

Fear no more the heat o' the sun; Nor the furious
winter's rages, Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages; Golden lads and
girls all must, As chimney sweepers come to dust.

Fear no more the frown of the great, Thou art past
the tyrant's stroke: Care no more to clothe and eat,

To thee the reed is as the oak: The sceptre,
learning, physic, must All follow this, and come to
dust.

FEAR NO MORE

Fear no more the lightning-flash, Nor the all-dread

How to Overcome Negative Voices,
Silence Your Critics, &
Conquer Your Greatest Obstacles

No exorciser harm thee! Nor no witchcraft charm
thee! Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

Nothing ill come near thee! Quiet consummation
have; And renown'd be thy grave!

Matt McWilliams

About the Author

Hey, I'm Matt and I'm a world changer.

Now before you think I'm an egotistical, too-big-for-my-britches, jerk, I think we are all world changers. If we weren't born to change the world, we're unnecessary.

This is my blog, focused on the lessons I've learned from many sources, mostly my own experiences. You can read more about my story below if you're interested. In a nutshell, I arrived at my world changer philosophy after being fired four times (twice by the same company and once by own dad...just try to top that!), after facing 42 years in prison, after starting two companies that rose and fell like the Roman Empire, and after getting married, having a wonderful wife and then daughter, and finally realizing my true purpose in life.

I am a world changer. And so are you.

My goal here is to help you become the world changer that you were born to be. Sometimes that means helping you to shift your mindset. Sometimes it means giving you the tools you need in life, in business, or in relationships to change the world. Sometimes it means some good old fashioned motivation and inspiration.

I write daily from Monday through Friday, with the exception of major holidays. The majority of my posts are about personal development, communication, business, and leadership, all tied back to helping you unleash the world changer inside of you.

To be clear, I will not make you a world changer. You already are. My goal is to help you find that person inside of you.

My Story

I have worked in small business and online marketing for as long as I can remember. That is mostly because I could never make it in a “real job.”

At the age of 23, I was fired by my dad. The day after my birthday. That was the second time I'd been fired. Thankfully, I had started my own company on the side in online marketing. It only took two years for that company to go under.

At the age of 25, I was arrested and faced up to 42 years in prison. [You can read that full story here.](#)

By the age of 27, I was an executive in thriving start-up. We won the Best in Business Award from the Nashville Business Journal that year and by year's end, we had 50+ people working for us. I was personally leading a team of 12 people...and had no clue what I was doing. I sucked as a leader and everyone knew it. I was their first employee and helped start the company above the CFO's garage. I had no business leading a team, but somehow we managed to succeed in spite of me.

[Click here to read what I did about my poor leadership and how I set about improving.](#)

I was fired from there (my third firing in case you're counting) but went on to find success elsewhere. In 2010 I was recognized as the top Affiliate Marketing Manager in the world by the Affiliate Summit Pinnacle Awards. I've won numerous other awards in that field as well.

I left that company (the first time in my life that I left a job by choice) and went back to the previous company. Yes, the one that fired me. Eight months later, the CEO left and the company laid off more than half the staff. I was one of those people. Firing number four (and it will be my last).

So there I was in November of 2011. Unemployed, brand new house, a six-month daughter and stay-at-home mom to support. That was the moment I decided to change the world.

Just kidding. That was the moment I decided to panic. But, once I calmed down, I resolved to live a life of meaning and purpose. I came to realize that I can and should change the world. I resolved never again to be dependent on an employer for income or others for approval. And I resolved to leave a legacy.

Due to the path I've taken to this point, I have a unique viewpoint on the ever-changing world in which we live. Most importantly, I have failed at mostly everything I have tried the first time.

Thankfully, I usually learned from those mistakes. And that is good news for you. I invite you to learn with me and from me. I invite you to leave your own legacy. I invite you to change the world.

I was born and raised in the south and currently live in Fort Wayne, IN with my lovely wife Tara and daughter Aracelli. My consulting company, Matt McWilliams Consulting, Inc. (that name took me forever to come up with), has clients all over the country in various industries ranging from educational courses to consumer goods and the financial industry.

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my wife and daughter, running, reading, and long days of doing yard work listening to various podcasts.

You can find me elsewhere here:

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Introduction

The title of this book comes from the William Shakespeare poem, *Fear No More*.

It is a short guide to overcoming the negative voices in your life (your own and others'), silencing your critics, and conquering your greatest obstacles.

My sincere hope is that when you complete this book, you will be equipped to tackle the fears that have been holding you back from achieving the greatness you are destined for. Remember, you (yes you) were born to change the world. That is your purpose here. That is your calling.

Now go out and change the world.

Fear no more the heat o' the sun;
Nor the furious winter's rages,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney sweepers come to dust.
Fear no more the frown of the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.
Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dread thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.
No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renowned be thy grave!

The First Step

Start today. Start where you are. Start on what matters to you.

I'm running a half-marathon later this year. My goal time is 2:10:00. For me, that is *fast*. About 1:00 per mile faster than I ran a 10k two years ago. It's going to be hard to accomplish that.

What if?

As soon as I committed to running, my thoughts drifted to:

“What if I finish last?”

“What if I don't finish at all?”

“What if my training is disrupted by sickness, work, or...life?”

Then it occurred to me...what if *all* of those things happen?

Let's say I get sick and miss two weeks of training. As a result, I begin race day having only run 11 miles on my best day. At the 11-mile mark, I have to stop and walk for a minute. Then I keep going...slowly. I finish last. I miss my goal by thirty minutes.

What if all of those things happen?

I will *still* have run farther (11 miles consecutively) than most people will run in their lifetime. I will have trained by running as much as twenty-two miles in a week. I will have lost a lot of weight and improved my stamina. I will be healthier, happier, and ready for the next half-marathon, where it will be much easier to hit my goal time.

Because I started.

I dared to take the first step without knowing where the second step will lead.

The idol of results

He reminded me to keep the end *in mind* (a la Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*) but not to make it the *only* acceptable destination.

He reminded me not to worship the end or make results my idol.

I will boldly go where I have never gone before...even if I have no idea where that will actually be.

The first step

Start today. *I took the first step.*

Start where you are. *It was cold, so I ran on our treadmill.*

Start on what matters to you. *Being healthier? Check. Pushing myself? Check. Raising money for a good cause (more on that later)? Check.*

I may run a half-marathon in 2:08:00 or less. I may run it in 2:38:00 or more. I might limp across the finish line. Or I might blaze through like Steve Prefontaine.

Regardless of the outcome, I have started the journey. That is the hardest part...and the most significant.

So I will:

Start today. Start where I am. Start on what matters to me.

Question:

What have you put off that you can *START* today?

The Voices in Your Head

Your internal voices are usually lies.

WARNING: Most of the following is an excerpt from my personal journal and might make you think I am crazy. I can live with that.

Jon Acuff writes in his book *Start* about his counselor, Al Andrews, who asked him:

“What do your voices tell you?”

Al states that:

“No one has a positive voice.”

Well that is a comforting thought.

I am finally realizing how *deceptive* our voices are. In fact, they might be rooted in the seeds of evil. This is a terrifying thought.

Both sides of the coin

Not only do they lie, but they manipulate you, twist the truth, and even make you believe the lies. And the worst thing they often do is make you believe the lies and then live out the opposite lie.

That’s what I’ve experienced in my life.

My voice tells me:

“You’re only where you are (career, marriage, finances, health) because of dumb luck.”

This is the first lie.

The second lie is even more devilish: Publicly I act like I got here all by myself, that I made it to where I am because of hard work, determination, grit, and my own superhuman intelligence. (I never said I was what one might call “humble”)

If my voice says I shouldn't be here at all, then the only way to counteract that is to claim sole responsibility for making it here.

Both are lies.

How can I live with either of those burdens?

There's nothing I can do.

It all depends on me.

I am helpless.

What if others find out?

Those are too heavy for anyone carry.

Not to mention that both extremes are extremely unattractive. Helpless people are a drag and arrogant, know-it-all jerks are...well, jerks.

Reality

The reality is I am where I am because of:

God's blessing.

God's purpose for me.

Hard work.

The help of others.

All of those are connected and reliant on each other.

Your voices will lie to you. They will distort reality and cause you to live in a state of fear rather than a state of grace.

Overcoming your voices

Acuff has two suggestions to overcome your voices. They are the two that led me to share this.

1. **Put them in writing.** Show your fears the light of day. You will quickly realize, as I did, how wrong they are. When you put them on paper, they might make you laugh at their ridiculousness. “You’re too old for this.” “You’re too young for that.” You will see their tricks and find hope in shedding the burdens of their lies.
2. **Share them.** Your lying voices hate the positive input of others. As Acuff says, “Fear hates community.” Allow others to speak truth into your life and drown out the voices in your head.

Question:

What do your voices say? How can others help?

The Surprising Truth About the Lies You Tell Yourself

The ironic thing about the negative voices I wrote about in the previous chapter is that they have some truth to them.

Those voices that say things like:

“You aren’t as good of a leader as so-and-so.”

“You can’t sell like Joe. He’s the top salesman.”

Those voices are often right. Yes, Mr. Positivity is telling you that those negative voices are often grounded in truth. But they are missing one word. That’s what makes them lies. We’ll get to that shortly.

My book vs. my voices: The battle within

As I stepped out into the cold night air, foolishly forgetting that I no longer live in the south and wearing only shorts, a T-Shirt, and slippers, a horrifying thought gripped me.

“Your book won’t be good enough. You can’t write like a bestselling author. Who are you to think you can write like that?”

Instantly, I felt deflated. Depression took hold.

My fears were speaking to me! And I was listening to them.

For the next few moments I battled a feeling which is familiar to anyone who dreams of anything big. Inside of me, a war raged. The night grew colder still, my mind raced, my heartbeat quickened, and darkness overtook my soul.

Yes, it *was that* dramatic.

I felt sick.

And then...

As I waited for our dog to finish his business, I realized something powerful:

What if my negative voices were actually right?

What if my *first* book *was* a flop?

What if?

My voices weren't lying, per se. It's true...I'm not as good of a fiction writer as others...and then came that missing word. That one word that changes truth to lies and lies to truth.

YET.

Why should I be as good as the bestsellers? I've never written fiction. I've never even written a full book before.

So I made peace with my fears. I acknowledged my negative voices. I said to them:

"It's OK. I am OK with not being as good as the others....yet."

What your voices say

Your voices tell you that you aren't a superstar now. They tell you that you don't have all of the skills or contacts or knowledge *today*.

And it's true. You probably don't.

Your voices aren't lying. They are just stating facts.

Somehow, though, we add on extra words like “never.” We twist our voice’s words. “Can’t now” becomes “will never.” “You aren’t” becomes “You’ll never.”

The missing “yet” morphs from the key to your future success into the wall you never climb over.

The dreams of billions of people lie at the feet of the missing “yet.”

The cures for diseases, the billion-dollar idea, the invention that feeds the world...all lie at the feet of the missing “yet.”

Because a voice said “you can’t now” and someone heard “you never will.”

But that stops today!

It ends now.

Your attitude from this point forward is:

“So what?”

“So what if I don’t have all the skills now?”

“So what if I don’t know anyone in that field.”

“So what if I don’t know how to do what I am called to do.”

You will have all of those things in time.

Agree with what your voices are really telling you. You aren’t who you are called to be...

YET.

But you will be. And you will change the world.

Action item: Identify the truth in one of your voices that you think is negative. Add the appropriate qualifier, such as “yet,” to make it true.

Question:

What are you not yet that you will become?

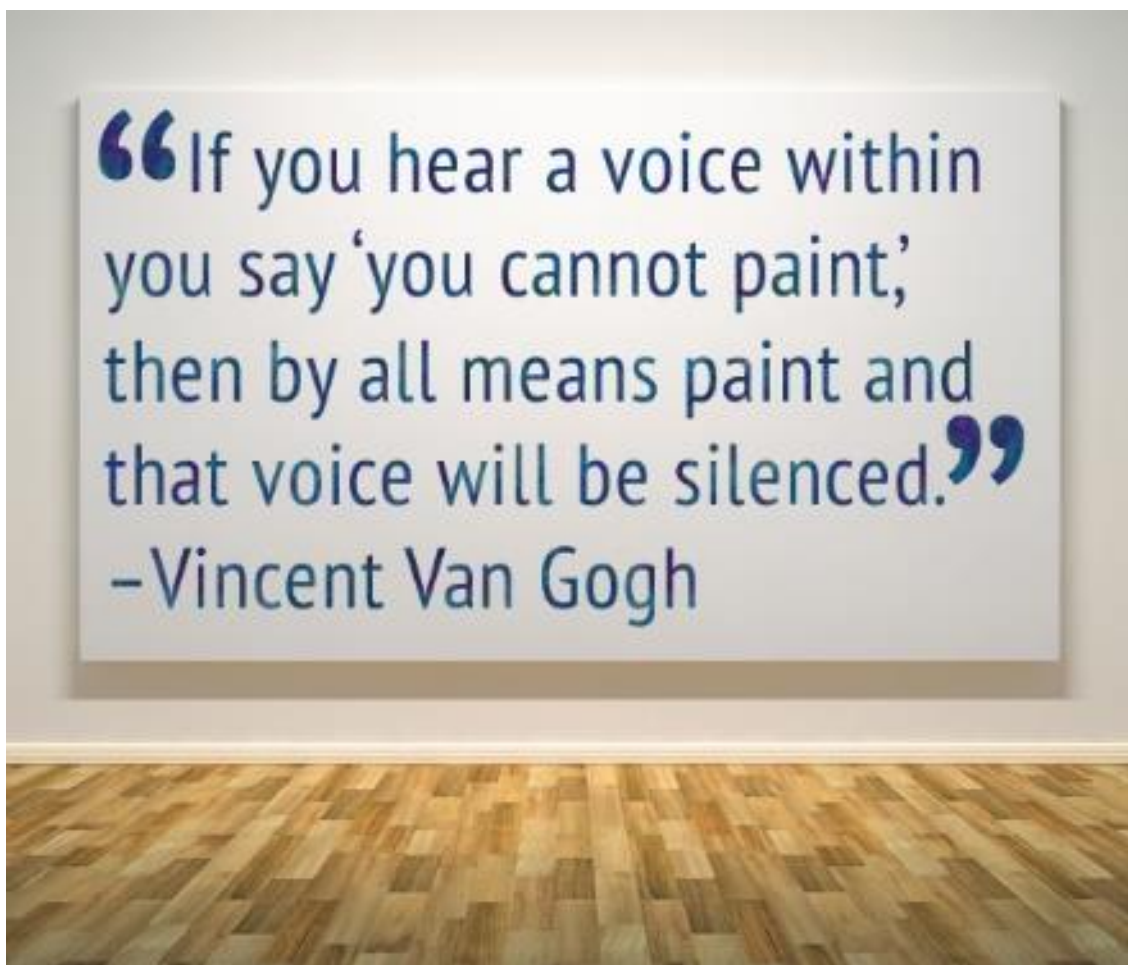
Here's a Surefire Way to Silence Your Negative Voices

If you're not hearing negative voices, you're probably not doing much.

You're probably not chasing a very big dream.

So you're going to hear negative voices. They will whisper. They will scream. They will make sense.

And when you do, remember these words from Vincent Van Gogh.



Want to silence your negative voices? Then do exactly what they are telling you not to do.

Do it as an act of defiance.

Do it to shut up your voices.

Do it as a declaration of purpose.

Do it as a finger in the chest of fear.

Do it because it's what you are called to do.

Then wave goodbye to that voice. For it has been silenced.

Ready for the next one? Yeah you are. And it doesn't stand a chance.

Question:

What voice are you going to silence today?

This 1 Thing Will Silence Your Critics Forever

Who are your biggest critics?

Think about that question right now. Who are the people in your life that are most critical of your dreams?

Do you want to know how to deal with them?

Before we go any further, let me be clear on the definition of “critic.”

A critic is not someone who brings up legitimate concerns or occasionally points out flaws in your logic. A critic is not someone who tells a 300-pound man who hasn't exercised since the Clinton administration that he should lose some weight and get on a training plan before running a marathon. There is a big difference between a realistic friend and a critic.

A critic is someone who tells you that any dream beyond their bubble of understanding is ridiculous or impossible. They label you a dreamer or a child. They believe it is impossible to live a dream and still provide for your family. They think that happiness on the job and responsibility are mutually exclusive. When you leave a critic's presence, your energy is depleted, your joy stripped, and your dreams crushed.

So how do you deal with these critics?

You leave them.

Entirely. Or as much as possible.

You deal with them the same way you deal with negative people, because that is exactly what they are.

You may be just like me. You have an unsettled feeling about abandoning people, no matter how negative or critical they are. But I've learned that since we are all world-changers, it often means leaving people behind. The positive influence we can have on hundreds or thousands (or more) of others is often dependent on eliminating the one or two negative voices in our lives. It's a sacrifice we must be willing to make.

Much of my unease in leaving people behind comes from my faith. My faith says that God leaves the 99 obedient sheep to find the one lost soul. My faith says to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. I *thought* my faith basically said leave no critic behind.

But then I read Jesus' own advice to His followers when he first sent them out on missionary journeys:

“If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.”

Matthew 10:14

In other words, if people aren't receptive to you, and that includes your dreams, goals, and plans, leave them behind. As a matter of fact, *shake any trace of their criticism off of you.*

Maybe my critic is right...

Years ago, I worked for a critic.

After finally leaving the company, I received an email from him that basically tore me apart. It called me lazy, unfocused, incompetent, and questioned my integrity. Even now, as I write those words, it causes a certain level of pain. Even now, I questioned rather I should even mention it.

For months afterwards, from time to time, I would pull up that email. I would read it over and over. I thought I was using it as motivation, but in reality the words just sank deeper and deeper into my soul. I began to question myself.

Maybe I am lazy.

Maybe I am unfocused.

Maybe I will never amount to more than I did working for him.

Maybe I will never live out my dreams.

I thought all of those things. His words were implanted in my memory. They would come to me anytime I sat down to write or when I would get ready to make a sales call. They would haunt me if I slept in on a Saturday morning.

You are lazy, they whispered. Look at you sleeping in. If you were worth anything, you would have been up already.

And then I left his town and shook the dust off my feet.

I permanently deleted the email.

And over time those words left me. Sure, they would rear their ugly heads occasionally, but I'd taken the edge off of them. My anger at this man subsided. The harshness of the words became softer and softer, like a sharp knife morphing into dull butter knife.

Jesus is telling you to do the same thing he told His followers 2000 years ago.

He didn't tell them to change their methods or adjust for their critics. In other words, He told them what I am telling you...keep doing what you are doing. Don't change for them. Run *your* race. Live out *your* dreams.

Action item: Identify one negative critic in your life today. Consider ways to remove that person from your life.

Remove every trace of that relationship.

Delete that email.

Remove the contact from your phone. I have a friend who did exactly that with the same guy who sent me that email. Months after they severed ties, he deleted him from his contacts. He told me that he instantly felt better.

Remove them from your social media.

Block them from commenting on your blog. I've never personally had to do this, but if someone's sole purpose in life is to criticize what you write, get rid of that person.

Do everything you can to remove your critics from your life. You will both be better for it...and the world will benefit from a more positive and productive you.

Question:

What can you do to remove your critics from your life today?

When it's OK to Interrupt

When is it OK to interrupt?

Yourself

When it's your own voice telling you:

You can't.

It's impossible.

You'll never...

You're too...

Others

When someone else is telling you:

You can't.

It's impossible.

You'll never...

You're too...

When someone you love is telling you:

I'll never...

I can't.

I'm too...

It's impossible.

In all three cases, it's OK to interrupt. In fact, *your success demands* that you interrupt others talking negatively. Your love for someone else demands that you do. The very essence of our being and our worth from the Creator demands that you do. *A life worth living demands that you stop every negative voice, shun every doubter and annihilate fear.*

How to interrupt yourself

When it's your own voice lying to you, there is only one way to interrupt it.

“Talk to yourself instead of listening to yourself.”

That is from a comment from a reader of mine in 2013.

When doubt creeps in, you shut it up by filling your mind with positive thoughts. Yes, that sounds simplistic...and it is. You drown out the negative noise with the truth.

How to interrupt others who are negative towards you

You *will* hear negative voices from others. Your parents, siblings, friends, and especially your in-laws will tell you that you are a dreamer, that you can't do that, that you will never succeed.

There are three steps to interrupting them properly:

1. **Walk away.** Nothing shuts up a Negative Nancy like lack of an audience. Kind of cruel you say? Well, the alternative is to sit there and listen to them shoot down your dreams. I guess that could turn out well.
2. **Share your dream.** There is a good chance that if they truly care about you, they will buy-in and support you. Which means no more negativity.

3. **When all else fails...replace them.** It might be time for new friends. If they are family, spend a lot less time with them and immediately shut down conversations that turn negative. Repeat step one as often as needed. Trust me, they will get the point eventually.

How to interrupt others who are negative towards themselves

If you truly love someone, I call on you to help them overcome their negative voices.

Do exactly what you do for yourself: *drown out their voices of defeat, lack, and fear with your voice of positive words of affirmation.* Remind them of every victory in their past. Share success stories from others.

When you believe in someone else, *you are speaking the very words of life into them.* You give them *hope* and you help them to overcome whatever is holding them back.

When you hear a loved one saying they can't do something or will never overcome an obstacle, interrupt them. Talk louder than they are talking. Shout if you have to. Gesture wildly. *Make a scene.*

But don't you dare let them continue with one more lie.

Remember what Bob said:

Talk to yourself instead of listening to yourself.

And apply it to others as well.

Question:

How can you interrupt your own negative talk and that of others?

Talk Back to Fear

Now that we know how to overcome (and even use) the negative voices in our heads and from others, let's talk about fear.

If you could say anything to fear, what would it be?

How about a simple, loud "NO!"

You actually *can* say anything you choose to fear, because fear only exists in your mind.

The Message translation of James 4 reads:

"So let God work his will in you. *Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper.* Say a quiet yes to God and he'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin." (emphasis mine)

Say a loud "NO!" to fear and watch it run away like the little punk that it is. Say "YES!" to God and quit dabbling in fear.

All or Nothing

You cannot take a little fear here, but leave it out there. It's not something you sprinkle in the recipe of life.

Either you completely annihilate fear or it annihilates you.

You must choose to annihilate it every day. You have to do it *every* day. Because it will come at you every single day.

Picture fear, doubts, negative comments about you, laughter towards you, naysayers...picture them being annihilated. Trampled upon and left in your dust. Every single day.

Jon Acuff says to “punch fear in the face.” I am suggesting that you do much more, making a sport out of beating the crap out of it and leaving it behind to die.

Fear and opposition are always one of two things:

1. Genuine warnings and good advice.
2. Crap.

When you feel like it's #2, remind yourself of some important truths:

You have never been criticized about your dreams by someone who achieved theirs.

You have never been criticized about your parenting from someone who is a great parent...or even a good one.

You have never been criticized about your finances by a wealthy person.

You have never faced opposition about your work ethic, job choice, or skills by someone you look up to.

Opposition always comes from those below you, including Satan himself.

Assignment:

Write a note to fear and keep it some place visible.

The Positive Side of Fear

Yes, fear can be a bad thing, but like the surprising truth about your negative voices, fear can be beneficial. The next two chapters will share how.

Fear as a Motivator

Fear can sometimes be a great motivator, but it can often be the great paralyzer.

I once wrote about fear-based leadership as being one of the three greatest downfalls of a leader. I received comments like this:

“One thing I have seen a lot, and have experience as well, is having the fear of losing your job hanging over you head. Leaders falsely think that it motivates people, but fear just paralyzes them.”

I agree with that statement. Most leaders mistakenly think fear is an effective way to motivate people, and it can be. But only occasionally and only for the short-term. Frequent and long-term fear does paralyze people and nine times out of ten, it leads to the exact opposite of the desired result.

The same goes for trying to motivate ourselves.

Diet and exercise

Fear motivates someone to eat better and exercise for about two weeks. The doctor says, “you’re going to have a heart attack if you don’t eat better and exercise.

So you eat better and exercise. You immediately go to the store and buy loads of perishable fruits and vegetables and lean meats. In two weeks or so, when it is time to stock up again, you are faced with a decision: go to the store for more healthy foods or eat a boxed dinner and some chips. Fear of premature death easily loses the battle to convenience and temporary pleasure.

The next day, the desire for an hour more sleep and watching your favorite show that you've missed the past two weeks takes over. So does your inability to suppress your appetite for Little Debbie's.

Fear is easily overpowered

As powerful as fear is, it is easily overpowered by our desires. Unless you want the positive outcome bad enough, the fear-based motivation loses out. If you don't *want* to be healthy, the fear of death doesn't stand a chance in the face of your desires.

Now this *can* work in your favor. Consider the mom who fears water, but wouldn't flinch to dive in to save her drowning baby. The positive (love of child) overpowers the negative.

A better way

Positive motivators are not easily defeated. They put up a fight. They argue with fear and usually win.

For the patient whose doctor just found high levels of bad cholesterol and blood pressure, saying "if you eat more fruits and vegetables and get more exercise, you will live a longer and healthier life, not to mention you'll feel better, look better, and have better sex with your lovely wife," is a positive motivator that can last a lifetime.

Example for business leaders

If you're a business leader working with a chronically late salesperson, fear can work in the short-term. The fear of losing a job might be enough to motivate Joe to get his butt out of bed on time for a few weeks. But eventually his desire to sleep in will win.

The better way is to motivate him with what can happen if he shows up on time. Remind him that he has the potential to be a leader, that his income could be ____, that showing up on time will make him eligible for his year-end bonus, etc. The motivators are longer lasting.

My story

Five years ago, I lost more than fifty-five pounds. I wasn't motivated by fear. I was only twenty-eight, so I thought I had a lot of life in front of me.

I was motivated by something positive: The desire to fit in size 32 jeans and a \$1,000 bet with two business partners.

We were each overweight and suffering the effects. We knew we needed to be in better health. We knew the consequences and benefits of both lifestyles. And yet we did nothing.

Until there was \$1,000 on the line and we had pictures in our minds of what life would be like with a lot less weight.

I won that bet handily and when I looked back I realized that if you added up the hours I spent working out, walking, and planning, I made approximately \$7.30/hour. Not a great deal financially. But I gained so much more.

I had positive motivators and I achieved amazing results.

Question:

What's one thing you can change from fear-based to positive outcome-based motivation?

The Biggest Benefit of Fear

If you get the following truth deep down inside, fear will no longer be something you...well, fear. I close with this chapter because the ultimate way to conquer fear isn't to skirt around it or even defeat it. It's to use it.

You need fear.

You need fear like Superman needed Lex Luther. Or like you need a steep hill at the very end of long run.

That is how much you need fear. It is vital to life, to finding your calling.

What Fear Tells Us

In his bestseller, *War of Art*, Steven Pressfield writes,

“...fear is an indicator. Fear tells us what we have to do.”

He goes on to say that,

“The more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we *have* to do it.” (emphasis mine)

Important work scares you. Important work invokes fear. Important work calls out to fear and says, “hey, something amazing is about to happen, you'd better come stop it.”

The thing you have to do (your calling) will always be opposed. It will always stretch you. Fear will tell you that you are not qualified. It will tell you that you don't have enough experience, training or knowledge. It will tell you that you will be uncomfortable.

It will tell you that you will fail.

How to Use Fear

But that same fear, that same doubt, and that same voice in your head telling you to stay in your comfort zone...*that* is the voice that is secretly telling you:

This is what you have been made for.

This is your life's work, your purpose, your reason for being.

Without this one thing, you will never find contentment or joy.

If you give in, I will always haunt you; always remind you that you listened to me.

I will own you.

A Lesson from Actors

Actors who stretch are the ones who get rave reviews. They are the ones who win awards. And they are the ones who have the most professional satisfaction.

When the creator of the hit TV show *Breaking Bad*, a serious drama, was looking for a lead actor, he chose Bryan Cranston. The producers only knew him from his role as the goofy father on the comedy *Malcolm in the Middle*. They said this role was too much of a stretch for him.

That is exactly why he was perfect for the role. His awards speak for themselves.

Or think about Robin Williams at his finest. You think of *Dead Poet's Society* and *Good Will Hunting*, don't you? Not *Mork and Mindy*.

Why? *Because the roles stretched him.* They called on him to go beyond what he thought was possible, to dare to step outside of his comfort zone and what others expected, and he made two hit movies and became a superstar in Hollywood.

The critics scoffed when he was cast, even for *Good Will Hunting*. They said *Dead Poet's Society* was a one-time thing. The critics were the voice of fear.

They could have persuaded Robin Williams to give up or to never try, but they only made it clearer that the roles were right for him.

Before *Dead Poet's Society*, fear probably told him, "Robin, you are a comedian. Take the comfortable role. This job is too hard. What if I fail? Can I ever go back to comedy?"

But he shut fear up. He followed his calling. He stretched...and his greatest stretches produced his greatest successes.

Listen to fear. It's telling you what is important. That is why you need it.

Question:

How can you use fear to discover your calling?

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