



How to change your relationship with fear and stop it impacting your success

We all have fears, many of which keep us safe and well. Fear's job is to warn us of danger and avoid risk. It wants us to avoid anything that would cause physical or social pain. But how much does fear restrict our good choices?



THE EXPERT

Dr Amy Silver is a psychologist, speaker and author of *The Loudest Guest: How to control and change your relationship with fear* (Major Street Publishing). She is the founder of The Courage Club, the place to outgrow your fears.

Fear wants to keep us away from discomfort but if we listen to it all the time, does it steer us away from growth? Or opportunity? Does our fear of rejection, failure, exclusion, being different, having to change, being vulnerable or showing weakness limit what we could do or who we could be? And as well as limiting us from gains we could make, fear also leads to distress and feelings of anxiety or worry. We may have a fear of missing out, fear of being overlooked, fear of being seen, of speaking up, standing up or even a fear of being taken advantage of.

What is fear?

There are biological, evolutionary, and social reasons why our fear is triggered. After all, we are simply animals. Learning how to override our fear is essential in helping us fulfil our potential. If left unchecked, fear can control everything we do. We become a bystander, commanded by the voice of fear as it triggers biochemical reactions that cause us to fight, flight or play dead.

I think of fear as a guest at our party, and we are the host. We are the ones who should get to decide what to do, not fear. Even if fear is the

loudest guest commanding our choices and movements, as the host we must elevate into the position of control.

Is your fear telling you what to do?

To gain control we must first understand more about our current relationship with fear. When does fear get loud for you? When is it difficult to ignore? Understanding the way in which our body reacts to our fear voice, what our fear voice says and how it talks to us is crucial.

It is easy to be self-critical of our fears, anxieties and worries or critical of ourselves for having them. If we are ashamed of our fear a natural response is to deny or ignore our fears. When we do, we lose touch with some important self-awareness cues and may end up carrying some new hard emotions such as shame and guilt. If we approach our fear with compassion, we can change the relationship with fear and turn towards it to hear its messages.

Fear has wonderful things to give us—it gives us the gift of working harder and warning us of failure or rejection. But we want to learn when to listen to it and when not to. We don't want to be blindly controlled by it.

How to get fear under your control

We want to evaluate what to do in relation to our goals, not our fears. We must learn to evaluate the content so we can hear the message that the guest of fear is giving us without having to take on the drama and catastrophising. For example, we don't need to listen to stories of the past or future that fear often uses to remind us of the dangers.

We want to tune into the 'now' so that we can truly evaluate the action that will serve our goals. We may also want to tune into what other important voices have to say, like hope, excitement, joy. We can control how we move our attention around these different voices using strategies such as writing or finding ways of letting fear travel through rather than getting caught up.

Professional success relies on learning when to listen to fear and more importantly when not to

Becoming more courageous is easy when we've decided to build a closer relationship with fear. Making sure we are in control of fear is one of the most essential skills we can practice driving our professional success (individually and as a collective). We will be able to make deeper connections, influence decisions, act quicker, create more, have more fun, opt into not away from a challenge, be calm and have more fun. We are not our fears, we are the host. ✖

www.DrAmySilver.com