

Transforming crisis into transpersonal experience  
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“Fear is a present feeling with a projected target into the future.”<sup>1</sup>

“Each change is as easy to do as you BELIEVE it to be, big or small makes no difference.”<sup>2</sup>

“Fearless: Benign or benevolent perception of ourselves and the world around us leading to feelings of ease and well being and to acting boldly in everyday life.”<sup>3</sup>

The current globally widespread experiences of fear and crisis have been generally accepted as a natural part of today’s modern world thus never questioned or examined. Avoiding deeper examination of crisis and fear prevents the wisdom of understanding the “Fear Motivated Behaviors”<sup>4</sup> and transforming them into useful and productive intention and energy. How does the “Fearless” program at the Option Institute facilitate the transformation of crisis into transpersonal experience? What is the anatomy and liabilities of fear? How does being ‘fearless’ lead to a more productive and healthy life? Is being fearless a useful option for humanity?

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

<sup>2</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

<sup>3</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

<sup>4</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

How does the “Fearless” program at the Option Institute facilitate the transformation of crisis into transpersonal experience? “Everyone knows what they are afraid of – every fear has a target.”<sup>5</sup> In the “Fearless” program participants are invited to examine their beliefs around fear and find that it is commonly believed that fear serves a useful process for doing life. In giving fears and crisis direct, non-judgmental attention it is found that fears are simply beliefs that self-actualize themselves through persistent and constant repetitive thoughts. Self-studentship and investigation of fear-based thoughts leads a person to reclaim the energy lost and move forward in life with acceptance and comfort. By examining my own fear of having a child I was able to see that my fear motivated behavior served to keep people from constantly asking me when I would have a child. Seeing this pattern clearly freed me to accept my choice of not having a child without needing fear to take care of my boundaries.

What is the anatomy and liabilities of fear? “Each instance of fear is precipitated by a fear-generating question.”<sup>6</sup> Fear-generating questions always lead to fear-generating responses as they tend to be victim-based, geared towards loss, negativity, powerlessness, judgment of the stimulus as bad and making assumptions. Some examples of fear-based questions are: What do you need to watch out for? Will you regret this later? What have I got to lose? What is the worst case scenerio?<sup>7</sup> Whereas fearless-based questions offer solutions, they

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<sup>5</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

<sup>6</sup> Anatomy of fear handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

<sup>7</sup> The anti-dialogue handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

focus on curiosity, taking action, acceptance, looking for the good in each situation, and are open. They presume that there is always an answer and opportunity in each situation. Thus how we ask questions will lead us into fear or fearlessness. By asking myself “Is it possible to lose my husband?” I automatically induce fear whereas asking myself, “What is the perfection of this experience?” I induce curiosity and delight in all circumstances.

“All fear is rational, not irrational. All fear is future-oriented (fear of future unhappiness)”<sup>8</sup> Understanding and investigating the anatomy of fear allows its mystery to be unveiled and brought into a user-friendly model. If it is accepted that fear is irrational, then there is nothing we can do about it, however, by accepting the concept that it is rational we suddenly gain the ability to change fear into fearlessness. Living from a place of acceptance instead of asking ‘why (did this happen to me)?’ allows for accepting the ‘universe as friendly, that I’m fully equipped to take care of myself and that comfort will take me everywhere I want to go.’<sup>9</sup> These new beliefs lead to seeing the world and all situations experienced in life as perfect and wondrous. I witnessed an in-class experience with an older man who was afraid of death. The facilitator had him say ‘goodbye’ and leave the room as a symbolic death and the next day we held a pseudo-funeral for him. There was joy, laughter and celebration and the man came out of it saying he could never again look at death as a ‘bad thing’ and actually understood it to be just another ‘doorway’ to adventure.

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<sup>8</sup> Anatomy of fear handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

<sup>9</sup> Primary beliefs of fearlessness handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute, June/2005

“I don’t have to understand or make sense of all the stimuli”<sup>10</sup> Replacing fear-based beliefs with fearlessness beliefs also facilitates a new response to all the stimuli that life generates. Another useful construct given was the liabilities of fear: not being present, physiological damage, muddled thinking, freeze response, depression, anger, supposed psychological disorders and pushing away and/or neediness in relationships.<sup>11</sup> Through seeing how the use of fear serves to create more issues than solve them, we can choose to motivate ourselves and respond to situation differently – with comfort and joy. For myself I released that fear was entirely pointless because it only produced more fear and not what I truly wanted. By releasing my fears and moving into life with comfort and joy I am able to be more authentic, more productive and more loving.

How does being ‘fearless’ lead to a more productive and healthy life? “To be without fear or fearless is to have boundless courage, to be comfortable and confident to act clearly.”<sup>12</sup> If we observe a child who has not yet formed beliefs about the world as an unfriendly and difficult place we can see that fearlessness is a natural state for humans. We learn how to fear through adopting fear-generating beliefs like: A healthy amount of fear keeps me on my toes – alert and ready, the world is a dangerous place, focusing on what I don’t want will keep me out of trouble, anyone who is sane and intelligent has a certain amount of fear – only the very stupid and the very crazy are truly fearless, and change is difficult

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<sup>10</sup> Primary beliefs of fearlessness handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute, June/2005

<sup>11</sup> Common liabilities of fear handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship

<sup>12</sup> Quote from Fearless seminar with Bears, Option Institute, June/2005

and unpleasant.”<sup>13</sup> Thorough examination of these fear-generating beliefs leads to the conclusion that life would be far more productive, fun, healthy and easy without these beliefs. Fearlessness also leads to moving towards our wants instead of moving away from our don’t wants. I was able to see that my fear of losing my husband was really my want to be with him. By releasing my fear and moving towards what I wanted I experienced exhilaration through becoming more loving and accepting of who he is.

“There is a rational use of fear; this is called Fear Management Behaviors.”<sup>14</sup> Fear Management Behaviors are behaviors created in order to manage fear. Some people use annoyance, others anger and still others peace. Any behavior can be changed by examining or ‘tracking fear threads’<sup>15</sup> in our life; for example – my fear of being ‘big’ leads to my fear management behaviors of playing small, pretending I am not as amazing as I am, and focusing on other people’s successes instead of my own. As soon as I am able to follow my ‘fear thread’ I am able to see clearly the path to the core fear and then I have the choice to transform it into: All that I create and experience is perfect and benevolent.

Is being fearless a useful option for humanity? “A fearless life is a life fully lived.”<sup>16</sup> If so many people believe in the usefulness of fear and its inevitability within life how can being fearless be practical? The greatest insight achieved in

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<sup>13</sup> Top Fear-generating beliefs handout handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute, 2005

<sup>14</sup> FMBs: handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

<sup>15</sup> FMBs: handout, Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

<sup>16</sup> Notes from Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005

the 'Fearless' course at Option was to realize that fear is utterly pointless. When deeply investigated there is no evidence of the usefulness of fear to enhance the quality of life. The greatest fear discovered was the fear of being God or Divine. At the core of the groups understanding about all common fears: fear of making mistakes, that something bad will happen, of being a loser/failure, of punishment, of loss of control<sup>17</sup> – the greatest fear was that of our own greatness. For myself, to accept my greatness invites me to take full responsibility for all my perceptions of the world, all my responses to the world and the creation of my dreams.

The realization of this greatness leads to the acceptance of the self as the creator of all experiences (the responses versus the stimuli) and the power to choose to create a fearless, open, loving and joyous life. From this understanding we are free to rewrite our personal histories without judgment, to fully experience the moment from a place of openness and wonder, and to expect benevolent gifts of our futures. Fearless people are responsible, creative, curious, motivated and opportunistic. For a world that currently invests in fear, understanding the power of living fearlessly could lead to creative and productive global solutions to all 'crisis'. In fact, fearless societies would no longer have crisis, they would have wondrous opportunities for growth and creative solutions.

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<sup>17</sup> Group notes from Fearless seminar, Option Institute & Fellowship, June/2005