



## Are You Letting Fear Hold You Back?

Fear can serve a positive purpose, especially when it comes to safety or potential self-destruction. The term “healthy fear” refers to a fear that is actually good for you in the sense it can be a protection. For example, fear of drinking and driving or fear of overdose can both be considered to be healthy fears because having a fear of those things can move an individual to make safer choices. However there are other fears that can be unhealthy. Some of these unhealthy fears can severely limit you from living up to your full potential.

***“One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his great surprises, is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn’t do.” —Henry Ford***

When someone is working toward making positive lifestyle changes in response to a substance use or mental health issue, there may be some fear involved during the process of healing. To get better, some risks have to be taken and some fears have to be faced for there to be growth. It is okay to be afraid from time to time but the difference that separates people who are successful from those who are not is the ability to move forward in spite of one’s feelings of fear. The feeling of fear is inevitable at times, however the difference is whether or not you will allow unhealthy fears to forever hold you back from the progress you deserve.

The process of working past your fears starts with insight and self-awareness. This means first recognizing and acknowledging to yourself what you may be afraid of. Once we recognize our fears we can learn to face them, and then slowly and steadily work on them. Some fears may never fully leave us, however, we have a degree of control over how we will allow fear to maintain a hold on us by keeping us inactive. Many fears eventually go away with time, patience, persistence and practice. The main point is to face our unhealthy fears and keep moving forward toward our goals anyway

**Group Process:** Start with a general discussion of the following questions focused on some of your strengths and coping skills.

- 1. Starting with strengths – The fact that you are here now means that you have already overcome some level of fear just to get where you are now – What fears have you already started to face on your journey to get where you are today?**
- 2. What helps you personally with your fears? Who or what do you rely upon for courage and strength?**

**Next –** Review the following page: **“Fears That May Be Holding You Back”**. When reviewing the list, check off any of the fears that you think may be holding you back in some way. *(Keep in mind that the list is made up of some actual phobias, which are irrational fears that in some cases can be extreme. By checking off any of the fears does not mean you have this phobia)* The main point with the exercise is to try to use insight and self-awareness to recognize what fears may be holding you back from moving forward to realize your full potential.

**When everyone is done reviewing the list:**

- **Discuss as a group what fears people recognized for themselves**
- **Answer the following discussion questions as a group:**
  - **From what you know of others in this group: Who has done a good job showing courage with a difficult life situation?**
  - **What can you start doing today to begin working toward overcoming some of the fears that may be holding you back? Be specific if possible. Write down your plan**



## Fears That May be Holding You Back

- Agliophobia (Odynophobia or Odynephobia) - Fear of pain.
- Agoraphobia- Fear of open spaces or fear of leaving a safe place.
- Alethephobia – Fear of truth
- Anuptaphobia- Fear of staying single.
- Atelophobia- Fear of imperfection
- Autophobia- Fear of being alone or fear of oneself
- Catagelophobia or Katagelophobia - Fear of being ridiculed.
- Bibliophobia- Fear of books
- Chronophobia- Fear of time.
- Cyberphobia- Fear of computers or working on a computer.
- Decidophobia- Fear of making decisions.
- Didaskaleinophobia- Fear of going to school.
- Disposophobia- Fear of throwing stuff out. Hoarding.
- Doxophobia- Fear of expressing opinions or of receiving praise
- Eleutherophobia- Fear of freedom
- Epistemophobia or Gnosiophobia - Fear of knowledge
- Eremophobia- Fear of being oneself or of loneliness
- Ergophobia- Fear of work.
- Gelotophobia- Fear of being laughed at.
- Gerascophobia- Fear of growing old
- Glossophobia- Fear of speaking in public or of trying to speak.
- Hypengyophobia or Hypegiaphobia- Fear of responsibility
- Ideophobia- Fear of ideas.
- Isolophobia- Fear of solitude, being alone
- Kakorrhaphiophobia- Fear of failure or defeat.
- Metathesiophobia- Fear of changes
- Nostophobia- Fear of returning home.
- Philophobia- Fear of falling in love or being in love
- Phobophobia: The fear of fear itself.
- Phronemophobia- Fear of thinking
- Prosophobia- Fear of progress.
- Soteriophobia - Fear of dependence on others.
- Xenophobia- Fear of strangers or foreigners.