

The Unfear Individual: The Most Impactful Daily Practice

Dear Reader,

In past newsletters and in the book, we have discussed the mindsets that an unfear individual carries. Some of you have tried the exercises and had some moments of insight on how different life could be with an Unfear mindset. But the real challenge comes in accessing these mindsets and translating them into what we think and feel, how we speak and act when were in the hurly burly of life, facing situations that trigger our fear response. How do we catch ourselves in the moment and prevent ourselves from relapsing into habitual dysfunctional responses? In our view, there is one tool that, more than anything else, allows us to do this: meditation.

Meditation

In its simplest form, meditation invites us to observe. We sit and focus on our breath. Inevitably, thoughts and emotions pop up. Whenever we notice our attention fraying, we gently bring ourselves back to our breath. This simple act reminds us that we are both the Actor in our lives—the one doing, breathing, thinking—and **the Observer**—the one observing our doing, breathing, and thinking. The more we practice meditation, the more we strengthen our observer muscle. And the more we strengthen the observer muscle, the more easily we can catch the signs of an impending **amygdala hijack** and hit pause. And, as we continue our practice, we understand more about ourselves, our mindsets, perceptions, and how they impact us and our behavior. In other words, we explore our personal **iceberg**. From that new level of understanding, we can recognize our dysfunctional mindset patterns and habits, and actually change them. Combining these two allows us to be conscious and choiceful, skilful and creative in our reactions.

The Balcony and the Dance

Imagine life as a large, raucous ball. Something out of an Oscar Wilde play. It's a party, but full of drama, intrigue, dashed love, ambition, angling and maneuvering. All this plays out on the dance floor. We dance, and we get caught up in the emotion. This is the level where most people spend most of their time. Now, imagine a balcony overlooking the ball. From that balcony, we can see everything: all the dancers, the dance, even some of the hidden intentions behind everyone's actions. Meditation is the mind training that allows us to access the balcony. As we develop our mindfulness muscles, we can gain the ability to simultaneously be in the dance and on the balcony at all times, even those difficult situations where in the past we would have been completely caught up in the emotions and adrenaline of the dance.

Worth thinking about

A lot of us have tried and given up on meditation because we think “we are terrible at it”. We think there is a right way to meditate where the mind goes to a place of silence or no thought and a “wrong” way where we are constantly going back and forth between thoughts flooding in and observing our breath. The reality is there is no “right” or “wrong”, “good” or “bad” in meditation. Sure, its wonderful and refreshing when we hit that zone of stillness. But we are doing immensely important work when we are in those other sorts of sessions with a constant stream of thoughts having to be consciously moved away from. We are working the Observer muscle that allows us to catch what we are doing in the moment!

Take it to go

Start a meditation practice this week. Start small. Try to meditate for ten minutes a day Find a quiet place, breathe, and observe your breath. When you notice thoughts coming in gently dismiss them and go back to noting your breath. Do this every day for one week straight. At the end of the week, ask yourself: am I able to more easily operate from the Observer? Is it easier to recognize when I am getting upset, and then center myself?

Questions, comments, push-backs

We want to hear from you.

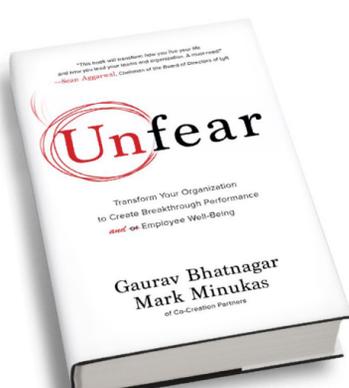
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Porchlight

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