

Transform Your Fear Into Focus!

By Waldo Waldman

The greatest deterrent to success in life is fear. It drains our ambition, denies us power, and strangles our ability to overcome the challenges we face in our personal and professional lives. When we let fear control us, we are destined to fail. When we control our fear and channel that energy in productive ways, we win.

Regardless if you are a manager in business, leading a team of salespeople to meet your quarterly goals, or involved in a serious relationship that is going through some tough times, we all deal with fear everyday...fear of failing to meet a deadline or a budgetary constraint, fear of letting down our co-workers or our children, or fear of rejection from a loved one. These are normal fears, but it's how you deal with them that matters.

How do you handle fear? Does fear control you, or do you control your fear? Do you become overwhelmed and give up, or do you take action and face it with courage?

As a former combat decorated Air Force fighter pilot with 65 missions in hostile territory, I had to face my fears every day...fear of getting shot down, fear of letting down my country and my wingmen, and the fear of failing to accurately perform my mission responsibilities. If I wasn't able to handle this fear and not let it control me, I would have surely failed. I had to realize that although there was no way for me to completely eliminate this fear, I still had the power to overcome it.

The key to my success was in my ability to direct my focus towards 3 distinct areas. First and foremost, I needed to focus on my **mission**. What was my mission objective or purpose for going into battle? Why was it important that I succeed? Who needed my help? Second, I needed to focus on my **wingmen**. No fighter pilot flies a combat mission solo! We always fly as a team, and we are *all* responsible for accomplishing the mission. In essence, we trust each other with our lives, and we need each other to achieve success. Third, I needed to focus on **winning**. I had to erase doubt and think positive. By 'chair flying' each mission – mentally performing the mission perfectly in my mind before doing it for real – I was able to experience victory, rather than failure, in my imagination. This encouraged a positive mindset of trust and confidence that ultimately gave me the power to face my fear and win.

Obviously, we are all not fighter pilots flying combat missions. However, the same lessons of focus can apply as we seek victories in our own unique experiences. Here's how you can apply these fundamental principles for overcoming fear in your personal and professional life:

- **Focus on your mission** – Accept responsibility for accomplishing your mission objectives and feel confident in your training and preparation. Ask yourself, 'What am I fighting for?' Why are you needed, and who is depending on you to get the job done? Perhaps it is your organization, your family, or the customers

you are serving. What are the positive benefits that can result from accomplishing the difficult mission ahead? When you take the focus off of yourself and away from your fear, and direct it towards how your mission will positively impact the lives of others, you find purpose and meaning in life, and your fear diminishes.

- **Focus on your wingmen** –Who is on your team that you can trust to get the job done? Who are the **trusted and reliable partners** in your personal and professional life? Who can you turn to for love, inspiration, advice, and courage? Perhaps it is your spouse, best friend, business partner, or even a co-worker. By focusing on your teammates and all the wonderful, supporting relationships you have, you become more courageous and confident to tackle life's challenges. In essence, they absorb some of your fear and make it easier for you to cope with life's challenges. You don't have to fly through life solo...have faith and trust your wingmen!
- **Focus on winning** – see the success you want in your imagination first. Experience the exhilaration of winning in your mind. Remember, the body achieves what the mind has rehearsed! If your mind thinks failure, you are setting yourself up to fail. But if you train your thoughts to envision winning; if you imagine with perfect clarity overcoming your challenges with courage and achieving victory, then you are destined to win. Just as I 'chair flew' my combat mission and experienced victory, you can do the same. It's what athletes do before a tough game, and how the top salespersons prepare for their big sales presentations. It's not easy. Remember, WIN stands for **Work it Now!**SM. Winners understand it takes effort and sacrifice to win the challenges of life. And they don't put it off until tomorrow; they do what it takes today!

Finally, the most important part in handling fear is to embrace it with courage. Accept your fear and learn from it. Don't fight it or attempt to eliminate it, for it is a battle that can never be won. As Mark Twain once stated, *"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear."* By experiencing fear, we become more human. Fear teaches us that we are not perfect nor are we superior to anyone else. It makes us more compassionate as we realize the frailty of life and emphasizes what truly is important in our lives.

Regardless if you are in business, in a committed relationship, or on a sports team, when you transform your fear into focus - on your mission, your wingmen, and on winning - you are sure to be victorious in all that you do.

Now, **Focus your Energy, Accept Responsibility**SM and make it happen!

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