

The Unfear Individual: The Angel in the Stone

Dear Reader,

We can only control one thing: ourselves. While the goal may be to unfear an entire organization, we can't force other people to unfear. So we must start with ourselves. The good news is that we already contain the unfear version of ourselves within us. It is as Michelangelo said about one of his early masterworks, *The Angel*: "I saw the angel within the marble, and carved to set him free." To unfear is to free the angel.

Freeing the Angel: Discovering Your Infinite Potential

We perceive the world through the lens of our consciousness. The core idea of unfear is that our consciousness contains infinite potential

To begin to recognize your infinite potential, ask yourself two questions. Do I have any thoughts inside my head? The answer, usually, is yes. Now ask: how do I know I have those thoughts? With enough reflection, you'll realize that there are two parts of you operating at the same time. One, "the actor," thinks. The other, "the observer," observes that thinking.

When we identify with just the actor, we define ourselves according to how we act or feel in a given moment. To unlock our infinite potential, we must remember that we are not just the actor, we are also the observer. When we do this, we realize that we are not our thoughts, ideas, and emotions, but instead, we *have* our thoughts, ideas, and emotions.

When we develop the capacity to stand on a balcony and observe our thoughts, ideas, and emotions, we realize that we don't have to give in to a habitual or predictable response to our fear, anger or stress. We can change the actor we are, try something new and consciously and deliberately decide how to adapt to new conditions and remain resilient in the face of challenges.

The Wise Fashion Themselves

Buddha said, "Carpenters bend wood. Fletchers bend arrows. The wise fashion themselves." To fashion yourself, we believe, is to recognize your infinite potential. It is to understand that we are Michelangelo as much as we are the stone. We must, like Michelangelo, acknowledge and believe in our infinite potential, and work to set it free.

Worth thinking about

Humans love labels. We develop countless systems of classification. Myers-Briggs, DiSC Profile, The Big Five Personality Traits, etc. While these labels can help us understand our tendencies, they also prevent us from accessing our infinite potential. We might say, "I'm a perfectionist; therefore, I have to spend X number of hours on this project." When we do this, we let our pasts dictate our actions instead of orchestrating our own futures. How do you label yourself? How do these labels impact your behavior?

Take it to go

When you feel strong emotions this week, notice how you describe the experience. Do you label yourself? Do you say, "I **am**... (angry, sad, upset, etc.)?" Or perhaps "You **made me**... (angry, sad, upset, etc.)?" How might this language limit your flexibility and resilience?

Try shifting this language from "I am..." or "You made me..." to "I **have**... (anger, sadness, hurt, etc.)." See if it allows you to identify with the observer rather than just the actor. What new possibilities does this orientation reveal?

Questions, comments, push-backs

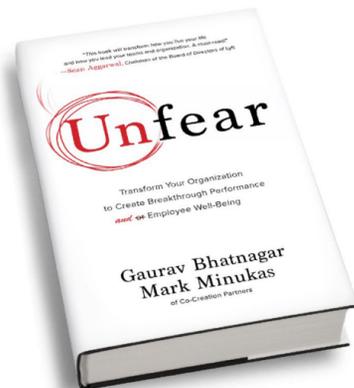
We want to hear from you.

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND



[Read the excerpt "From Label to Label To Human to Human" from the Unfear book featured on Execunet.com](#)

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