



5.1 FEAR

HOW IT DOMINATES & CONTROLS YOU

To recap, the previous section explained the most common obstacles you'll face and the tools to overcome or to prevent them. This section demonstrates the influence of fear in your life. Most of the obstacles in your life are caused by fear.

It's unlikely you have any issues in your life that weren't created by fear. You might not think that your financial or relationship challenges are rooted in fear. However, if you're honest with yourself, you'll probably realize that many of your obstacles *are* caused by your fears and your inability to deal with them in an appropriate way.

CONSIDER THESE EXAMPLES:

1. **Relationship issues.** Fear of abandonment is a common fear. It's also common to fear the loss of autonomy or freedom. Trust issues can also be fear-based. You might be afraid that you won't be accepted fully.
2. **Money issues.** Many people deal with fear and anxiety by shopping, which can create debt. Some simply fear discomfort and are unable to let go of that expensive car or morning coffee.
3. **Procrastination. Procrastination can be caused by fear of failure or the perceived discomfort of performing an unpleasant task.**
 - a. For example, you might fear you're missing out on something exciting and scroll Facebook or Instagram constantly instead of working.
4. **Stuck in a job you dislike.** You might be afraid that no other decent jobs exist for you. You might be fearful of giving up your benefits or getting a new job that pays less. You might be afraid of going through the application process and competing for a better job.



These are just a few examples. Consider the other parts of your life that are challenging. Can you see how fear is having a negative impact?

HOW TO HANDLE FEARS THAT ARE HOLDING YOU BACK:

Realize that fear is uncomfortable, but it isn't a good reason to avoid doing something. Fear is helpful if you're considering doing something physically dangerous. But at the end of the day, fear is simply a feeling.

There's no reason to let fear guide every decision you make.

Think about a fearful activity and simply breathe. Your body is unable to maintain a fear reaction in the long term. There's a psychological technique called "flooding." In flooding, a person is exposed to their fear without being allowed any reprieve.

Think about the activity that makes you uncomfortable and focus on taking long, deep breaths. Notice how you start to feel better.

Make a list of the ways that fear is holding you back. If some part of your life is in complete turmoil, it's likely that you made poor decisions in the past. How did fear affect your decision-making abilities at that time?

Remember the times you were fearful and still made a good choice. You've likely had times where you felt fear but managed to take the appropriate course of action anyway.

Remind yourself of those times and remember how strong you can be.

Practice dealing with discomfort. Take a situation that you find mildly uncomfortable. Perhaps it's eating broccoli or talking to an attractive member of the opposite sex. **Force yourself to deal with small doses of the discomfort, and increase the level of exposure over time.**



Although it's challenging to give up the habit of avoidance, you'll be surprised at how much you can tolerate.

Realize that discomfort and fear are frequently good things. If you're not doing anything that makes you uncomfortable, your life is likely to stay the same. It's only when you push your comfort level that new things can begin to happen.

BOX BREATHING

Your breathing is one of the most important and integral parts to your survival. Yes, if you don't or can't continue to breathe you die, literally. But if you can't regulate your air intake and control your breath then you will simply not perform at your best. It's that simple.

Breathing can also regulate your stress levels, when it's out of control you can literally panic or your stress and fear can put you in a downward spiral of failure BUT when you can control it you can do amazing things. Your mind can absolutely control your body and the breath is a pathway to that realization.

Warriors, like the Navy SEALs, use a breathing technique called box-breathing to regulate their airflow and control their mind and body when they are called upon to perform.

This technique will help you cool down your body as well as find your mental-center.

BOX BREATHING HOW-TO:

1. Inhale for 4 seconds (as the circle expands)
2. Hold your lungs full for 4 seconds (as the circle stays fully expanded)
3. Exhale for 4 seconds (as the circle shrinks)
4. Hold your lungs empty for 4 seconds (as the circle is contracted)



Mark Divine teaches in-depth about the way we breathe and various breathing patterns you can use during a performance or generally to control your emotional state.

Watch the podcast by [Barbell Shrugged with Mark Divine](https://youtu.be/GZzhk9jEkkI) (<https://youtu.be/GZzhk9jEkkI>)

JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT:

Become more adept at dealing with fear and discomfort in your daily life. This can be a little challenging, because we're programmed to seek out comfort. We're so quick to respond to any form of discomfort, our ability to withstand it is compromised. You have to rebuild this ability in yourself all the time. It is also a skill that diminishes over time.

For the next week (7 Days) seek out, execute and then journal your experiences performing each of the following:

1. When you have the urge to get something to eat, make yourself wait another 30 minutes to an hour - the longer the better.
2. When you feel like quitting an unenjoyable task, persist for another 15 minutes.
3. Have challenging conversations instead of avoiding them. *This does not mean be a jerk and continue an unnecessary argument, for argument's sake...*
4. Refuse to engage in your most common avoidance/distraction techniques – Facebook, Instagram, Phone, Netflix, Youtube, and so on...