

Fearful Times

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I have spoken with many people lately who feel afraid. These are, indeed, fearful times, with what has happened in the stock market, upside-down mortgages, loss of jobs, etc. Those fears are due to this period of time, which some believe is “the time of the end.” How do we deal with chronic fear, though, that is not just based on the age in which we are living?

Throughout most of my life, I have struggled with fear. I was what they call a “painfully shy” child, one of those kids who hung onto the hem of her mommy’s skirt. I was often afraid of even looking someone in the eye. I’ve looked back and believe I was afraid they would see “the real me,” a frightened child who didn’t “fit in.” My main fear has always been that of rejection, from the time when I was a child and little girls were determining who was worthy to play with them to being chosen last for teams. I did not just experience fear in my childhood, though. Even as an adult, I feared being rejected by my peers at work and by men when I was single.

Fortunately, through hard work and a lot of prayer, I have overcome most of my fears. I’ll admit it has been a struggle, though. The first step was to overcome my shyness. I’ll never forget telling myself one day when I was in my early 20’s that I was sick and tired of being shy and that I needed to be done with it. I had to “push” myself through my fears and feel discomfort. An excellent book that talks about pushing through fears is *Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway* by Dr. Susan Jeffers. Dr. Jeffers says that we will always feel fear whenever we are stretching ourselves. None of us purposefully wants to feel discomfort, yet sometimes it’s necessary if we are to move forward in life.

Another fear I have dealt with in my life is the fear of conflict. I believe this fear is connected to my fear of rejection. If I have a conflict with someone, there’s always the possibility that there will be no resolution, and I could come to believe I have been “rejected.” The fact is that whenever two people interact there always is the potential for conflict. No matter how similar we may believe a person is to us, we are all unique individuals. No one feels exactly the same way as we do. Pushing through fear to attempt to resolve conflict, even when there is a risk of rejection, is worth the effort. Of course, one should always approach conflict through as much thought as time allows and through a great deal of prayer. The key is to tell the truth with kindness.

The second book I would recommend is called *Fearless Living* by Rhonda Britten. Rhonda is a life coach who overcame a horrific past to help others with their struggles with fear. The book’s stress is on loving, accepting, and being true to oneself. The books that have had the most impact on my life all focus on how important it is to be one’s authentic self. I truly believe that we give God who created us pleasure when we are being true to ourselves. Otherwise, it’s a bit of an insult to Him when we are constantly trying to be someone else.

As a life coach, I try to not hand out “advice,” but I have some suggestions when you’re dealing with fear: 1) Be yourself. 2) Talk with your loved ones about your struggles. 3) Give your fears over to God. I feel so incredibly blessed to have come to the point in my life where I’m pretty comfortable with myself. I also have a very loving husband, family and friends who are there for me in the tough times. Most importantly, I have a loving Father in Heaven who has always been there for me. He is there for you too.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.” (Psalm 46:1-3)