

Demystify your Fear

How to smash the last obstacle
between you and your business success

PETER
SHALLARD
The Shrink for Entrepreneurs

Demystify Your Fear

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The information contained in this guide is designed to help you develop an entrepreneurial mentality that leads to business success. However, I can't guarantee you'll succeed, because everything revealed herein requires that you take action and apply what you've learned correctly, and that's up to you.

This document cannot be construed as medical advice. Only a licensed professional familiar with your specific circumstances can provide that kind of advice.

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Foreword:

The Importance of Overcoming Fear

If you're reading this, you're probably an entrepreneur or you really want to be one. You probably have a good idea of what you want from life: freedom, wealth and happiness usually sums it up nicely. And you probably want to reach those goals by trying to win big in business.

But there are thousands (millions!) of ways to achieve freedom, wealth and happiness. Most have nothing to do with business or being an entrepreneur. In fact, the chances of winning big as an entrepreneur are pretty slim.

The statistics are downright scary. Most small businesses fail in their first year. Only 5% or so turn a profit in that time. And if a business makes it to two years, that's almost surprising.

In other words, being an entrepreneur is a seriously high-risk occupation. It doesn't matter if you "think positive", visualise success, practice affirmations every day or believe you're different from the rest. At the end of the day, business success is hard work, and it's statistically unlikely.

Oh, and in terms of stress? Being an entrepreneur makes being a lion tamer look like a walk in the park!

Yet every day, people give up their jobs to chase the self-employed dream. An entire industry of self-help and personal development books, courses and websites have sprung up to sell teach entrepreneurs the "secret sauce" to success.

The promise of secret knowledge that nearly guarantees you'll make it into the top ranks of wealth, freedom and happiness is damned alluring.

There is one thing that credible and trustworthy experts agree on as a secret to business success: persistence wins.

That means that while only 5% of entrepreneurs might turn a profit in their first year of business, it's the entrepreneurs who fail but who keep trying anyway who end up winning.

Here's another way of saying this: A new entrepreneur has a 95% chance of losing at the game of business. But, if he can lose and learn from each experience, the chance of eventual success increases dramatically.

Persistence wins.

And the prize?

Wealth. Freedom. Happiness.

It takes a lot of determination, though. And it takes strength of character, too. When business failure happens, the world dishes up a pile of feedback. This feedback nearly looks like a list of everything you did wrong. It's horribly painful to read.

It's so painful to read, actually, that most entrepreneurs don't bother. They give up, go back to their jobs and (try to) forget their dreams.

But persistence wins. And the true secret of amazing success is the ability to overcome failure after failure and get something out of each experience. It's the ability to keep trying and to continue growing.

It's the ability to turn failure into feedback and learn from it.

Easy, right? Well, not quite. If it were easy, then 95% of entrepreneurs would succeed from the get-go – they're smart, savvy people, after all. But they don't succeed immediately, because they face an enormous, overwhelming obstacle that prevents them from turning failure into feedback and learning from it.

That obstacle is fear.

The problem is that fear is a result of failure. When you fail, you fear that...

- **things might not get better**
- **people will give up on you**
- **you won't be able to pay the bills**
- **friends and family think you're a failure**
- **you'll be laughed at**

- **there's something wrong with you**
- **you're not doing what you're "supposed" to be doing**
- **you don't have what it takes**
- **you're not good enough or smart enough**

Fear of failure cripples you, whether you're just starting out or you're a serial entrepreneur with the Midas touch and a dozen successes already.

How does fear cripple you? When you fail, fear courses through your veins in icy coldness. It grips your stomach and freezes your spine. It attacks your brain, and it makes you doubt everything.

And while you're experiencing all this failure and fear, some guy comes along and tells you to turn it into an awesome feedback experience.

Yeah, *right!*

Turning failure into feedback is the entrepreneur's ultimate challenge. It's the litmus test of success and the deal-breaker that separates those who'll win and those who won't be entrepreneurs for very long.

Fear is the greatest enemy of persistence. Thus, fear is the greatest enemy of entrepreneurs.

Conquer your enemy, and you win big at business and at life. Why? Because you silence the inner critic that tells you why you failed, you destroy the mental pattern that tempts you to give up, and you cut through the bullshit so you can assess the situation, grab the feedback, and learn from it.

The result?

Wealth. Freedom. Happiness.

Success.

*the true secret of amazing
success is the ability to
overcome failure after failure
and get something out of each
experience*

Chapter One

Fear 101 – The Basics

You're Not Joe-with-a-Job

Joe-with-a-job is the guy who plays it safe. You've seen this guy before. He goes about his daily routine at work, doing what he's supposed to be doing, and not really doing much else.

Sometimes Joe stops working for a minute, and he gazes out the window while he imagines what life might be like beyond the four walls surrounding him. What life might be like if he had total freedom to just get up and walk away? To go outside. To do what he wanted.

Whatever he wanted.

Then Joe tells himself, "That's dangerous thinking. Better get back to work."

It's dangerous thinking because fear is important to Joe. Fear lets him know he's somewhere he shouldn't be. It tells him when it's not safe. And when Joe senses fear, he avoids it. He works hard to escape it.

Joe escapes by putting his head down and going back to his daily routine, doing what he's always done and doing what he'll always do. Joe stays comfortably safe.

This works really well for many people. The world is full of Joes, all living happily inside their comfort zone where there's no dangerous thinking and where life is safe.

Not you, though. You're not like Joe. Even if you work for someone else right now, even if you're employed, even if you don't own your own business, you're not an average Joe.

You're an entrepreneur.

You're different from Joe because you look beyond your four walls, and you don't tell yourself it's dangerous thinking to do so. You tell yourself that outside your four walls is freedom.

And you're committed to achieving that freedom.

Until you achieve it, though, you can never really stop thinking about freedom. It preys on your mind. You're constantly aware of it. You never forget your dreams, even temporarily. You can call up your dreams in a split second, and you dare to let them linger and burn in your mind while you savor them.

But make no mistake: fear is important to you, just as it's important to Joe. Since you're different people, though, your fear is important in different ways:

Joe's fear keeps him safe. Your fear keeps you in danger.

Fear is dangerous to you because when you're an entrepreneur, running away from fear means you behave just like Joe.

And when you start behaving like Joe, you pay an enormous price:

You become Joe.

Joe's Sane; You're Not.

The statistical likelihood of entrepreneurial success is ridiculously low, as you've learned. In fact, it's so low that convincing yourself that you have a chance at success is actually pretty crazy. You'd be even crazier to try to reach that goal.

Choosing a career or lifestyle that carries such a low chance of success is enough to have friends and family tell you that you're crazy or beg you reconsider. They might even plead for you to think this through properly.

Ah, that's happened to you before, has it?

Probably. Most people are just like Joe-with-a-job, remember? To them, pursuing a dream is dangerous thinking. Risky. Crazy. Downright insane.

But you *can* succeed in reaching your dream. As you've learned, persistence and the ability to fail and educate yourself from that experience is the only conceivable way to beat the statistics.

The proof is all around you - every mega-success entrepreneur who was insane enough to keep trying has a story of persistence, failure and learning. Just look at these three examples of ultra-successful entrepreneurs:

*Entrepreneurs don't really sweat
the small stuff.*

Richard Branson

The long list of business ventures Branson has under his belt is nearly phenomenal. Well known for his Virgin business brand success, Branson also suffered plenty of failures. He had poor grades in school and his first ventures never got off the ground. Several of his ventures after becoming successful also failed.

Branson pushed forward with persistence and achieved all sorts of entrepreneurial goals while dealing with limited funds, stiff competition, legal battles, boycotts and complaints, to name just a few. Each setback only saw Branson emerging with a positive mindset and triumphant wins. The man's attitude is exceptional!

Donald Trump

A celebrity in the business world, Trump wasn't always winning. In the late 80s, he was unable to meet loan payments. He eventually reached business bankruptcy (and quite nearly personal bankruptcy) in the early 90s, to the tune of \$900 million dollars worth of debt.

Hard financial times continued for years, yet Trump persevered, pursuing his goals until he finally broke through... only to face the 2008 financial crisis. Throughout the fiasco, Trump continued to cruise around in luxury cars wearing expensive suits. He refused to compromise his beliefs of success – and he's still going strong today.

Steve Jobs

The famous technology leader had early years that included dropping out of college and creating a circuit board for an Atari game, a task in which Jobs held little knowledge. It was a humble start for someone who changed the face of the computer industry with Apple, a company founded by Jobs in the 70s.

Criticized publicly for a temperamental, aggressive and demanding personality and suffering an industry-wide sales slump, Jobs eventually found himself caught in a power struggle with CEO John Scully in 1984. Jobs was relieved of his duties at Apple that same year.

He moved on to found NeXT, which was bought out by Apple a few years later, and Jobs became Apple's CEO. Since then, the

company has done nothing but leap from strength to strength, revolutionizing how people use technology around the globe.

These three entrepreneurs began with nothing, just as almost all of us do. They had shaky starts filled with adversity and faced plenty of obstacles that would have caused many people to toss in the towel and give up.

But they didn't give up. And you don't have to either, even though your goals might be far more modest than those of Jobs or Trump or Branson. As the saying goes, if they can do it, you can too. Fear is the only significant obstacle that gets in the way of your persistence.

Sure, we all struggle with little bits and pieces of fear every day – that's normal. You're on top of those, though. They're no more than fleeting thoughts. You know you'll get through it, and you'll be fine. Entrepreneurs don't *really* sweat the small stuff.

The bigger stuff, though... that's a little different. Once that type of fear takes hold of you, it becomes constant and ends up being the ultimate cause of entrepreneurial issues such as:

- **Procrastination**
- **Self-sabotage**
- **Stress**
- **Poor decision-making**
- **Second-guessing and self-doubt**
- **Questioning your core purpose**

You've experienced each of those, I'm sure.

But imagine what you could do if you didn't have to experience them. Imagine they were never a concern. Imagine what it would feel like if you never questioned your dreams, if you never doubted yourself, *if you had no fears at all*.

Imagine. No procrastination. No second guessing. No *stress*.

Think of what you could do if all that melted away tomorrow. Think of where you could be in three months, in six months, and in twelve months, if you mastered and conquered every fear that held you back.

Forever. Imagine that. How much could you achieve?

Exactly.

Joe of the Jungle

Fear is wonderfully complex. The brain performs a powerful little trick in a split second and you don't even notice. The trick goes something like this:

Perceived threat = instant FEAR

When your brain turns on fear, all kinds of interesting chemical reactions occur within you. Your brain floods with mind-altering chemicals and flushes your body full of adrenaline. Your heart rate accelerates, and so does your breathing. Your muscles are pumped full of blood, your stomach halts digestion in its tracks, and your pupils dilate wide.

You're ready for action. Fight or flight.

It sounds primal, and it is. When you perceive fear, whether it's real or imagined, your brain reacts instantly to prepare you for deadly combat or a sprint to safety.

Your brain's job is to keep you safe and alive.

To understand why the brain reacts this way, let's go back in time. We'll take our friend Joe-with-a-job along with us.

Our ancestors – yes, cave dwellers – faced phenomenal life-or-death situations every day. Each time they left their cave to hunt, they were in mortal danger. They had to avoid tigers, snakes, and all sorts of deadly creatures. One wrong move and our ancestors became lunch for some vicious beast.

Fear was perfect for this environment. As Joe-the-hunter tiptoed through the jungle, he would sometimes push aside a fern and find himself staring straight into the eyes of a hungry jaguar. And at that instant, fear struck.

Adrenaline flooded through Joe. Without even thinking, he reacted. He hurled his spear into the jaguar's face – and then he ran.

Fear saved Joe-the-hunter's life. It shut off his conscious thought, turned him into a creature of reflexes and made him take action to avoid danger and stay safe.

This is useful. Without fear, Joe-the-hunter would be dead.

In today's world, the jungle is concrete and steel, and fear has evolved to mean something quite different than it did back then. Fear is no longer about daily life-or-death situations. Now you hear about "softer" fears, like fear of failure, fear of the unknown and fear of success.

These fears have very little to do with being eaten alive - but your brain reacts the same way.

The ancient fight-or-flight reflex has limited use in the modern world. It keeps you out of dark alleys where you might be robbed, and it makes you look before you cross the street so a car doesn't hit you. Fear helps you navigate the modern world safely, and it's still appropriate and still useful. You'd be in trouble without it.

But you're in trouble when fear controls you in situations where it's not useful. And this is why mastering fear becomes so crucial to success.

*you're in trouble when fear
controls you in situations where
it's not useful*

Chapter Two

Fear in the Modern World of Business

Jill's Modern Jungle

Meet Jill-the-entrepreneur. Jill owns her own business. She likes what she does, and one day, she decides it's time to find some new clients.

So Jill-the-entrepreneur puts on her best clothes, gives herself a mental pep talk, and sets out to network with potential clients.

Jill's going cold calling.

On the way to the first destination, Jill-the-entrepreneur is thinking hard about the challenges she'll face. What to say. How to shake hands. What pitch to use. And she steps to cross the street.

There's a loud honk, someone yells and Jill's head snaps to the right. A city bus is screaming towards her.

Jill-the-entrepreneur was so preoccupied thinking about cold calling that she forgot to look before crossing the street.

Adrenaline flushes through her, Jill's mouth goes dry and she stops breathing. She yanks her foot back to the curb just in time, and the bus flies past (with its driver shaking his fist).

Fear just saved Jill's life. That was useful.

Jill takes a moment to recover, and as her heartbeat slows down, her breathing becomes easier. She's still feeling shaky, but the office building is just across the street and she knows she's fine now.

So Jill-the-entrepreneur crosses the street (looking both ways this time), approaches the door to the building, and imagines what the busy receptionist might look like. The woman will probably be annoyed, then she'll be snippy, and Jill can just imagine having to plaster a big smile on her face and...

... Jill's heart beats faster, her mouth goes dry and suddenly she can't catch her breath.

That bus really shook me up, thinks Jill-the-entrepreneur. She decides to go have a coffee before beginning her cold calling, and as she's waiting to be served at the café, the feeling goes away.

It comes back a few minutes later as Jill sits there sipping her mocha-latté, thinking she'd better head out soon for that first cold call of the day. Her stomach is all twisted up, and her heart beats fast again.

Today just isn't my day, Jill decides. She sets down her latté and tells herself she'll come back tomorrow. Right now, she just wants to go home.

And as she leaves the café and heads for home, Jill-the-entrepreneur starts to feel better. Her heart slows down and a few minutes later, Jill feels relaxed and relieved. *I'll nail it tomorrow*, she thinks.

Fear just sabotaged Jill's intentions. That wasn't useful.

Sound familiar? Cold-calling might not be part of your particular business strategy, but I bet you know what it feels like to be nervous as you go into a place you've never been before to ask for something you're not sure will be well received.

What's interesting is that Jill experienced the exact same reaction to two very different situations.

One saved her life. The other held her back.

And that day, Jill lost a client. While she walked home, someone else approached the man she'd been going to see that very afternoon.

The Difference between Useful and Useless Fear

You've learned that there are two types of fear: useful and useless.

Useful fear is appropriate, needed and wanted, because it protects

us and keeps us safe. Useless fear is inappropriate, sabotaging and unwarranted. It holds us back.

Fear only ever has one meaning, though: fear means you need to prepare for an upcoming event.

Here are a few examples to demonstrate that definition:

1. **You meet with a bear while hiking in the woods. *You need to prepare to run for your life or battle for survival.***
2. **A stranger in a hooded shirt grabs your arm as you're walking past. *You need to prepare to run or yell for help.***
3. **A business partner says something that makes you doubt his intentions, and he shiftily avoids eye contact. *You need to prepare that this person may be up to no good.***

In each of these cases, fear did its job of keeping you out of danger. It was useful, appropriate and warranted. And when fear is useful, appropriate and warranted, it serves as the most powerful early-warning system you could ever have. Fear is an instant-action signal that comes from your unconscious mind.

Think about the process of consciously figuring out a logical analysis of a situation. A stranger grabs your arm as you're walking past, and your conscious mind would think:

Fear is your internal ninja, and it has lightning reflex

What...? This is a man. He's squeezing my arm too tightly. He seems aggressive. He's wearing a hood. It hides his face. I don't know this man; he's a stranger. His voice sounds foreboding. His tone of voice is harsh, and he's demanding something. He wants my wallet!

Right. Forget that. By the time you've rationalized this all out consciously, your wallet's gone and so is the stranger.

Your unconscious is much faster. In a fraction of a second, it sizes up the situation, knows EXACTLY what's going on (and even if it judged wrongly, better safe than sorry), and it's pumped you full of chemicals you need to *take action*.

Fear is your internal ninja, and it has lightning reflexes. It's keeping you safe. It's a gift.

Except when it isn't, of course.

You've learned that fear always triggers the same physical reaction. You've also learned that this fear reaction means you need to prepare for an upcoming event. In the situation above, fear helped you prepare for a mugging.

Here are three scenarios. Think about what fear might be preparing you for, and how useful it is:

1. The freelancer

You've been asked to quote on a freelance contract. You write your proposal, but just as you're about to send it off to the potential customer, your pulse quickens and you hesitate. What if the person receives your quote and thinks, "Are you out of your mind?!" Should you quote that rate? Is it too high?

2. The manufacturer

As you get closer to the deadline for shipping the product you've been working hard on, your stomach starts to feel queasy. You're nervous, and you're pacing a lot. You start to worry whether the product is good enough. You can just imagine everything that could go wrong.

3. The sales manager

You have a meeting in the morning with an important individual. You can't sleep, and you stay awake the whole night worrying over whether you'll make a mistake. When morning comes, you really wish you could just reschedule. Your stomach's in knots. Maybe you'll call in sick...

Fear creates some pretty nasty business sabotage. Let's see how fear influences these three scenarios:

1. The freelancer

As you imagine your client's indignant reply, you decide that maybe your rates a little too high after all. So you edit the email and cut your rates by 15%. You try to ignore a last pang of nerves that they're still too high and hit 'send'.

The client emails you back: "Fantastic! Let's get started." Now you'll never know if your rates were too high or if they're now too low, because fear made you sell yourself short either way.

2. The manufacturer

The more you think about shipping the product, the more your heart beats faster. You end up deciding to contact the client to let him know you're running behind. You even add some positive spin on the situation by saying you're putting extra quality into the product.

Deep down, you don't believe your BS. Neither does the client, and you start building the reputation of a company that can't meet deadlines.

3. The sales manager

You force yourself to attend the meeting, but you almost feel like you've taken a drug. You arrive at the meeting overtired and looking a mess. You're not speaking well, either, because you're stressed.

You come across sounding unprepared, flaky and nervous. You're not in "the zone".

And the meeting flops. The person you're pitching is skeptical and doesn't buy into your ideas.

Now, all these are worst-case scenarios or close to them, but they do happen every day to entrepreneurs everywhere and at every level of success.

These scenarios could work out better than they did here - you might end up winning *despite* your fears. In fact, that's how many successful entrepreneurs operate: they win *despite* their fears... but that sure is stressful!

Let's think back to useful fear and useless fear. Remember that useful fear always has the same meaning: that you need to prepare for an upcoming event.

When you look back at the three scenarios and how fear influenced the outcome of each, you'll notice that in every one of the situations, the fear was *useless* fear, and there was nothing to prepare for, because the upcoming events ("Are you out of your mind?!"; "This isn't good enough."; "Uh-oh... I just made a mistake.") didn't even exist.

As the freelancer, you had nothing to prepare for other than an imaginary, unlikely confrontation with a rude client. As the product-launching entrepreneur, you talked yourself out of meeting the deadline because you presumed the client's disappointment before

the client himself even had a chance to react. And the big meeting was blown because *fear itself* ruined your composure.

Fear is a gift when it's useful, appropriate and warranted. And when it's not useful, inappropriate and unwarranted, it's an invalid, meaningless signal.

Useless fear is useless because there's no bear about to maul you. There is nothing worth the racing heart or the high-level stress.

And useless fear is the number one cause of entrepreneurial mistakes. It's utterly pointless and shreds great plans into waste. If you're an entrepreneur, you can't afford to let pointless, unwarranted fears come between you and your success.

Play it smart. Pay attention to the signals from your unconscious mind – and know what those signals mean.

Why useless fear happens if there aren't any bears to battle

Before you explore how you can overcome useless fears, it's critical to understand why those useless fears happen in the first place.

Nervousness, anxiety and worry are all words we use for modern fears. These fears occur because our world changed so rapidly that our brains couldn't keep up with the pace of change.

Millions of years ago, our unconscious mind switched on that powerful, adrenaline-fuelled state in seconds. It needed that. The

fight-or-flight emotional reflex was the perfect reaction to the many terrifying hazards that humans had to face back then.

But as society grew and changed, people gained mastery over the natural world. We tamed wild beasts, built better weapons and created cities to live in. Finding some permanent safety enabled us to develop all kinds of new things, like farming, art and business.

Thus, the entrepreneur was born.

*Useless fear is the number
one cause of entrepreneurial
mistakes*

These developments influenced the meaning of failure. In ancient times, failure meant being eaten by a bear, and that was a terrifying thought. But as humans evolved, they overcame fearing constant physical danger. They focused on other survival needs, such as hunting, because they feared lack of food.

Then they quickly overcame *those* fears as they discovered better hunting techniques - and developed new fears that replaced those they eliminated.

If you're reading this right now, you probably don't fear attacks by bears or starving to death. The dangers at the top of your mind probably include:

- **Losing face in front of your friends**
- **Being laughed at by your colleagues**
- **Being rejected by your loved ones**
- **Not having enough money to sustain your lifestyle**
- **Not being perceived as "successful"**

Our fears are horribly self-centered compared to the fears of our ancestors and to the disadvantaged people in the world today. Even so, our unconscious mind still takes our personal fears very, very seriously. Why?

Because for millions of years, avoiding fear meant staying alive.

Staying alive is still your number-one priority, and your brain is deeply conditioned to do whatever it takes to avoid you being exposed to your fears. It makes sense for the threat of bears - not so much for business.

The fears you face as an entrepreneur are less tangible than bears. There isn't a hungry animal roaring in front of you, so your brain (which is only trying to protect you and keep you safe) has to resort to other tactics to have you avoid "danger".

These tactics include:

- **Playing out disaster scenarios in the movie theatre of your imagination**
- **Creating stomach-wrenching feelings of stress and overwhelm**
- **Turning up the volume on the internal dialogue that destroys your confidence**

These thoughts and feelings swirling in your head *create* your modern fears - but as always, your unconscious mind is simply trying to be helpful by keeping you safe.

As an entrepreneur, you're opting for the risky route in life. You're choosing a career that puts you in the firing line of every single one of the modern fears. It's "dangerous". And your unconscious mind wants to protect you from bears and dangers.

Eons of mental programming mean you have a fundamental conflict with your unconscious mind. It's trying to keep you out of danger, and you're making a conscious decision to live dangerously – just by trying to do something remarkable in business.

The reason why you've chosen to live this way isn't important. What's important is that you *have* chosen. You've set a goal for yourself, and reaching that goal requires you to overcome your fears.

You need to resolve the conflict between your unconscious desire for safety and your conscious quest for success.

How fear helps prepare us for modern-day events

The ancient fear, the kind that freezes your brain and stops your heart, is actually very easy to overcome. It's a signal from your unconscious, and it's screaming, "Fight or run for your life!"

Responding to that scream is all it takes. Once you've run far enough or fought hard enough, the fear disappears, dissipating as soon as your unconscious mind is reassured that you're safe.

This type of fear is great for keeping you out of trouble and can be very useful. Do you know how many people die by bear attack each year? Don't be one of them!

But what about modern fears? What about dealing with the intangible, debilitating terror that sabotages your best intentions to be an awesome businessperson?

Well, let's see how fear can be useful in today's world, and how it might signal the need to prepare for an upcoming event:

A few years ago, I had been invited to speak to a group of executives. I was going to present psychological tactics about resilience to these people so that they could deal with the ridiculously stressful careers they had chosen.

The executives worked for an enormous global company with exceptionally high standards for its staff. The company also had a policy of pitting staff against one another for promotional opportunities. It was one of the most backstabbing political organizations I'd ever known.

Staff was petrified of looking for support from their colleagues, as any sign of weakness could be used against them. Work-life balance was unheard of, and while people were making loads of money, they weren't enjoying life. Burnouts and midlife crises were common.

I had worked with this organization before, though, so I knew what to expect, and I was well prepared. I had a kick-ass presentation designed to be a real breath of fresh air for these people. I boarded my flight feeling confident.

About 15 minutes into the flight, a little knot in my stomach began to twist and grow. I was surprised at the feeling, and I thought, "Am I developing a phobia of flying?!" Surely not – I was very comfortable in planes and had flown many times.

I didn't feel comfortable this time, though, so I did what everyone tends to do - I ignored the feeling. I ordered a drink. I tried to distract myself with an informative article on the dance rituals of Pacific island nations. (Thank you, Inflight magazine.)

But I couldn't dissipate the anxiety - and it grew.

After about an hour, my whole body was tense, and even though the air in the plane was cool, I started to sweat. So I ordered another drink, and that helped. The feeling went away... or at least, it got a little fuzzier.

The unfortunate thing about flying long-distance is that long-distance travel takes a long time – usually enough to get a little drunk and then a little hung over. As the warm glow of one too many gin and tonics wore off, the feeling of fear returned to the party - and it brought headache along as a guest.

Now my heart was pounding (and so was my head). “Enough of this bullshit,” I thought, and I went to the washroom to splash cool water on my face. I asked the flight attendant for one of those awesome heated towels and feeling moderately refreshed, I returned to my seat for a moment of reflection.

Why was I feeling anxious? What could this mean? These questions swirled in my mind. I tried to bring to mind all I knew about fear. And I remembered that fear – appropriate fear - has only one meaning: that I need to prepare for an upcoming event.

“Well, duh,” I told myself. “This presentation is a big deal.” It was a big client, and I wanted to impress them. But I wasn’t nervous - I was prepared!

Then I thought I’d better double check.

I opened up my laptop and went through my materials. Kickass bullet points for presentation, check. Super-sexy handouts for participants, check. Game plan for one-on-one sessions, check. Gorgeous slides for presentation...

“Oh, *\$&%!”

I didn’t have the files for a pivotal segment of the presentation. I was about to begin several days of consultations and training soon after I landed, and I was missing 40 crucial slides.

I was screwed! My stomach back-flipped. Even if I stayed awake all night to prepare new slides, I’d never make it in time. And then...

My anxiety melted away. My heart slowed its beating, the shaking stopped, my stomach untwisted and I was left feeling exhausted but calm.

Why? I’d realized I could phone a friend at home and solve the problem. I’d tell him where my spare key was, which files I needed and have him upload them to my web server so that I could download them at the hotel. I actually laughed! This was no big deal.

Problem solved, and the fear was gone.

I spent the rest of the flight sleeping and watching movies. When I landed, I called my friend and an hour later, I had my files. All it cost me was a bottle of wine to make up for waking my friend at 3am.

This story is a great example of the modern-day equivalent to meeting a bear. The “danger” of screwing up the presentation would have been enormous. That particular client had very high expectations, and half the presentation was based on diagrams, bullet points and pictures. If I hadn’t had the files, I would never have worked with that company again.

My unconscious mind had been trying to protect me from the danger of screwing up. It sent a message, and that message was, “You need to prepare for an upcoming event.”

And I wasn’t prepared. I thought I was, but that final step of transferring files to my laptop had been missing. Deep down, my unconscious knew I’d forgotten, and it was screaming at me to remember.

It screamed at me by causing all that fear.

At the start of this section of the book, I mentioned that ancient fear is easy to overcome. It screams, “Fight or run!” and all you need to do is respond. The fear disappears as soon as your unconscious mind knows you’re safe.

The minute I solved my problem of the missing files, my fear disappeared. My mind knew I was safe, so there was no more reason for the fear to exist.

We’ve lost touch with the true meaning of fear

Entrepreneurs feel fear all the time, no matter who they are. You, me and every businessperson out there.

We all get nervous in various situations, no matter how much we know about fear. I know exactly what the fear is and that it’s unwarranted. I know that my unconscious is just trying to keep me safe while I’m trying to win big in the “dangerous” game of entrepreneurship.

I deal with it. I’ll bet you do your best to deal with it too. Every entrepreneur typically works to ignore unwarranted fears. We face them, push through them, and do it anyways.

And we win.

The problem with operating this way is that when our unconscious mind actually does have a useful message (i.e. “You’ve forgotten your files!”), you’ve become so used to ignoring its signal of fear that you don’t really receive it.

You have to ignore certain fears, because if you don’t, you’d never get anything done. You’d become fearful of failure (or some similar intangible risk of the entrepreneurial life) and just be trembling away, metaphorically or even literally!

The challenge facing entrepreneurs is how to decide which fears to ignore and which are actually worth your attention as early-warning signals for a tornado of business challenges (like mistakes). Had I ignored my fears while on the plane, for example, the result would have been a business disaster of epic proportions.

Being able to identify the difference between useful fears (worth paying attention to) and useless fears (worth getting rid of) is extremely important.

On the plane that day, I did choose wrong – at least, at first. I thought this was useless fear and tried to dismiss it, but the fear was worth paying attention to and the solution was simple. Had I considered the signal for what it was from its very first alarm bells, the fear would never have progressed beyond a minute or two of nervousness. I would have resolved the problem quickly.

So how can you tell which of your fears are useful and which are useless? How do you conquer fear and keep it at bay so you can reach fantastic business goals? How can you live fearlessly in the risky, dangerous world of entrepreneurship?

Stay tuned. It's time to move into the practical how-to information found in this guide, where you'll learn how to demystify your fear – and start achieving better business success.

Chapter Three

How to Overcome Fear

Everything you read from now to the end is designed to provide you with practical, kickass tactics to help you get enormous benefits from demystifying fear. Let's get to it, shall we?

When fear rears its head, an *effective* entrepreneur can choose one of two directions: He can identify the fear as useful and use the action-signal to help prepare for an upcoming event, or he can identify the fear as useless and treat it accordingly.

You can benefit from *both* types of fear.

How to Identify Useless and Useful Fear

If there's a concept that needs to get drilled into your understanding (and there's a reason I'm drilling it in), it's this:

- **Useful fear is useful because there is something you need to prepare for.**
- **Useless fear is useless because there isn't really anything you can do to prepare.**

Have you ever been to a meeting that you were 100% ready for? Felt nervous just before going in anyway? That's a classic case of *useless* fear.

Another example of useless fear – a perfect one, actually - is the fear that strikes down public speakers. These people have well-prepared speeches ready, and they're feeling confident about getting up on stage... until the last minute, when they become paralyzed by fear.

The fear makes them look *unprepared*, which is tragically ironic.

Remember the meaning of fear? It's a signal that you need to prepare for an upcoming event. It's so important to grasp this concept because it forms the backbone of an easy, three-step fear action plan:

- 1. Step One: Identify what you're feeling afraid of**
- 2. Step Two: Find the solution to dissolve the fear**
- 3. Step Three: Take action**

Let's look at each of these steps more closely:

Step One: Identify what you're feeling afraid of.

Ignoring fear only results in more pain in the long term. Acknowledging fear and identifying it is far more useful, and it results in much less discomfort.

To identify exactly what you're feeling afraid of, you need to stop ignoring the fear, feel its message and allow your mind to form an image of the source of the fear.

When you know precisely what you fear, you should have a clear mental image in your mind. The image will be a situation or an event of the near future, and it'll involve a mistake, a disaster or something going *wrong*.

This step may be uncomfortable for you to carry out, but keep in mind that it's only temporary. Feel the fear and embrace it for a few minutes so that you can learn what it means.

Then you can move on to getting rid of it. It's time for the next step:

Step Two: Find the solution

With your mental image in mind, ask yourself, "What action could I take to prepare for this upcoming event?", or, "What could I do to prevent this situation from happening?"

If the answer to these questions is, "Nothing," then you have all the evidence you need to confirm that this is useless, inappropriate fear.

Why? Because when the emotion you're feeling literally means you need to prepare for an upcoming event and there's *nothing* you can do to prepare, what's the point of being afraid? It's useless.

If the answers to these questions are something different from "nothing", if there are actual steps or solutions that you could act on, then you're feeling useful, appropriate fear. There's an upcoming event, and it *is* something you can prepare for.

This means you need to...

Step Three: DO IT!

Solving appropriate, useful fear is easy: the key is taking action. Take action, become "prepared", and you overcome your fear. You're using your brain's warning-signal system as it was meant to be used!

When your unconscious mind feels positively reassured that you'll take necessary preparations for an upcoming event, your fear disappears. Like magic.

There's one very important trick to make this technique work really well, and it's easy: Before you carry out step one, get out of the physical space or environment where you first felt the fear.

Getting distance between you and that physical space gives you the psychological space you need so you can think through the first two steps. Fear is a state that shuts down advanced thinking. It narrows everything to fight or flight, and there's no room for rationalizing or taking some time to introspect.

You need to create a window of mental space so you can identify whether the fear is useful or not.

So if you start to feel fear in your home, go outside. If you're outside, come in. If you're in a restaurant or at the office, leave for a little bit. Put space between you and your fear, and give your thoughts some room so that they can come up with clear answers and solutions.

What if you can't get some physical distance between you and your fear, or what if you can't leave the space you're in? Then think of ways to create psychological space by changing the environment – make the space you're in somehow different.

For example, when I felt fear on the plane, I couldn't just step outside and put distance between me and my fear. So I changed my environment instead. I tried walking down the aisle, splashing water on my face, and asking the flight attendant for a heated towel.

The short walk, the cool water, and the warm towel changed my environment. They helped me feel instantly refreshed. I might have been stuck on a plane, but I found a way to create psychological space so that I could come back to my seat, resolve the fear and find a solution.

You already have great strategies for changing your environment. When a warm towel isn't handy, try listening to music, going to another room in your home or getting up to wash dishes by hand. It really is that simple.

Now that you've learned how to identify useless fear from useful fear... well, fear not! You're about to learn some kickass techniques to eliminate useless fear – and how to use it to accelerate your entrepreneurial success!

Find Meaning in Your Fear

Many different techniques can transform useless fear into something far more useful that helps you reach your business goals. In order to use these techniques successfully, you need to understand how they work. You need to know what's going on in your brain at a very specific and detailed level.

The good news is that when you break fear down to that level, fear becomes really, really easy to understand.

Your unconscious mind always has two questions rolling around inside your brain at all times. You're not even aware that you're asking and answering these questions either, but you are, and that endless process makes you conscious.

The two questions that you ask yourself every second of every minute of every day are:

- **What does this mean to me?**
- **How does this make me feel?**

You're asking those questions all the time, about everything - even about what you're reading right now! It's completely automatic and unconscious, and all the information that comes into your mind via your five senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) is hit with these questions.

For example, if you see a clown on a unicycle crossing the street, your unconscious mind asks, “What does that mean to me, and how does that make me feel?” You see a bird land in a tree nearby, and your unconscious mind asks, “What does that mean to me, and how does that make me feel?” Your cat comes to sit next to you on the sofa and... You get the picture.

Being conscious means you experience things, give them meaning and feel emotion, all in that specific order. It's just how human beings work.

And eons ago, when the ancient hunter saw a tiger, his unconscious screamed, “What-does-that-mean-to-me-and-how-does-it-make-me-feel?!”

The answers?

- 1. I'm in danger!**
- 2. I feel like I should run!**

The hunter got a big benefit out of his warning-signal fear, because he stayed alive when he listened to it. He ran like the devil, escaped the tiger and stayed safe. That was useful.

Sadly, you're stuck with the same primeval reaction.

Those two questions – what does that mean to me, and how does it make me feel – and the answers your mind automatically creates are the source of useless fear. And when you're faced with a situation that requires you to go outside your comfort zone, you're dealt a dose of useless fear.

Remember Jill-the-entrepreneur? She's our hypothetical friend who wanted to do some cold calling but who never accomplished her goal that day. As she contemplated entering the office building for her first cold call, her unconscious mind asked about *meaning* and *feeling*.

- 1. What does the thought of cold calling mean to Jill?**
- 2. How does that thought make Jill feel?**

The answer is uncomfortable.

Cold calling, to Jill, means risking rejection, putting herself on the line, maybe being asked to leave and told not to come back... she might even be laughed at.

How does all that make Jill feel? We don't even need to ask Jill - that would feel horrible!

For Jill, the meaning and feeling of cold calling is *fear*. Fear is very unpleasant, and more importantly, fear is *avoidable*. Remember how helpful your brain is? It'll do anything to keep you safe.

It kept Jill safe, because she walked away and lied to herself by saying she'll try cold calling again another day.

Human beings are machines that create *meaning* and *feeling*. We walk around all day experiencing life, figuring out what it means and deciding how we feel about that. We can't help it.

And entrepreneurs (who are humans as well, every one of them)

voluntarily throw themselves into situations where they push the envelope and take risks. They have plenty of meaning and feeling to deal with.

Unfortunately, the *meaning* of many of those situations creates the *feeling* of fear. And when you decide the meaning, you define the type of fear you'll feel. If you create inappropriate, useless meaning, then inappropriate, useless fears prey on your minds.

If Jill could find a new and more effective meaning for "cold calling", she'd have a different emotional reaction each time she went to cold call on new clients. She'd feel something more useful than useless fear. And because she didn't fear cold calling, she'd probably end up impressing a lot of people and landing new clients.

When you find useful meaning in what you fear, you get rid of useless fear. Then you can achieve far more than before, when useless fear held you back.

Want to know how to find useful meaning in your fear?

*Being conscious means you
experience things, give them
meaning and feel emotion*

Focus on What You *Think* You Want

So many entrepreneurs believe they know what they really want from life. They set big goals, have bigger dreams and tell themselves they know their purpose. Then they go off to chase their goals and dreams.

I think that's great. Connecting with your true purpose is definitely game-changing for anyone.

The problem is that while these entrepreneurs might know what they want and have big goals and dreams for the long term, they're also incredibly short sighted when it comes to setting goals for the short-term. And by setting goals for the short-term, I mean task by task, hour by hour.

To create effective, empowering *meaning*, you need to focus on your goals – the short-term ones that help you reach the long-term goals far faster and much more easily. Take your eye off those short-term goals to focus on your dreams, and you've dropped the proverbial ball.

Here's an example: Let's say you have a five-year goal of having a business that completely sustains your lifestyle. If someone asks you about your goal, you can tell him or her in a heartbeat what it is and what you want.

But let's say that same person asked you what you want to do this month. Things get a little sketchier. You might say you wanted to finish that project you were working on, or you want to organize

your task list...

And what about today? You have some calls to make, a couple of emails to answer, a report to write...

Ask yourself what meaning these tasks, calls, and projects have in relation to your long-term goals. Do they help you, right now, get closer to those big goals and dreams you have in mind?

- **If not, why are you doing them?**
- **If yes, how focused are you on doing them?**

These are two important questions.

Think of Jill-the-entrepreneur, who'd been planning a morning of intensive cold calling. She had a business goal, of course – to get more clients.

But when Jill approached the building, she gave up on cold calling because her mind was full of vivid imagery of failure, criticism and rejection. She stopped focusing on what she wanted (more clients), and started focusing on what she didn't want.

To create effective, empowering meaning, you need to focus on your goals

Focusing on what you don't want attracts you towards it like a magnet. It's like driving – if you're going along on the road but start to focus on the tree ahead, you hit it. The trick is look where you want to go, not where you don't want to go. Then you just... well, go!

This is a hugely significant principle for entrepreneurs, and you should definitely take advantage of it, but it's not really the primary point.

The most important take-away is that when you focus on what you don't want, your unconscious asks, "What does that <insert thing you don't want> mean to me, and how does that make me feel?"

The answer is fear. Useless fear.

When you focus on what you do want, your unconscious mind asks the same question. "What does that <insert thing you want> mean to me, and how does that make me feel?"

The answer is completely different, because you're focusing on something good.

Let's say Jill approached the door to the building imagining the outcome of the meeting. She's finishing up and shaking the client's hand. He's smiling, and she walks away with the name of an interested, qualified lead and an invitation to follow up next week with a proposal.

What does this mean to Jill? "I've done a great job and the biz is

about to take off!"

And how does that make Jill feel? "*Fantastic!*"

This is all happening in Jill's imagination, of course, long before she actually does anything. But Jill's put all the chances on her side. By focusing on what she wants, she's more likely to feel confident, do a great job, take the action and - here's the best part - get better results.

Entrepreneurs tend to perform 300% better when they're not twisted up with useless fear.

How to Focus on What You *Really* Want

Here's how to implement the technique of focusing on what you want in a very practical sense so you can put it to work right away:

Have intention.

Yes, it's that simple. I assume you already have goals, because most entrepreneurs do. What you need is to add intention on a micro level. Have that level of intention for everything you do, and you'll force yourself to focus on what you want.

When you focus on what you want, you create useful meaning and feeling. This puts you in a positive, effective frame of mind and circumvents useless, ancient-caveman fear. You don't hit the tree because you took your eyes off the road to stare at what scares you.

You focus on where you're going, and you get there.

So have intention. Have intention for everything you do. Know your ideal outcome. Fill your mind with images, sounds and feelings of what you *want* to achieve.

Not at a big-picture level, though. That's not enough.

Fill your mind with what you want to achieve at a very specific day-by-day, minute-by-minute level. Let's break that down:

Step One: Figure out your specific outcome

You need to identify the exact, tangible goal you want. This is more than just emotion - you don't just want to feel good or be successful. Think with precision, and think of measurable goals - how many leads do you want this week, for example, or how many clients will you call today?

Step Two: Make it real in your brain

This step programs your unconscious mind to expect success rather than fear failure. That's very important, so pay attention please.

Close your eyes. (You can keep them open, but you'll get much better results if you close them.).

Imagine that you have achieved the result, goal or outcome you identified in step one. Create a vivid image in your mind's eye, as if you were seeing this moment in the future with your own eyes.

What would you see the moment you achieved your outcome? (Jill, for example, would see herself adding the client's name to her qualified lead list.)

What would you hear, or what would you tell yourself when you achieved your outcome? (This could be your client saying, "It's a deal," or telling yourself, "I did it!")

What would feel once you'd achieved your outcome? (Feel how great it would be to do this.)

Enjoy the moment. Program your brain to look forward to the result you want.

Step Three: Step back into reality

Since your goal isn't yet achieved, step out of your mental image and see yourself as if the image was a photograph of the moment or a poster of yourself. That mental image you're looking at is you in that moment of achievement.

Go ahead and take a good look.

Step Four: Get your game plan on

Remind yourself of where you are now, and focus on what needs to happen to get from now to making that internal vision of success a reality.

Step Five: Take action without fear

Do it. That is all.

As you use this technique, you'll start taking more action and move faster towards your goals.

You may one day find yourself feeling a gut-wrenching spike of terror (or maybe just a medium twist). That means your unconscious mind isn't looking at the positive image of the future anymore. It's lost sight, and you've intuitively begun doing the reverse of this technique - visualizing failure instead of victory.

You may not be consciously aware of it, but I can guarantee that it's happening, so remind yourself of your positive intention, feel the good feelings and take action as you were before.

Entrepreneurs who condition themselves by deliberately, repeatedly using this technique eventually train their unconscious mind to focus on positive imagery all the time. At that stage, useless fear almost completely disappears, because optimism exists at the deepest level.

*Fill your mind with what you
want to achieve at a very specific
day-by-day, minute-by-minute
level*

Chapter Four

The Voice that Erodes Your Self-Confidence

Meet your Inner Critic

When I began working with entrepreneurs, I was a little surprised to find out how much internal dialogue went on in their minds. In clinical therapy, I worked with people who literally heard voices in their head – in the entrepreneurial field, I expected businesspeople not to have that issue.

Call me naive.

People manifest fear in many different ways. It could be vivid mental imagery of failure painted by your mind's eye. It could be gut-wrenching, ice-down-the-spine sensations. But no matter how we process fear, we all have an insidious, *persuasive* inner critic who verbalizes our terror.

Businesspeople hear a lot of chatter from their inner critic

Businesspeople hear a *lot* of chatter from their inner critic, and there's one important generalization that applies to *all* entrepreneurs:

At some point in your career, your inner critic will swing a wrecking-ball of mental destruction smack into your wall of self-confidence.

The only difference is that while the voice itself is universal, the tone and content are always different. You'll recognize your inner critic when its dialogue starts asking questions like:

- **How do you know this will work out?**
- **Do you really think you're good enough?**
- **What if something goes wrong?**
- **Do you really think you deserve this?**
- **Who do you think you are?**

These are generic examples by the way - it's likely that your inner critic has custom-tailored some real rippers that push all your buttons the wrong way.

Imagine if you could silence that voice. Imagine silence in your head, and nothing but quiet in the space behind your eyeballs.

Better yet, imagine you had a positive voice acting as your inner champion or your cheerleader. Imagine your unconscious actually supporting your risk-taking, empowering you and making you feel good about yourself.

If you could wave a magic wand and make that happen, do you think it'd be easier to achieve your business goals?

Getting on top of this destructive mental habit of letting your inner critic erode your self-confidence is perhaps the most significant psychological breakthrough an entrepreneur can make. The inner critic creates performance plateaus, making sure you stay stuck where you are, no matter what level you're stuck at.

- **The person who dreams of quitting a day job to become fully self-employed hears, "You're not good enough. You won't make it. You'll lose your house!"**
- **The solopreneur who considers hiring full-time staff hears, "You can afford it now, but what about next month? Next quarter? What if you can't pay the salaries then, eh?"**
- **The multimillionaire contemplating stepping away from control of the empire (and getting some real *freedom*) hears, "You're the cog holding it all together. Holidays?! You're crazy if you think it won't all fall apart...."**

Inner dialogue keeps you nice and safe, right in your comfort zone. When you stretch yourself and push yourself further, this voice is what you push *against*.

I genuinely believe that most challenges entrepreneurs face aren't reality-based. The challenge isn't finding more staff, getting more customers or acquiring more funding. The challenge is winning the

mental tug of war that prevents you from doing what you want to do.

When you overcome all your mental obstacles and go do *stuff*, it's typically far, far easier than you thought it would be. Think back to some of the achievements you've already made. Weren't they actually easy to accomplish, once you just took action and went with the flow?

The "real-world" challenges aren't tough. The mental challenges are.

The Past Affects Now; Now is Not Your Future

Your inner critic is one of the easiest manifestations of fear to hush up. In the section that follows, you'll learn exactly what to do to silence yours.

Keep in mind that this isn't an instant fix. In fact, none of the techniques in this book offers anything instant or magical. You'll have to be consistent at developing new thought patterns. You're up against a lifetime of mental habits, and most people develop their inner critic at a young age.

Despite the inner critic's development during youth, you don't need anyone to get psychoanalytical to help you overcome it. The inner critic is seldom created by deep, residual childhood issues. It's really just a bad habit of ineffective thinking that becomes harder to shake as you age.

When I work one-on-one with clients, we do explore to find the root cause of the problem. The reason is that gaining this knowledge and understanding can help resolve the problem more rapidly. It can even help unblock other areas in the entrepreneur's life.

But most people typically share a few common root causes of their inner critic. See if you can spot your inner critic's formative moment in this list of generic childhood experiences:

- **Loss of a loved one (in any particular way). The voice inside you whispers, "Was this YOUR fault?"**
- **A parent or a teacher criticizes or tells you to stop wasting your time with some hobby you love (maybe painting, or music, or computers) because it won't pan out in a "good" career. And the inner voice grates, "Are you not GOOD enough?"**
- **The other kids don't want you to play on their team, or they don't want to hang out at your place. And you hear, "Are you not COOL enough?"**

I often joke around with clients and say, "There are only two things that mess people up: parents and high school."

The scary truth is that it's only half a joke. We shouldn't generalize or blame others for the way we think and behave. We have to own our past and take responsibility for it. All the same, it's worth noting that through years of therapy sessions with clients, I still haven't heard a single problem that can't somehow be connected back to parents or a school experience.

And when it comes to inner dialogue, it's mildly insightful to know where it comes from. By all means, take a moment to reflect on your youth and figure it out, but *only if it helps you feel better*.

Why do I say this? Because the techniques that make a difference are ones that focus on the present, and they give you inner resources for the future. The past has happened, and there isn't much anyone can do about it.

We *can* do something about now, and what's to come, because you create your results. The following two strategies you're about to learn work wonders for silencing the inner critic...

... but it's up to you to work 'em.

*Your inner critic is one of the
easiest manifestations of fear to
hush up*

How to Steal Your Inner Critic's Power

There's a great psychological explanation as to why the following technique works so well. Quite simply, changes in the way we mentally represent our internal dialogue dramatically influence how it affects us.

Your inner critic isn't *always* a critic - in fact, sometimes it's quite the opposite.

What does your internal dialogue say when you're playing with your kids, for example? How about while you're taking a shower in the morning? And when you're drinking a glass of wine in the evening? What about when you're playing with your spouse?

Seriously, think about it!

Psychologically speaking, there are two types of communication from internal dialogue: verbal and non-verbal. Most people aren't consciously aware of the internal dialogue that fuels some of the best times of our lives or the most peaceful moments or the exciting hours, because we don't hear the voice.

But it's there. It just doesn't need to say anything. All's well.

And that's something important to learn: your inner critic already knows how to be something besides a critic. It can be your inner coach, your friend and your cheerleader. It's on your side.

Sometimes we can't ignore the voice, though. And we definitely hear it.

The big difference between an inner voice that feels good (versus miserable) is its tone of voice. It's all in how the voice talks to you. Does it yell? Does it snipe at you? Does it scream? Or does it whisper quiet, destructive thoughts from over your shoulder?

This is where the following technique comes in handy. For the purpose of this exercise, what your inner critic actually says is irrelevant. Why? Because it's the *tone* of the communication that counts.

Let's say a gorgeous man or woman (you choose!) leans close and whispers seductively in your ear: "What are you going to do?"

How would you react? How would you feel?

Imagine if the same person snapped out the same words with skeptical, bitter bluntness, perhaps even in the voice of your most disapproving parent or authority figure: "What are YOU going to do?!"

See what I mean? The entire meaning changes just because of the tone and style of delivery. You already know that feeling stems from meaning. Now you know that tone also affects the way we feel.

When I go through the exercise myself, the seductive whisper makes me feel playful. It makes me feel like clearing my schedule and running away for a risqué weekend because it evokes a state of optimism and curiosity.

The second tone makes me feel like I've failed before I've even answered the question. I feel judged, childlike and disempowered. I almost feel like I'm standing over a smashed bottle of milk and now I'd better goddamn explain myself!

Yuck.

The point is that in this example, the voices say the same thing but their tone evokes certain states of mind. Which tone do you think is the most useful for planning what you should do? Which tone is the more useful state for solving problems and taking action?

Exactly. So let's learn how to steal the power from your inner critic, change its tone and free yourself from its grip.

Step One: Identify the type of inner criticism

There are two types of inner criticism, and this technique equips you to deal with both. The first step is to work out which type currently bothers you:

- 1. Blatant, self-destructive statements (for example, "You're not good enough!")**
- 2. Critical, uncomfortable questions (for example, "What are you going to do?")**

Figure out whether you're on the receiving end of an insidious question or a piercing statement.

Step Two: Pick your preferred voice

This is the fun part. Pick a voice for your inner critic and internal dialogue, one that either diffuses the critical heat or helps you achieve positive growth from answering the question. Here are a few classic suggestions:

Voices for destructive statements:

- **Donald Duck**
- **Porky Pig**
- **Mickey Mouse**

Voices for uncomfortable questions:

- **A sexy, seductive lover**
- **Oprah**
- **Santa**
- **Your grandmother (ONLY if she's a nice lady!)**
- **Big Bird (who is oh-so-wise)**

See how these work? They're weird voices, yes. But that's the point: they're useful voices.

Step Three: Install the voice

Rewind and play your inner criticism back to yourself in the new voice, again and again.

The reason this works is because there's only room for *one* voice in your mind at any time. When you switch your voice to Miss Piggy or Kermit, the nasty, vicious voice simply vanishes.

Step Four: Rinse and repeat

The key to making this technique work is repetition. Practice this exercise deliberately and consciously, and you'll build an unconscious habit. Before you know it, Kermit will deliver all your useless criticism, and you'll feel playful and excited about the mental questions you ask yourself.

Well done.

Now, this technique is powerful, but it's still considered introductory. It only manages the inner critic by diffusing its ammunition to make way for strategies that silence it altogether - or transform it into something positive beyond your wildest dreams.

The next technique tells you how.

How to Transform Your Inner Critic into a Coach

You've learned how to take control of your inner critic, rob it of its power and make it easier to deal with. Now it's time to put it to work for you.

Truthfully, the inner critic is misunderstood. For most people, their relationship with their inner critic has just been one big misunderstanding!

Have you ever known a couple who disagreed all the time? You could see these people creating their own misunderstandings between each other. It's always easier to see communication breakdowns in the relationships of other rather than in our own.

Your relationship with your inner critic is the same, though - just one great, big misunderstanding. You were actually made to be together! You were meant for one another. After all, your inner critic is part of you.

But it's hard to realize this because you're so close to the situation.

The following technique breaks down the communication wall between you and your inner critic. The strategy is closely modeled on conflict resolution techniques, so if you feel you have conflict with your inner critic, listen up!

Step One: Trust your intuition

This technique requires you to get out of your comfort zone and have a conversation with yourself. Don't worry, everyone talks to himself or herself anyway - this is just the most *useful* way to do it.

You need to discuss things with your inner critic, which is like having a talk with your unconscious mind. That means the answers you'll get back will be impulsive, intuitive and illogical. Logic is the realm of your *conscious* mind.

Your unconscious mind doesn't play by the same rules.

Practice asking yourself questions and receiving unconscious answers with this quick exercise:

Imagine an apple sitting on a table near you. What color is it? Answer now - don't think!

You probably said red or green. Where did that information come from? It's an unconscious answer. You imagined an apple, and your unconscious mind visualized a certain color.

Let's try again: Imagine a cat sitting at your feet. What color is it? What kind of cat? QUICK!

Unconscious answers are *always* the first ones that pop into your mind. You probably imagined a cat you've owned, a common tabby cat or maybe a fancy Persian.

These are intuitive answers. Your unconscious mind throws up images, sounds and feelings all the time. Being able to pay attention to these signals means understanding and *using* your intuition.

What better way to have a conversation with your unconscious than to understand its language of fleeting imagery, curious voices and powerful feelings?

Practice a few times by saying words aloud and receiving answers from your mind. When you think you have this step nailed down, move on to the next step.

Step Two: Identify your inner critic

Remind yourself of the definition of your inner critic, just so you're sure you know what you're dealing with. Your inner critic is the part of you that:

- **Creates useless, inappropriate fear**
- **Believes you're not good enough**
- **Thinks your dreams are unrealistic**
- **Rips your good ideas to shreds**
- **Tells (and shows) you why people will laugh at you**

That's the inner critic for sure. You know what it does, so now let's explore *why* it does it.

Step Three: Discover your critic's deepest desires

Your goal is to identify the ultimate purpose of your inner critic - its deepest desire and its ultimate reason for being. If that sounds fu-fu to you, put it this way: You want to know *why* your inner critic does what it does to you.

Grab a pen and paper for this exercise, as you'll definitely want to keep track of the interesting things your inner critic has to say. You're going to ask it questions and receive answers from your intuitive mind.

Keep in mind that the answers to the questions that follow should always be focused on you. This means that you're asking the inner critic why it's doing these things FOR YOU.

Remember, your inner critic is a part of you. As such, it has no malicious intent towards you. If you catch yourself giving answers like, "to ruin my life," just smile and remind yourself that the inner critic is a part of you. It no more wants to ruin your life than you do.

When you're ready to answer some unconscious questions (remember, fast and intuitive ones), ask yourself the following:

1. **"For what purpose, inner critic, are you doing these horrible things to me?"**

Write down the first answer that pops into your head, be it a picture, sound, feeling or voice, even if it makes no sense. It should take only a split second to get the answer, and once you have it, move to the next question:

1. **“For what purpose, inner critic, do you want <insert your answer from question 1> for me?”**

Write down the first answer that pops into your head, even if it makes no sense.

What you're doing is chunking up logical levels of intention to find your inner critic's highest possible purpose. You're finding out what your inner critic *really* wants for you. Move to the next question:

1. **“For what purpose, inner critic, do you want <insert your answer from question 2> for me?”**

The question looks familiar, doesn't it?

By repeating question 3 several times and inserting the answer from the last question, you'll be able to write down a series of answers. Keep going until you receive no more new answers and start to get the same one again.

You'll notice the answers evolve along the way. Most people are surprised to learn that their inner critic doesn't really want to criticize and create horrible feelings. You'll discover your inner critic actually has a completely different intention – but it's using criticism as a tool to get what it wants.

Here's a case study example of this exercise:

Stan ran a moderately successful internet business at night while juggling a full-time position as a corporate sales rep during the day.

He was a star performer in the corporate world and enjoyed the comfortable lifestyle his salary and attractive bonuses offered.

He came to see me after he'd been “playing” with his small online business for year and had realized that he wanted to give up his corporate job to be a full-time entrepreneur.

But Stan was having trouble. He would set himself goals to quit his job every couple of months, and each time the deadline crept closer, he couldn't quite convince himself that the internet business was ready to support him and his wife.

He'd reassure himself that just a few months more would do it...

Stan realized something was wrong with his thinking, because he'd repeated this cycle for a year. He knew he was afraid of stepping into self-employment, and he wasn't able to silence his internal voice that told him he'd fail, need to go crawling back to his old job and get laughed out of the office.

Stan and I worked through this exercise with great success. The conversation went like this:

Peter: “So why does this critic guy you have up there.... *taps head* ... want to undermine your confidence and freak you out about failure? For what purpose is your critic doing this stuff?”

Stan: “Because he hates me.”

Peter: “Do you hate yourself? No, I didn't think so. Remember, this

critic is a part of you, so what's its intention in doing all this stuff for YOU? What does it really want for you?"

Stan: "Oh. Okay... Umm... The word safety is coming up."

Peter: "Great! So your critic wants you to be safe, huh? That makes sense."

Stan: "Yep."

Peter: "For what purpose does your critic want you to be safe?"

Stan: "So that I don't screw up."

Peter: "Okay. Why does it want to avoid screwing up? For what purpose does it want that?"

Stan: "So I.... succeed. I guess?"

Peter: "You mean your critic really wants you to succeed?!" I was grinning like crazy. "Get outta town! Why would it want that for you? For what *purpose*?"

Stan: "It... uh... it wants me to win in business and get what I want."

Peter: "Why? For what purpose?"

Stan: "It wants me to be happy. It wants me to be *happy*?!"

Peter: "Well done. Your critic just wants you to be happy."

Can you see how Stan moved his awareness up the logical levels of his inner critic's intentions? He found (surprisingly!) that his critic really just wanted him to be happy. Just like every other part of him.

Once you've found your inner critic's highest possible intention, read on to find out what's happening deep in your unconscious mind while you're doing this exercise.

How Your Inner Critic Got Stuck and Created Conflict

Most people feel as though their inner critic is at war with them, that it's designed to sabotage their dreams and best intentions. This is why finding your critic's ultimate purpose is a significant breakthrough.

It literally dissolves the conflict you have with your inner critic, and you're no longer at war.

The internal conflict between you and your inner critic only exists because you have a "robot" in your mind. Your inner critic's autopilot program is to criticize you, because at some point in your past, it was given instructions to protect you.

Your inner critic was told (or it learned) that the best way to protect you from failure and help you succeed was to criticize everything you do. And once the inner critic robot received its programming instructions, it went to work.

It played devil's advocate for all your dreams, ideas and goals

After a while, though, your inner critic forgot why it was given those instructions. It went on autopilot, instead of reminding itself that its job was to protect you and help you reach success. It just got better and better at criticizing because it had forgotten its job.

You started to loathe your critic - and that created inner conflict.

The Pixar film Wall-E is a great metaphor for the inner critic's robotic tendencies and lack of big-picture thinking. Wall-E received instructions to clean up planet Earth and make it habitable for humans, so it scampered about, carrying out the same behavior day after day... even long after the humans had changed their goals and abandoned the planet.

His programming told him to.

The inner critic was once a useful program. It probably developed when the authoritative voice of your parents or a teacher made you "get real" about your dreams. Hell, a bit of internal criticism is a good thing, when it comes to keeping a wild teenager safe.

The problem is that once the inner critic received its instructions, it kept up the good work. As you grew older and wiser, criticism was less useful, because you became smarter about your goals and dreams.

If your inner critic were connected with its true purpose, it could learn and adapt to your goals and dreams. Its ultimate

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intention is to help you be successful, so it could most likely be doing far, *far* more useful things to help nudge you in that direction.

Before you carried out this exercise, the game was you versus the critic. You had dreams on your side; it had its criticisms. You wanted success and happiness... and your critic wanted the same for you.

Remember your old conflict? How can you have conflict with your inner critic when you both want the same thing? You *do* want the same thing, by the way - your critic just has different ways of going after what it wants than you do.

This is a good thing. The more strategies you have to achieve your business success, the better. Until now, you've been forced to ignore your inner critic and miss out on its amazing, business-creating powers.

Well, no longer. It's time to change the game.

Invite Your Critic into Mental Meetings

One universal trait of the inner critic is persuasiveness. Your inner critic has an uncanny knack for manipulating your emotions. So now that you've reminded your inner critic of its true purpose and reset its programming, put it to use manipulating your emotions *positively*.

Wouldn't you love it if your inner critic had an automatic program to make you believe in yourself? It certainly does a great job of persuading you of negative thoughts, so imagine how persuasively it could mutter empowering thoughts into your mind if it became your cheerleader.

Yes, you truly have all the resources you need to succeed - and the power of your critic is a huge resource. It's high time to start using it in that manner.

When your inner critic remembers its ultimate purpose, it gives up bashing your dreams and starts asking questions instead. So give it space. Let it do its thing. Invite your critic into mental business-planning sessions, board meetings and strategy workshops you hold in your mind.

This is a game changer. It doesn't mean you should allow your inner critic to crush your dreams or let it rip apart your game plans. It means you should present your dreams, goals and plans to your inner critic (once you've come up with some good ones) and let it help you by picking out the flaws.

The smartest entrepreneurs already do this. Instead of dreaming big and hoping for the best, they pick holes in their plans and try to find solutions to all the potential problems.

The big secret? They only give their inner critic a small window of opportunity. I actually recommend timing your critic. Twenty minutes should be more than enough for it to find all your problems.

Then switch your critic off - it'll go to bed happy knowing it's done its job, and it'll be pleased that you're now closer to success (and happiness) because of its input.

When you switch off your critic, pass the meeting back to your dreaming and planning self so that you can adjust the plan to fix the problems your critic spotted. Then move on and take action.

That last sentence is the secret that makes the difference between entrepreneurial success and just dreaming about it: taking action.

What Happens When You Resolve Conflict with Your Critic

Most people find reconnecting their inner critic with its ultimate purpose fairly insightful, but that's really just the beginning of something far more significant.

You've learned that your inner critic isn't really a critic. It's a part of you, and it wants the same things you do. It's on your side.

Now that you know this, you have a fantastic opportunity. You know how your brain works on a completely different level. You've resolved an old, useless, fear-mongering mental conflict. You realize why your old critic was so at odds with your entrepreneurial tendencies.

When you're decisive about what you want to do in life and you firmly remind the critic of its true reason for being, it gets easy

Here's the next question: what do you want to do now?

You know both parts of you push toward the same ultimate goal: your happiness. Do you really want to achieve happiness through entrepreneurship? My vote, for what it's worth, would be yes. Do it. Be an entrepreneur.

Whatever you decide, you have to let your critic know. Tell it, "Hey critic, this is the path I'm choosing. And that's final." Your critic wants to help you, so now that it knows your true purpose, it'll accept the new rules. It can quit trying to convince you to quit, and it can start being useful.

And you want it to be useful and working hard within the scope of being an entrepreneur so you can play smart in business.

When you're decisive about what you want to do in life and you firmly remind the critic of its true reason for being, it gets easy. Your critic is already on board and wants what you want - now it can do its job better than ever. It's on your side again.

So I'll ask the question again: what do you want to do now? Put the inner critic to work. Enabling your inner critic in constructive ways and then taking action based on its input is priceless.

Forget calling it "critic" - let's rename your internal genius as the business mentor you've been wishing for!

Chapter Five

The real secret to fearlessness

By now, you've gained some valuable insight and understanding about how and why fear holds you back. You've also learned some practical techniques that create transformational change in your thinking, and these will lead to positive change in your behavior.

I always focus on providing people with practical how-to lessons broken down into steps. People enjoy simple, easy-to-follow instructions they can put to good use to make their life and business better. When dealing with fear, keeping it simple is more important than ever, if only because you need solutions that work quickly.

Now you have some fast solutions, and you have techniques to at least escape useless fear temporarily, if not banish it altogether. In other words, you have some headspace. You're a few steps ahead of useless fear and anxiety.

It's a good place to be, because now you can get serious.

I'm going to let you in on a secret that I only ever tell to extra-special clients. All those step-by-steps? They're cool and they're effective, but they're only an introduction. They're quick-fix-feel-good tactics that work, and they're superb for making behavioral changes so

you can push past fear and get busy with more significant stuff.

They pale in comparison to the real transformations you're capable of making.

You're probably wondering what further change is necessary, if you've put the techniques you've learned in this book to good use and really rocked them out. You're already enjoying the fruits of change in thinking and behavior.

Getting rid of useless fear is a big deal. It's actually one of the toughest transformations a human being can make.

The good news is that it's also the most rewarding step in personal development. Why? Because a world of possibilities opens up to you - in entrepreneurship, in business, in your personal life, and in your ability to impact your community and help society for the better.

So let's create more than just behavioral change. There's a whole new level where you can take your battle with fear, and you'll benefit from even more victories. Your mind's psychology operates at several different levels, and the behavior level is just one of them.

Beyond behavior, there are a few significant levels of “you”:

- **Capabilities:** This level includes the unconscious skills from which behaviors develop. It’s where being intuitively awesome in a certain area of your life happens, such as in business, art, sports, etc.
- **Beliefs & Values:** This level is the most unconscious of your thinking, and it affects how you think and react in business and in life. Beliefs and values influence the way you see the world and drive you to get out of bed each morning.
- **Identity:** Higher still than beliefs & values, your identity is the core of who you are. When behaviors, capabilities and, yes, even beliefs change, identity (the raw essence of you) remains constant.

Most entrepreneurs are already awesome at the level of capabilities. You’ve already figured out what you are capable of doing and what you aren’t. Even if there are capabilities you don’t have right now, you have a mental to-do list of exactly what you need to learn and master.

Insomuch as fear is concerned, it’s simply an obstacle you want to overcome because it gets between you and using the capabilities you have that will help you achieve the goals you want.

Beliefs & Values is where most clients and I hang out. A huge amount of significant game-changing revolves around exploring beliefs and helping people realize their values (and by realize, I mean “make

real”). More often than not, when a client has pain in life or feels stuck, he or she is somehow limited by a plain old useless belief.

Your Beliefs Are Your Reality

Beliefs are merely tools – at least, this is *my* belief. Philosophically, I think every person has his or her own map of reality, and beliefs are a big part of that map’s creation. Beliefs cause us to build our reality or pay attention to certain facets of reality while ignoring others.

For example, people who have a strong belief in the existence of miracles tend to sort their life experiences so that they feel as if miracles happen or have happened to them. A hardcore rationalist would look at the very same life experiences and say, “That’s just luck and coincidence.”

Me? I believe that you create whatever you believe in. Then the question simply becomes, “What are the most useful beliefs I can equip myself with?”

Psychologists often use this fantastic hypothetical example to explain how beliefs affect the way we experience our individual reality:

Two identical twin teenagers, Stan and Dan, attend the same party at Melissa’s house on Saturday night. Stan thinks Melissa’s great (and cute, too!) and that her friends rock. He’s been looking forward to the party for weeks.

As they arrive, Stan says to his brother Dan, "Tonight's gonna be awesome!"

Dan, on the other hand, thinks Melissa is an airhead and that all her friends are losers. He's pretty sure he won't have anything in common with anyone else at the party.

So he says to Stan, "Whatever, dude. Let's just get this over with."

At the heart of your useless fears lie a set of beliefs

Throughout the night, the twins have very different experiences of the exact same event.

Stan works the room. He laughs at jokes, enjoys a few drinks, hits on Melissa and maybe even gets lucky. Dan ends up sitting in the corner trying hard to ignore most people. He eventually leaves without his brother.

Both twins experienced the event in a way that confirmed and validated their beliefs. Both twins had the potential for either a great experience or a bad one, but their beliefs determined what they paid attention to and what they ignored.

Dan could have actually found a girl (or two!) who were his intellectual equal - he was kidding himself by thinking there were none at the

party.

Likewise, Stan could have noticed that there were a bunch of morons and people he didn't like at the party. Instead, he focused on hanging with Melissa and having fun.

We can experience whatever we want in life - our beliefs determine what we pay attention to, and they shape our experiences, sometimes before they even happen.

Aren't we supposed to be talking about fear?

Absolutely. If you want to discover the secret to fearlessness in business, it's crucial that you understand how beliefs work.

At the heart of your useless fears lie a set of beliefs. To create a truly transformational and permanent change, it's time to look at those beliefs. If life was one big party, what kind of experience would your beliefs be creating for you?

But let's not rely on psychological theory. Let's do something far more effective. We're going to analyze the beliefs of people who have overcome fear so they could accomplish significant goals in life and business.

Why? Because analyzing current beliefs that produce ho-hum results only gets you so far.

In fact, I don't spend much time analyzing the current beliefs of my clients. When I identify a limiting belief, I often just ask the client, "How's that working out for you?" Some clients hear that question *dozens* of times! I say it with a grin, and they soon get the point.

Their answer is usually that it's not working very well, and it's time to replace the belief with a better, more effective and useful one.

So just take a very quick look at your current beliefs about business, achievement and fear. Have a think about what your beliefs might be – and then move on. Some classics include:

- I'll never be <insert-big-career-dream-here>
- I don't have what it takes to do this
- Failure is bad, it hurts and I should avoid it
- I'm just not good enough to achieve <insert-huge-dream-here>
- Those other people who made it? They just got lucky. I'll never be like that

Do any of these sound familiar to you? They should, because they're incredibly common. And if they don't sound familiar, it seems you have your own distinct set of limiting beliefs. In either case...

How's that working out for you?

Fear is at the heart of almost every limiting belief, and in terms of how it's working out, limiting beliefs of all kinds create and propagate plenty of useless fear.

In the following section, we're going to look at some highly useful and empowering beliefs that have been field-tested, adopted and modeled by successful, revolutionary entrepreneurs including:

- Henry Ford
- Richard Branson
- Warren Buffet
- Walt Disney

Try on the mindset of these legends and many other entrepreneurial heroes who share the same mindset, and see how these empowering beliefs work for you.

The Fear-Proof Beliefs of Entrepreneurial Champions

The beliefs I'm about to list are very positive and powerful. 100% of the entrepreneurs I've worked with who had already built successful businesses had one or more of these empowering beliefs ticking away in their unconscious mind, even though they were usually unaware of it.

And when I worked with people who had entrepreneurial dreams? I witnessed their businesses take off at the exact same moment they embraced these empowering beliefs.

Brace yourself if you've come from a lifetime (and perhaps a heritage) of limiting your beliefs and self-expectations; these beliefs might sound over the top or a little fu-fu to you. And if that's your initial reaction, it's all good.

These new, empowering, fear-busting beliefs just take a little getting used to.

It's time to introduce you to the ideas, principals and insights these super-useful beliefs offer. After going through each belief in detail, you'll know exactly what to do with the information.

There's no such thing as failure; there is only feedback

Let's start with an easy one that you've probably heard before. What do you believe about failure?

The concept of failing and all the emotions that go along with it are near and dear to the heart of most entrepreneurs. It's *fear* of failure - failure to win at our own goals and failure to win in the eyes of others - that really petrifies entrepreneurs.

Guess what? Revolutionary, wealthy and free entrepreneurs don't believe in failure. They believe in feedback.

For them, failure is the end of the road. The word reeks of implication that whatever you were trying to do has ended. It's done. Kaput. You tried; you failed. The show is over.

Believing in failure absolutely *stinks*, in terms of usefulness!

In the world of business, the show is never over and is seldom reality. Having worked with quite a few entrepreneurs who had

declared bankruptcy or who had lived on welfare checks while still pursuing their dreams, I'm here to tell you that what you think of as "failure" is not failure.

There is no failure. There is only feedback. You always have the choice to say, "This is not the end." You *always* have the choice to learn from what happened, and you always have the option of trying again.

When you believe in feedback versus failure, an enormous weight lifts from your shoulders. You no longer need to perform in a make-it-or-break-it sense. You can try different methods or strategies - you can mess around. You can throw ideas out into the world and see what sticks.

If you look at the attitude of any super-successful entrepreneur, this gung-ho mentality of trying new things is always there.

When you believe in feedback, there is much less to fear when it comes to taking a step out of your comfort zone and trying new things. There's no pressure, and you can embrace opportunities, make mistakes and learn.

You get smarter, faster. You improve from what you've learned.

Failure isn't a learning experience. It's a definitive end. When you fail, it's over - you don't get another shot. The perception is all in our head, though, and the conditioning begins early in life.

For most people, failure conditioning begins in school, when

students are programmed to believe in failure. Teachers use the threat of failing grades to motivate students into turning in reports and working hard... even though the students would rather be doing something else.

Highschool students who fail year-end exams (ironically often called “finals”) don’t ask themselves what they learned. They hit the end of the line. They check out, metaphorically and physically, for summer holidays.

In the real world, it’s different. You’re not limited to final exams, and in the game of business, everyone gets another shot - even people who’ve declared bankruptcy.

So why believe in failure? Mistakes are simply *feedback*.

And when you believe in feedback, you grow faster and bigger than ever. Always seeking feedback from a situation means you’re hungry to learn. Your brain starts tuning itself into learning and finding the room for improvement.

This means that as soon as something goes wrong, your unconscious mind immediately begins planning for the next (and better) attempt.

Believing there’s no such thing as failure and that there’s only feedback is perhaps the most remarkable difference between entrepreneurs who enjoy enormous, world-changing success and those who spend their lives frustrated, struggling and stuck.

It’s impossible to feel *any* of those if you don’t believe in failure.

People have all the resources they need

This belief has everything to do with your ability to achieve the extraordinary.

I’ve met and worked with a huge number of people who reassuringly told themselves they were capable of anything - and yet deep down, they had a limit where they were more than prepared to tap out and call it quits if they reached that point.

An entrepreneur who says, “I can do anything” usually means, “I’ll do anything so long as it’s not too hard.”

Our hangover from the human potential movement has installed a practically default state of optimism (or at least, *surface* optimism) in the entrepreneurial community. The dark secret that lurks deep in most people’s unconscious is that we don’t really believe that we have the ability to do *anything*.

We believe there are limits to our abilities. And to be honest, I’m inclined to agree. I’m not convinced that it’s useful to believe in unlimited potential.

When modeling experts in business, a special distinction becomes obvious: the mega-successful believe in innate resourcefulness versus innate potential.

High-power CEOs won’t hire someone who says, “I have lots of potential!” They know everyone has potential. So they look for people who are highly resourceful about doing whatever it takes to

turn potential (or ideas) into reality. They look for people who know how to take potential and turn it into results.

Results are what the successful count as important.

And when you believe people have all the resources they need, you believe that even if people don't have the time, money or skills to get the job done, they can get them.

You included.

If you ever spend time with those supercharged CEO-types, you'll notice these people have a habit of not taking others seriously unless they walk the talk. They know that resources are easy to find (and people already have the resources they need) but the people willing to use those resources are rare.

Why is it so hard to find people willing to use their inner resources and potential? Look at the last word of this new belief: People have all the resources they need.

Need is the key. People only do what they need to do.

Very few entrepreneurs classify freedom, wealth and happiness as a must-have or an absolute need. That means most end up producing ho-hum results their entire lives. They *need* shelter, warmth and money to spend on widgets, so they use their resources to obtain that.

Then they tap out, reassuring themselves that they're just full of potential.

It's wishy-washy. Don't fall into that trap. Believe that people (you included) have all the resources they need. Set the bar in your life for what *you* decide you need.

Then find the resources to make it happen. Need a hint? You already have them.

Adopting this belief does mean you'll start attracting some pretty damn resourceful people to your life. Sick of dealing with folks who tell you they don't have the time, the money, the energy or the smarts to do the things you'd like them to do? Entrepreneurs hear this all the time, from their customers, their friends and their family.

If you've heard it too, try adopting this new belief about people... and watch what happens next.

Every behavior has a positive intention*

This belief needs a huge asterisk because despite the fact that entrepreneurial champions all over the world share this belief, its meaning is very often misunderstood.

Here's the disclaimer: *Every behavior other people perform has a positive intention for *them*, in terms of fulfilling *their* needs.

When I explain this powerful belief to people, someone always pipes up and asks, "But what about criminals?!! How do they have positive intention?!!" It's great - I think criminals are a fantastic example to help explain this belief.

Everyone does the best he or she can with the resources available. When you've grown up in an un-resourceful environment, you still have needs. For example, we all have a need for recognition. And for some people the fastest way to achieve that recognition is through direct power over others - by using a gun, let's say.

The gun is a resource the criminal had at hand. His behavior of using the gun had the positive intention of fulfilling his need for recognition. It's sad, but it's true.

This belief makes us look at crime (and *everything*, really) with a whole new perspective. Believing that every behavior has a positive intention enables us to see beyond the act (which may be unforgivable) to the intention behind it. And by helping people find more socially acceptable ways to fulfill their intentions, their basic human needs, we can work to eliminate issues like violent crime.

That might sound fu-fu or like a load of bull to you, and that's okay. These new beliefs are bound to provoke reaction, especially if you or a loved one has been a victim of violent crime.

But there are countless films, books and autobiographies that detail this story. They tell the tale of a person who grows up in a rough neighborhood and who then channels the need for acknowledgement and recognition into a new, empowering medium.

The struggling, troubled hero pours his or her energies into art, sports or business, and by doing so achieves a more complete fulfillment than through crime or drugs.

Every behavior has a positive intention – and yes, even nasty self-sabotaging ones. People are doing the best they can with the resources they have available. When people believe this, deep down, it means they can change the world by equipping others with new, more powerful resources.

You'll find this belief at the core of every single business tycoon, corporate CEO and wealthy entrepreneur... or at least, you'll find it in the ones who *care*.

Let's get back to you.

Every behavior you carry out has a positive intention, even though you may not realize it. Once you learn this and get it, it's easy for you to stop beating yourself up for creating fear, self-sabotage and other annoying behaviors that get in the way of you reaching your goals.

Instead, you can look beyond the behavior to find its intention.

Your behaviors have positive intention, even if the behaviors itself are destructive. Your unconscious always has a positive intention when it creates the emotional response of fear. Even useless fear is your unconscious mind's attempt to keep you safe. Your communication with your inner critic revealed its true, positive intention - which is always the same as *your* intention.

Your unconscious mind is doing the best it can with the resources it has. This book (as well as my career) is designed to give you

even more resources. More resources means you can use your inner resourcefulness to show your unconscious mind some faster, smarter and better ways of fulfilling those positive intentions.

You are in charge of your mind and therefore, your results

This is the most crucial belief I try to instill in every single one of my clients. It changes everything.

There's a certain type of person who looks around the world and sees problems. This person sees limitations and feels trapped. When given opportunity to do something, this person responds by thinking of reasons why he or she can't do it.

If you've ever met a wannabe entrepreneur who can't seem to get it together, you've seen this phenomenon in action.

This person says:

- **"I would, but I don't have the <insert time, money or skills>."**
- **"I tried, but <insert something> got in the way."**
- **"It's not my fault; it's because of <insert reason>."**

At their very worst, these people feel like victims. Most of the time, they feel their goals are foiled by external forces outside their control. When (or if) they enjoy a small victory, they think it's because they got lucky.

They aren't to blame for their lack of results. Other things are, things they have zero control over, things such as:

- **The market (vaguely, stock, real estate or even consumer market)**
- **The economy (even more vague and incomprehensible than the market)**
- **Their family**
- **Their spouse (Ouch! But yes, this is common)**
- **Not being born with the right connections**
- **Not going to the right school**
- **Not going to school**

Yet there are entrepreneurs in the world that could claim *all* these excuses but who nevertheless go on to win big in business. These entrepreneurs *could* acknowledge the reasons why they can't (or perhaps shouldn't) succeed, but they choose not to.

Because it's just a list of excuses.

You are in charge of your mind and therefore, your results. This belief is the mental building block upon which mega-successful entrepreneurs have built their businesses. Adopting this belief is the one of the most powerful strategies for overcoming fear so that you can achieve significant goals.

When you believe you're in charge of your mind, you also believe your thinking creates business results. Those results aren't at the mercies and whims of any kind of external force. Your thinking is yours and *yours alone*, and you have complete control of it.

You are in charge of your thinking. You are in charge of your results.

If you use none of the techniques in this book and take nothing else away from what it teaches, at least take away this single concept. Adopt this belief into the core of your thinking and identity. It makes all the difference. Nothing else overcomes the useless, destructive fears you face more completely than making this belief part of who you are.

The truth is that this belief, or at least the potential for it, already lives somewhere in your mind. How do I know? You bought this book. You acted on your realization that overcoming fear would have a positive impact on your business.

You already know your thinking creates your results. You already know you're in charge of your mind.

To be honest, there's actually very little else in this world that you are in charge of. Most of it is out of your control - but that's okay. Your thinking is what counts, and it's what makes the difference.

You may know that entrepreneurs often come from traumatic or painful backgrounds, or you might have heard they rise up high from so little. It's true. People who successfully face enormous challenges and trials in their life often generate high levels of success. This happens outside business and entrepreneurialism, too.

These people have to overcome great obstacles. And at the heart of people who overcome great obstacles is this belief:

You are in charge of your mind. And therefore, your results.

A fantastic example of this belief in action comes from Nelson Mandela, an individual who achieved the extraordinary in spite of the odds within the last century.

Mandela was imprisoned in 1962 by the Apartheid government of South Africa for his involvement in the organization of the Anti-Apartheid movement. He spent 27 years in a tiny, tiny cell - the kind where you can touch all four walls at the same time. He was allowed out only to perform the most menial, hard labor.

When he was released from prison in 1990, Mandela went on to lead the first multi-racial democracy in South Africa's history. He served as the country's president until 1999.

***You are in charge of your
thinking. You are in charge of
your results.***

Mandela claimed there was one source of inspiration in particular that helped him survive through nearly 30 years of persecution. It was a simple poem, without which he may never have freed a nation from the tyranny of institutionalized racial discrimination.

The poem was “Invictus”, written by William Ernest Henly:

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.*

Beyond Belief: Why You Should Value Fear

Beyond beliefs, just one value sets truly exceptional entrepreneurs apart. A value is an abstract concept or ideal that we hold as important. We're motivated towards our values and often driven away from a lack of our values.

For the truly game-changing entrepreneurs, the ones who win wealth and freedom as an afterthought, fear is a signal that they're doing it right.

For example, you might value money (most entrepreneurs do, at some level) but do you really value money or do you value avoiding poverty? Would you be more motivated to earn a million dollars or to prevent someone from stealing a million dollars from you?

We all have different sets of values that we move towards and away from, and we all have some values in common. Successful entrepreneurs share one value:

Fear.

Successful entrepreneurs recognize that fear is the unconscious mind's signal that they're pushing the envelope of what is possible. For the truly game-changing entrepreneurs, the ones who win

wealth and freedom as an afterthought, fear is a signal that they're doing it right.

Valuing fear utterly and totally transforms your experience of it. Overnight, the terror fades and the panic disappears. You're left with a state of excitement. You anticipate and look forward to the emotional ups and downs that come from stepping outside of your comfort zone.

You realize that business (and life) is just that - a roller coaster ride. You can choose to enjoy it or hang on, white-knuckled, wishing it was over.

Want to get rid of fear for good? Welcome it into your life and business. Embrace it.

Value it.

Keeping It Real

You've had a good taste of how to overcome fear, and you've seen the benefits of doing so. There's been a pinch of fu-fu along the way, a splash of the abstract and the philosophical cake was iced with metaphysical frosting.

Now it's time to keep it real.

No amount of deep, meaningful conversation or rah-rah ranting substitutes for practical action. You've learned fear-busting techniques that you not only understand at a powerful level but that you can now actually use.

Let's add more action by putting the good stuff about beliefs into the mix.

You've learned some incredibly useful beliefs you can adopt as your own. They're concepts that you can presuppose to be true and that will tend to cause extraordinary results in your life and business.

But before you reap the rewards of those results, you have to believe.

Embracing new beliefs is tricky work. You have to work hard against resistance, and if you're like most people, your unconscious mind is fairly skeptical by default.

Beliefs, left to their own devices, change and evolve over time... but veeeerrrry slowly. In the "wild", beliefs form through a gradual process of insight, test, trial, confirmation and validation:

Insight - A young child hears, "You'll never be good at football." The new concept enters her mind.

Test - The kid tries out the new concept (it's not yet a belief) by testing it. She kicks a ball around. If she feels successful, she'll probably throw the concept out then and there. If she struggles in her testing, she'll move to...

Trial - This is really a sequence of testing but of different forms. Our girl might try kicking the ball in different environments and or ask a different series of people for that crucial 2nd (and 3rd and 4th) opinion. If the results of the trial come back negative, she'll abandon the concept. If the trial confirms her worst suspicions, she'll move to...

Confirmation - This is the emotional event that people tend to remember most. The memory sticks. It's the cathartic moment when the trial comes to its conclusion and the belief locks into place. Typically, the moment of confirmation is immediately followed by action. In this example, our girl quits the football team.

Validation - This continually happens throughout our lives. At 21, the girl (now a woman) gets kicked a ball by some buddies. "Oh, I'm hopeless at this!" she exclaims, and then she boots it in the wrong direction. The belief validated, she settles in for another few years of definitely not being good at football.

How to Change Beliefs for the Better

While the breakdown above sounds depressing, there are tons of different strategies to transform limiting beliefs. If you want to create rapid, finger-snapping instant change, you need advanced psychological reprogramming techniques - the kind that isn't appropriate for this book.

What can make an enormous difference, however, is trying. Good old-fashioned deliberate, mindful conscious willpower. It's not hard, either.

Now that you know about your beliefs (and how possibly useful or non-useful they may be), you'll find yourself automatically paying attention to them and how they affect the way you think and feel. You'll start to notice specific areas of your life and business that might just benefit from being looked at through the awesome-tinted glasses of the beliefs described in this book.

Just being more aware does half the job. Focus on paying attention to beliefs that could be improved, and you'll notice a rapid, marked improvement.

Nevertheless, let's take it a step further. Here's an even more effective approach to making new beliefs your own:

Remember your old critic? That inner watchdog kicking your ass whenever it thought you were thinking dangerous thoughts or dreaming too big? That little guy (or gal!) is without a job, and you've just found the perfect employment opportunity.

You need a belief watchdog. You need a little partner-in-crime to sit on your shoulder and say useful stuff like:

- **“Hey, do you think this frustrating behavior has a positive intention?”**
- **“Are you looking for reasons to blame for your lack of results? Come on. How can you be more in charge of your results?”**

- **“This isn't a failure! It's priceless feedback. What can we learn, here, buddy?”**
- **“You know what? You can handle this. You have all the resources you need!”**

Hell, having a mental watchdog like this is awesome! It'll have you embracing those empowering beliefs so hard and so fast, you won't even remember the days when your beliefs *weren't* those of a rockstar entrepreneur.

And you know what? Your old inner critic is up to the job. It has the exact level of sassy, no-bullshit, insightful, wise attitude to be a star performer in the role.

Want to know how I know this?

Because you have all the resources you need. They're inside you - just waiting to be used.

Chapter Six

The Takeaway - Why You Should Overcome Fear

It's crucial to have a clear sense of direction and know your goals. At the beginning of this book, I had asked you to think of what might happen if you could wave a magic wand and overcome your fears for good.

The answer should be a list so long that you're still adding to it weeks later... or it's simply one answer that's so huge it makes your eyes water just to look at it written down on the page.

When you overcome fear, you get to join an elite club: the club of realized potential. It's formed entirely of people living up to their own exceptionally high expectations.

Take a good, honest, hard look at yourself and your results in life to date. Can you say you're doing pretty well and that you're completely satisfied?

There are just a handful of people in the world who can answer, "Yes!" Only a tiny fraction of the population ever taps into their full potential. The rest sit around thinking about what they'll do when they finally get serious and make it happen.

They tell themselves, "Tomorrow I'll start," or "Yeah, I'll do that soon," or, "Maybe one day..."

Overcoming fear means you get to do something worth doing today. You also hop on the fast track to the payoff of entrepreneurial success - that legendary hat trick of wealth, freedom and sanity.

The Cost of Beating Fear

You probably invested in this book because you want to overcome fear and move towards a particular goal or business idea. The cost of *not* moving forward might not be that great, though.

Hell, you may have been self-sabotaging for months already simply because staying comfy is easy to do. Plenty of ideas in this book could easily not be for you - you have all the reasons you need not to take action on any of them.

There's never been a lack of reasons for not producing results. It's *easy* to do nothing.

Beating fear isn't easy. Well, it would be easy, if it weren't for the enormous cost that goes hand in hand with overcoming fear:

You run out of obstacles.

It's tragic irony. For entrepreneurs, having no more excuses is the scariest, most terrifying thing of all. When you beat fear, you create the cost of discomfort and pain (both literal and metaphorical), because you'll feel the need to get up, *do* something, push the envelope and put yourself on the line.

Don't kid yourself that feeling this need to take action will be easy.

Remember that every behavior has a positive intention, and one of the deepest, most positive intentions behind fear is your unconscious mind's desire to keep you comfortable. Safe. On the couch. Doing nothing.

If you want to overcome your fears, make sure that you're really sure you want to do what you say you want to do. Make sure you're passionate about your business. Make sure you want to reach your goals and achieve your dreams.

If you don't have the passion, it's probably not worth it. If you know your purpose (and love it), then it's a better alternative to give into your fear, at least until you figure things out. After all, the couch is comfy.

Remember that every behavior has a positive intention, and one of the deepest, most positive intentions behind fear is your unconscious mind's desire to keep you comfortable.

Make no mistake: Fear is THE obstacle for entrepreneurs, in many ways. Imagine if you do stay on that comfy couch. Imagine yourself in five years, still struggling with the same fears you have today.

Imagine the same fear in ten years.

Imagine it in twenty.

How long are you willing to stay comfy with your fears? How long are you willing to pass up on your goals? And if the answer is, "Not that long!", then the question becomes...

When will you be ready to change things?

Tomorrow?

Or today?

Today is More Important than Tomorrow

Today is important. You could conceivably take action tomorrow. In fact, most people reading this book might say something like, "You're right, Peter. I'll start putting these techniques into action first thing in the morning."

Tomorrow never comes. It's always just around the corner.

Many of the techniques in this book take a little practice. To master these techniques to the point of becoming an automatic, absolute fear Jedi, it typically takes about six months of conscious use. By

that point, you'd probably be so fearless that you'd eat poisonous spiders for breakfast and hang glide to work every morning.

Or the entrepreneurial equivalent.

The point is that if you decided you wanted to be the most fearless person in the world, you could get there quickly – just not instantly.

The more important point is that if you start using the techniques first thing tomorrow morning, that's a day more that it'll take you to reach your goal. If you start next week, you push it out even further. If you wait a month to start?

Well, geez, who knows when you'll overcome fear!

So start today. You know *exactly* where you'll be in six months if you do – six months closer to reaching fantastic goals, with probably a few small goals you've been waiting to reach under your belt already.

It's a little like earning interest on savings. If you put away \$10 a day starting today, in six months you'll have a holiday. If you start saving in six months... you'll have the first \$10 you put in, and that's it.

\$10 doesn't go very far.

Fearlessness banks itself up exponentially. By starting today, you'll improve a little. Tomorrow, a little more. In a month, even more. And when you reach that sixth month, every day you'll wake up means an exceptional new level of fearlessness.

Think about this: the only thing holding you back from starting right now is fear... and you know how to deal with that, don't you?

Think Less. Do More.

The clichéd “feel the fear and do it anyway” should be one of your personal mantras. It seems contradictory, because this book is about destroying, eliminating and ridding yourself of fear.

It all amounts to the same thing at the end of the day. Look for useless, inappropriate fear and transform its meaning into taking action. I like to think of it as turning fear into fuel – it's what adrenaline junkies do.

And you might think, “I'm not an adrenaline junkie. Sky diving? Not for me, thanks!” That's because you probably think golf is the sport of choice for entrepreneurs.

(By the way, you're statistically more likely to be killed crossing the street to get to that golf course than you are in a sky dive. And as an entrepreneur, you probably cross the street almost every day.)

Entrepreneurship has more in common with sky diving, big-mountain skiing and grizzly-bear wrestling than you realize. It's the extreme sport of business, where you recreate the sensation of overcoming irrational fear and leaping into the fray.

So think less. Do more.

One of the easiest ways to leave fear behind is to move fast. When you don't have time to think it over and let your imagination create what *might* happen, fear doesn't have a chance to settle in.

Think *less* – but not *never*. Always stop to check your parachute harness. Take a second to scope the slope you want to ski. There might be rocks, after all. Once you know which direction to take, though, quit thinking and just do it!

You're better off making real-world mistakes than making a thousand mistakes in your imagination. Learning from feedback and experience pays dividends in life and business. Even if you try to imagine every possible outcome or scenario (people call it "planning"), the world eventually throws you something you don't quite expect.

So why bother?

Except the unexpected. Action gets you places. Imagination doesn't.

And the only obstacle? Fear.

Wishing you wealth, freedom and success,

Peter Shallard

The Shrink for Entrepreneurs