imagination associated with psychological fear is triggered by something, and you must use rational thinking to ascertain whether that 'something' is real (such as an exam tomorrow) that requires you to act accordingly, or false (such as a fake news story) that requires you simply let it wither away.

Chapter 2: The Birth of Fear

The Birth of Fear

You know fear very well. It is likely you have several fears, some of which have been with you for many years or even decades. But have you ever seen a new fear be born? Have you ever observed the first time a fear establishes itself in your mind?

In this chapter, we explain how a new fear is born, how it is sustained, and what determines its intensity.

How Fear is Born

Fear is born from experience.

You are going about your day feeling completely normal and then encounter a situation that distresses you. The distress builds until you cannot take it anymore. You panic, exit the situation, and decide you cannot experience that situation again. Fear is born.



figure 1. the birth of fear

How Fear is Sustained

Fear is kept alive by the belief that you cannot handle that situation.

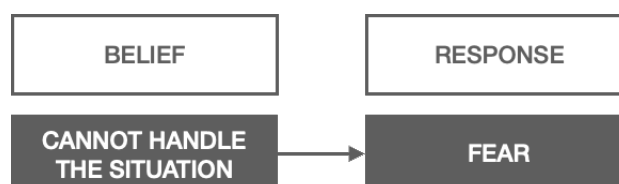


figure 2. how fear is sustained

Fear arises automatically as a self-protective response that reminds you to avoid the situation.



figure 3. the goal of fear

The trigger for fear is thinking you may encounter the situation you cannot handle.

Examples

Suppose you fear heights. Your fear may be triggered when you see a bridge in the distance. The fear instructs you take steps now to avoid the bridge in the future.

Suppose you fear spiders. Your fear may be triggered when you see a dark patch on the wall. The fear instructs you to grab a shoe and investigate the situation further.

The Intensity of Fear

The intensity of the fear you experience is determined by the degree to which you believe you cannot handle the situation.

When you believe you may be able to handle the situation, the fear is mild.

When you believe you cannot handle the situation, the fear is intense.

The belief in your ability to handle the situation is directly formed from the distressing experience that caused your fear to be born.

A person who fell into water, struggled to swim to safety but managed to climb out, will have less fear than a person who fell in the water, almost drowned, and had to be rescued by another.

The Freedom From Fear

As we said, fear is kept alive by the belief that you cannot handle that situation. Consequently, fear is ended by gaining the skill that makes you believe you can handle the situation.

When someone cannot swim, their belief in drowning makes them fear the water.

When that same person learns to swim, they believe they can stay afloat. Water is no longer something they need to avoid, so the fear diminishes.

Synopsis

Fear is created by experiencing a distressful situation and believing you cannot handle it. The belief establishes a reaction that makes you avoid the situation, and the reaction is triggered by thinking the situation may arise.

The intensity of the fear is determined by your believed inability to handle the situation and the ending of fear comes through gaining the confidence that you can.

'Fear emerges from an inevitable process of thought and must be ended by a deliberate act of perception.'

Chapter 3: The Spread of Fear

To avoid fear, the mind builds a network of escapes. Each escape appears to pacify one fear but inadvertently create another. In this chapter, we explore why fear persists when we escape from it.

The Birth of Fear

Fear is born from experience.

You are going about your day feeling completely normal, and then encounter a situation that distresses you. The distress builds until you cannot take it anymore. You panic, exit the situation, and decide you cannot experience that situation again. Fear is born.

Fear is kept alive by the belief that you cannot handle that situation.

To prevent yourself from experiencing fear you organise your life in a way that avoids encountering the situation you cannot handle. To explain this we will use the example of loneliness.

The Fear of Loneliness

When you are alone, you feel lonely. The loneliness causes you great distress.

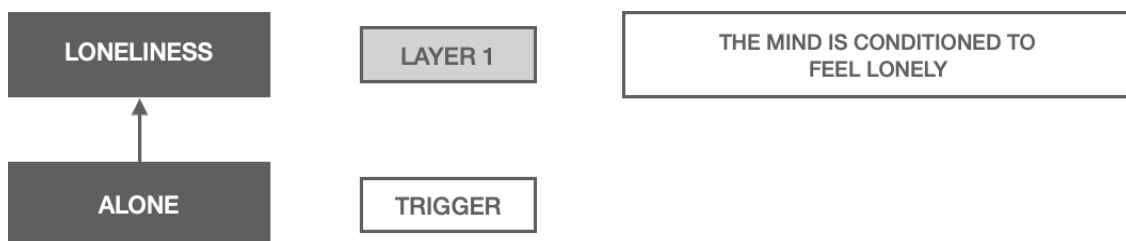


figure 1. condition 1: loneliness

You feel you cannot handle loneliness and you decide you must never be alone again. The fear of loneliness is born.

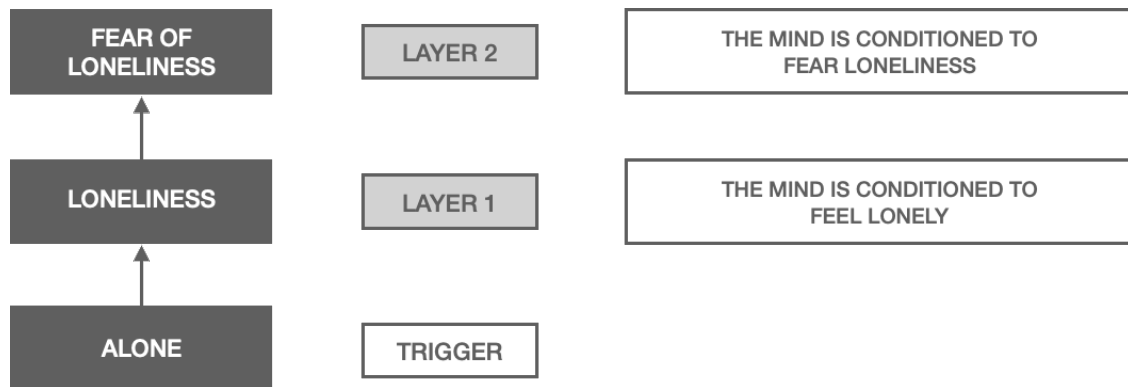


figure 2. condition 2: fear of loneliness

To ensure you are never alone, you acquire a partner.

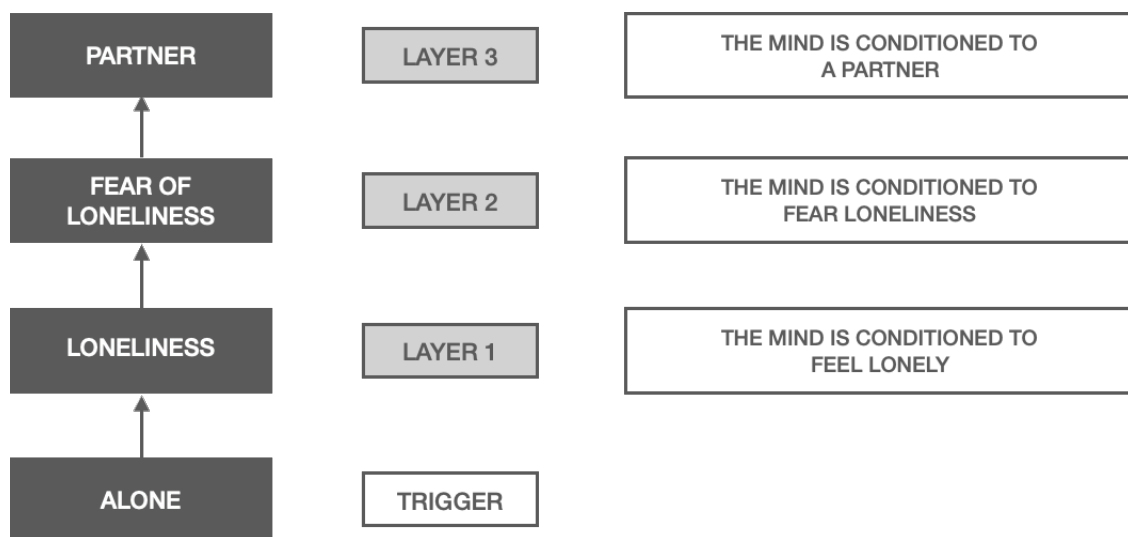


figure 3. condition 3: partner

At first glance, this appears to solve the problem — you are rarely alone, so rarely feel lonely. However, on closer inspection, you will see that the problem has not been solved; only the appearance of the problem has been modified.

This is because once you have acquired a partner, you fear losing them.

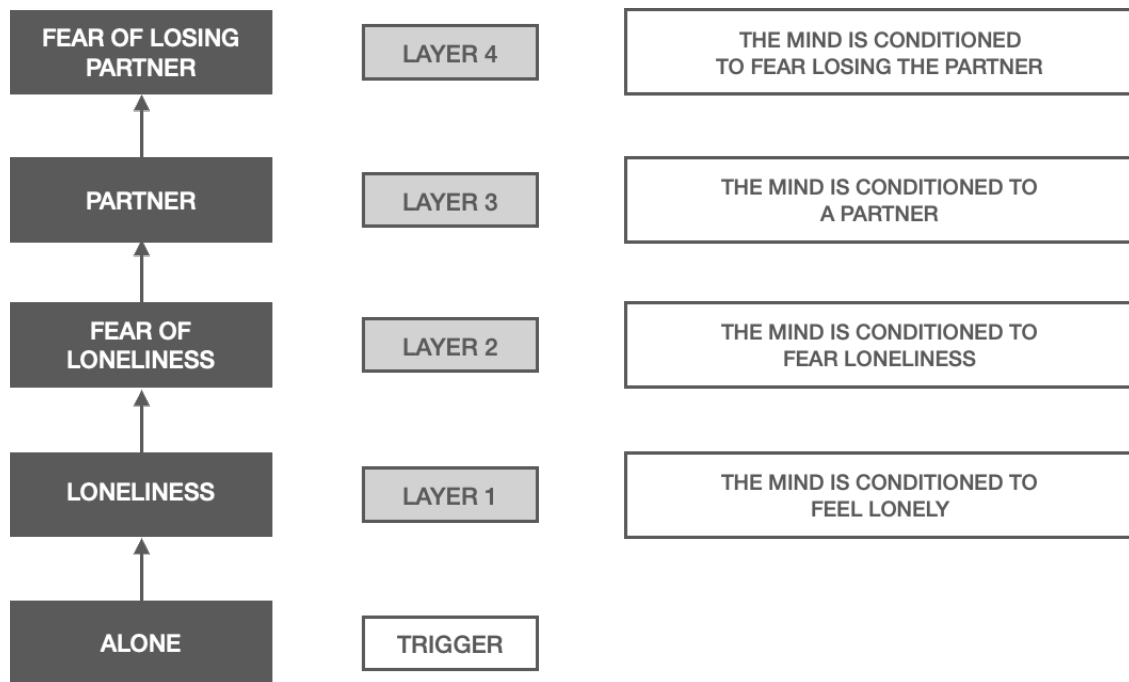


figure 4. condition 4: fear of losing the partner

Why do you fear losing the partner?

You fear losing the partner because it represents returning to a state where you are alone, and experiencing the loneliness you fear. The fear of losing a partner is the fear of loneliness presenting itself in a modified form.

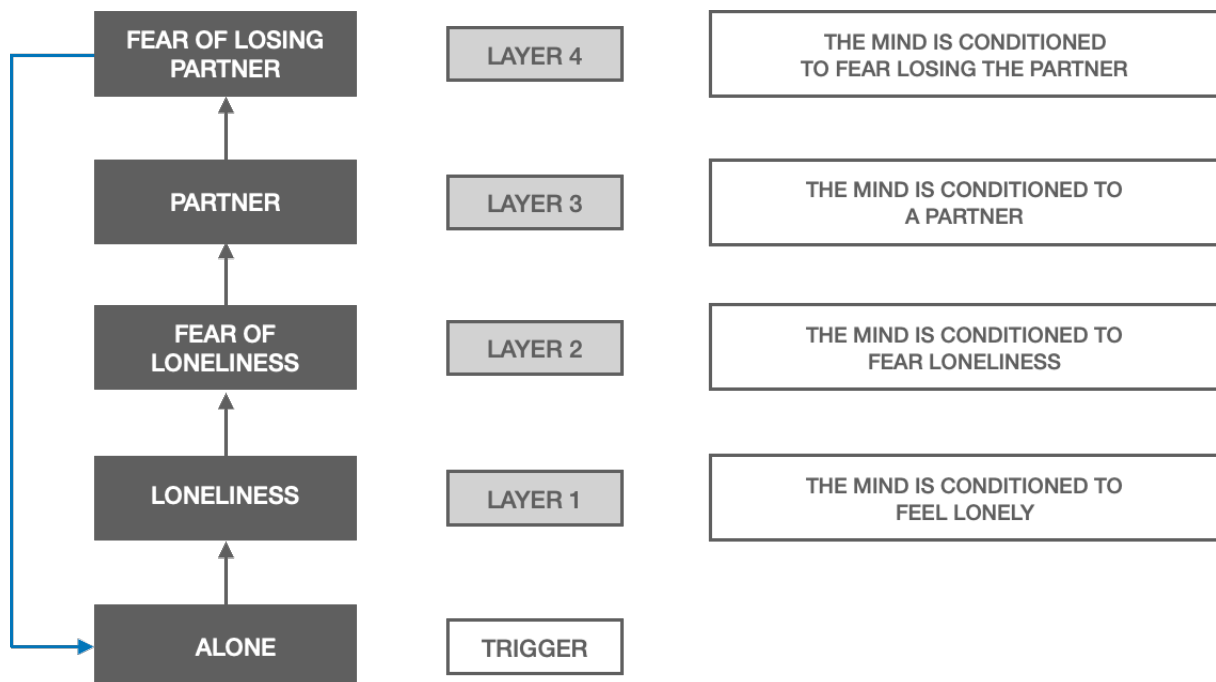


figure 5. the fear of being alone appearing in a modified form

This shows you that every condition built to avoid fear sustains the root fear. The new condition only modifies the appearance of the root fear. In this way, the root fear spreads out to effect other parts of our lives.

For instance, the fear of being alone creates dependency issues in our relationships with others.

This generates new issues that were not there before.

For instance, your dependency on your wife may bring out aggression towards other men who try to attract her. Yet again, this is based on your fear of being alone.

The Process of Conditioning

By observing how the mind conditions itself to escape from fear, we can understand how the mind conditions itself in general.

The establishment of one condition produces an experience. The mind responds to that experience by establishing another condition. In turn, that condition produces an experience, and the mind responds to that experience by establishing another condition. This is how knowledge builds itself in layers.

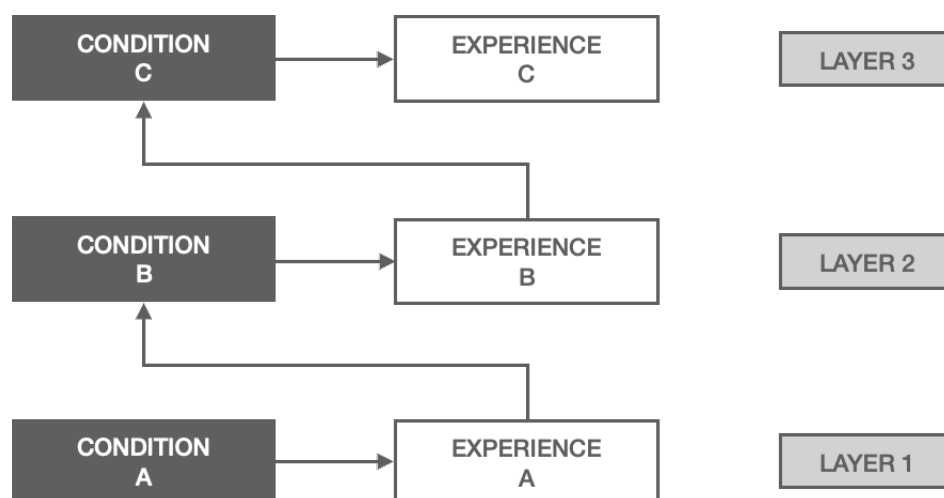


figure 6. the general process of conditioning

Synopsis

To avoid fear, we condition ourselves to various forms of attachment. Each attachment harbours the fear of losing the attachment and returning ourselves to a state where we experience the root fear.

Each condition we establish modifies how the fear appears, creating the illusion that we have solved the problem when we have not.

Chapter 4: The Point of Terror

Fear is born from experience.

You encounter a situation that distresses you. The distress builds until you cannot handle it anymore, you panic, exit the situation, and decide you cannot experience that situation again. Fear is born.



figure 1. the creation of fear

There is a pivotal moment in the inception of fear — the moment you believe you cannot handle the situation.



figure 2. the moment you believe you cannot handle the situation

We refer to this as ‘the point of terror’ and discuss the significance of that moment in this chapter.



figure 3. the point of terror

The Condition of Fear

While undergoing a situation that puts you under stress, your mind is not only thinking about how to do the task but simultaneously considering your ability to do the task. This creates a feeling of confidence in yourself.

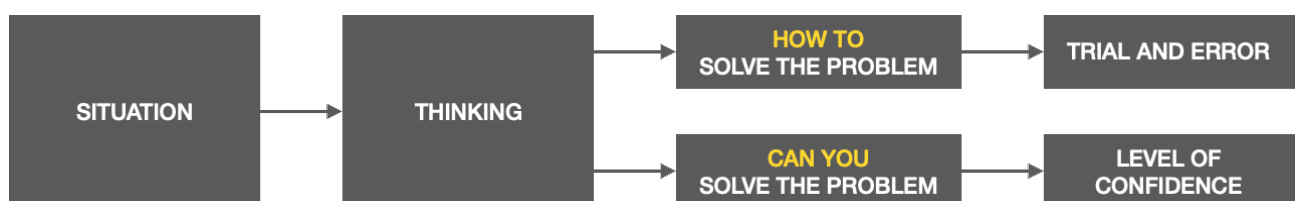


figure 4. two simultaneous processes of thought.

When your confidence drops below a certain level, you believe you cannot handle the situation, and fear is conditioned into the mind.



figure 5. the point fear is created.

The important thing to understand about this moment is that it is a belief.

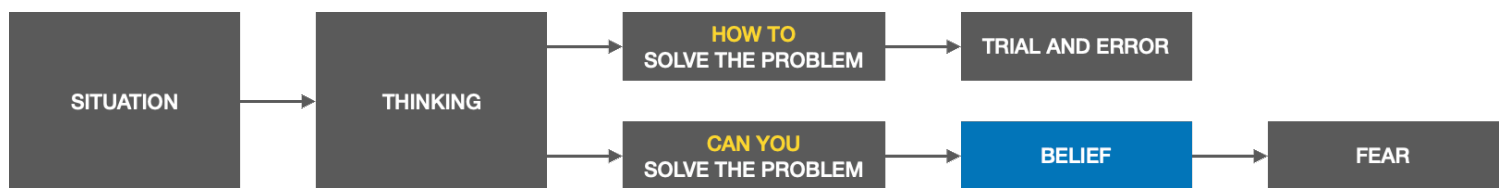


figure 6. the belief

This means you can immediately challenge that belief, falsify it, and uncondition your mind from the fear.

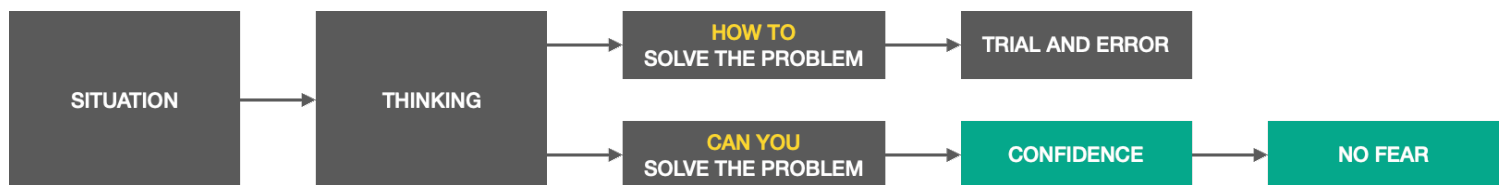


figure 7. the belief can be revoked

Why is it important to challenge the belief immediately?

After the belief establishes itself, thoughts begin to emerge to justify it.

Example

For instance, you may have an argument with a coworker, believe you cannot handle the situation, and develop a fear of speaking to them. After the fear is established, you may sit by yourself thinking of all the reasons why you can never talk to them again.

Each new justification reinforces the belief, making it harder to remove.

Behind the scenes, the belief is forming connections with existing parts of memory and entrenching itself.

To use an analogy, you can picture belief as a stone that falls to the ground and immediately has vines come out and begin to wrap around it, securing it in place.

The Ending of Fear

I observed the creation and ending of fear while doing an administrative task. Because the task was not life-threatening, the fear emerged with very little emotion. This enabled me to see the mechanics of fear without any distraction.

Personal Experience

I needed to complete some important official paperwork. I inspected the paperwork to see whether I could do it myself. As I read through the forms, each new section revealed more things I did not know and reduced the confidence in myself.

At a certain point, I decided the paperwork was too complex and sought the help of a professional.

That was the establishment of fear.

The professional replied back with an expensive quote and answered one of my questions incorrectly. This made me choose to revisit the forms.

That was me challenging the fear - challenging the belief that I could not do it.

As I investigated the forms, I discovered they were less complex than I had imagined and my confidence grew.

That was the ending of fear.

After a few days, I completed the paperwork and sat back considering it to be quite simple.

That was the end of fear.

The Appearance of Fear

Everything appears complex when you don't know how to do it. Once you have learnt how to do it, it appears simple.

This offers an important insight into the false appearance that conditions us to fear.

The Profitability of Fear

The example also shows the use of fear in business.

The high fees charged by many professionals are not related to the difficulty of the work they perform, but to the difficulty of the work their clients imagine.

A high quote is reasonable when the client believes the task to be difficult.

A high quote is unreasonable when the client knows the task is simple.

Synopsis

Fear is conditioned into the mind at the point you believe you cannot handle the situation.

Fear will inevitably condition itself in the mind at various points of our lives because it is the outcome of a simple calculation about our capabilities. Eliminating fear is, therefore, a life skill.

By understanding fear to be formed through learning we possess a lack of skill to handle a situation, we can take steps to acquire the skill, transform our conditioning, and alleviate the fear.

The belief we cannot handle the situation can be revoked most efficiently immediately after it has been created because it has not had time to justify its existence and entrench itself in the mind.

Analogy

You can visualise fear as a wall of fire.

You are moving forward in your life and suddenly this wall of fire ignites in front of you. You feel immense heat, temporarily unaware that the heat is imagined.

For those who back away from the fire, the wall exists for the entirety of their lives. They then live within the confines of fear.

Those who keep moving forward enter the fire, realise it does not burn them, and watch the flames diminish as they pass through to the other side.

Such a person lives in the same world as those who backed away from the fire. But where as those who backed away see a wall of fire, the other sees no wall and has free passage to roam.

The ending of fear is the maintenance of freedom.