

Getting Un-Stuck: Working with Fear Exercise

Many of our limiting beliefs and stressful reactions are connected to fear-based thinking. These beliefs, and their associated patterns of thinking and reacting, can keep us stuck and limit our ability to think clearly and creatively, learn, connect and respond in resourceful, effective ways. Sometimes fear can impact our ability to act at all, keeping us frozen or passive. It can also trigger us into overly controlling or aggressive behaviours, taking us out of alignment with our intentions and values.

Working directly with fear can be very helpful in any stressful situation, and particularly those in which you find yourself stuck and unable to take action, speak honestly, make decisions, let go of control or follow through with something.

Exercise:

Part 1. IDENTIFY your beliefs:

- A. Think of a specific situation in your life where you are feeling stuck and experiencing fear or stress about taking action on something. *(It can also be a situation where you are fearful about letting go of control of something.)***

Write it out in a simple sentence beginning with:

"I want to: _____"
(example: have a challenging conversation; make a presentation; go on a trip)

or

"It is important to me to: _____"
(example: speak up honestly; change jobs; get my website done ...)

- B. What are you afraid will happen if you do this? What are your stressful thoughts?**

Make a list:

Use short, simple sentences. Do not censor or be "wise".

(example: they will get angry at me; it won't work; there isn't enough time; nobody will listen to me...)

Part 2. INQUIRE:

Write your belief as:

If I _____ then _____
(what you want to do) (fear or stressful thought)

Do The Work (4 Questions and Turnarounds) with a facilitator or in writing.
(See "Instructions for doing The Work")

Be curious. Reflect. Notice what you experience and learn.

Four Questions:

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know it is true?
3. How do you react, what happens, when you believe that thought?
4. Who would you be without that thought?

Turnarounds:

Example belief: (If I speak up), then he will judge me.

Turnaround to opposite:

- He won't judge me.
- **Examples:** Find specific reality-based examples that support, 'He won't judge me'.

Turnaround to other:

- I will judge him.
- **Examples:** Where in this situation am I judging that person? *

Turnaround to self:

- I will judge myself
- **Examples:** Where in this situation am I judging myself? *

**note – these turnarounds are for learning and self-awareness, never self-blame. It can be empowering and helpful to see and take responsibility for shifting my part, even if it is small.*

Extra opposite:

- (If I don't speak up) **He will judge me**
- *Notice where judgment can happen, whether you do it or not. Sometimes, it is even more likely by not taking action.*