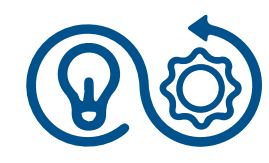


8 Ways To Boost Your Courage



Ask yourself: Should I take action to solve this fear?

All fears are not created equal. Some are useful, and some are useless fears that you can't or shouldn't do anything about.

Fear can sap your strength for no reason, and you should put those fears in their place. Worrying about a comet striking Earth falls in this category. Also, if your fears are tied to a recent decision you have made, it's important to trust yourself and believe that the decision you took at that certain time, was the best for what you knew or could do at the time.



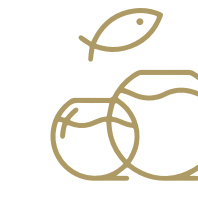
Remind yourself that fear can harm you.

Fear evolves for a good reason – to keep us safe. But in many situations, it actually endangers us. Thinking beyond how stress and worry can harm your health, fear can endanger us in more immediate ways in high pressure situations. For example, with scuba diving, fear could cause you to breathe too fast or move too quickly to the surface. Or, fear could cause you to forget your lines when delivering a presentation at work. Knowing that fear has the potential to harm you can help you set it aside. Fold up the fear, put it in a box, and promise you'll get back to it later at a less dangerous time.



Remember that fear is just chemicals.

You may think it's your judgment deciding that something is dangerous and you should be afraid, but what actually happens is that fear chemicals are flooding into your brain. Do the chemicals know what you should and shouldn't be afraid of? Of course not. You do.



Enlarge your comfort zone.

The more we stick with what's familiar, the more frightened we'll be every time we encounter the unfamiliar. So, seek out unfamiliar territory – try new things, stretch yourself professionally and personally. It's a good reminder to keep stretching beyond your comfort zone to boost your courage and grow.



Do something to engage your cognition.

One good way to take back your brain from chemicals that are flooding it is to do something that engages your prefrontal cortex (that is the part of your brain that reasons). Ideas to try are: focusing on problem solving – such as doing a crossword puzzle, organizing your finances on a spreadsheet, responding to emails that are for business or serious in nature, or other activities that are considered to be 'emotionally-neutral'.



Name your fears.

Naming your fears always takes some of the power out of them. Telling a friend, your partner, or your spouse what you're most afraid of can be a great way to cut those fears down to size. It can also be helpful to write them down. This simple act of doing causes the thinking brain to kick in and begin coming up with solutions and backup plans – in case your fear comes to pass.



Meditate, or at least stop and breathe.

Meditating can make a huge difference to brain function, even if you do it for only five minutes a day. But sometimes a daily meditation practice of even a few minutes is hard to maintain. If so, you can still help yourself (especially when you're feeling afraid), by simply stopping for a few moments and focusing on your breath. Filling your brain with oxygen will help it drive out fear.



Embrace your fear, then let it go.

Life is far from perfect and some days, instances and situations are much harder than others. The key is to give yourself permission to wallow in your worries (but set the timeframe, if you can – and try to be reasonable). When that timeframe is over, tell yourself that you are finished with that useless fear. More often than not, things do work themselves out one way or another.

