

## SECRET # 7 - FEAR

*“Don’t be discouraged by a failure. It can be a positive experience. Failure is, in a sense, the highway to success, in as much as every discovery of what is false leads us to seek earnestly after what is true, and every fresh experience points out some form of error, which we shall afterwards carefully avoid.”*

*John Keats*

We, as a society live in amazing times. Every time we turn on the television or read the newspaper we hear about mayhem and destruction. There is violence and murder, war and death, hunger and starvation. Terrorists make front-page news and there is forever a country having some sort of civil unrest. We read about bank robberies, white-collar crimes and abuse of women, children and the elderly. We have hijackings and anthrax scares. All of these things are a constant reminder that we live in an unsafe place and time. Now we can even get this information through e-mail.

How can anyone possibly not have fear given this assortment and constant barrage of bad news? Yet **FEAR** is exactly what we must overcome to succeed.

The reality is that we all have fears. The odds are that during your childhood programming you were given lots of fears to ensure that you did not do anything silly and harm yourself. Yet those same fears are probably still with you today.

Most fears start with the line “what if?” “What if I fall and hurt myself?” “What if the boat sinks?” “What if the plane crashes?” “What if my business fails?” “What if I start a business and it does not succeed?” “What if I go for that promotion and I do not get it?” “What if it does not work and my family or neighbours find out about my failure?” and on and on it goes.

Today we are so paralysed by all the bad news and what ifs that we are handicapped from the very beginning. Some of us never try anything new or out of the ordinary because we have been so trained by the “bad things that could happen” that we actually believe it. If you were to live your life by the reporting on television or in the newspaper it just would not be safe to go outside, ever. So we need to check what is real here and what is not? The reality is that it is often some of both. The average citizen does not have to be concerned about all the mayhem that goes on.

It is amazing how many of the murders are committed at some early morning hour and between people that are involved in drugs, gangs or some other illegal activity. This is usually well past the time that the majority of us have long been counting our ZZZZS.

Fear seemingly comes in many flavours. Renowned author Napoleon Hill stated that there are six basic fears at the root of all other fears. According to Napoleon Hill the six basic fears are:

- ❖ The fear of poverty
- ❖ The fear of criticism
- ❖ The fear of ill health
- ❖ The fear of the loss of love of someone
- ❖ The fear of old age
- ❖ The fear of death

The list of fears that stem from these six are tremendous. Fear of failure, fear of success, and fear of the unknown are just some of these. Yes, even the fear of succeeding exists for some of us. Do you recognize any of these operating in your life? If so you are not alone. Yet those that succeed are able to see fear for what it is. Fear in its simplest essence is a human emotion. It is no different than happiness or sadness. For some unknown reason fear has the ability to stop us in our tracks, to freeze us in a life that we are not happy in and were it not for fear itself we would change.

Steven Bisyak and Michael McDermott, authors of “Mastering Fear” have an acronym for the word fear. It is “False Evidence Appearing Real.” According to the authors “fear is an illusion created by the mind. It is fear of the unknown that is the greatest fear that we will face.”

Yet when we make fear known, it dissipates. I recall the fear I experienced when I was about to learn to drive. I could never picture myself driving a car down the highway at sixty miles per hour, with automobiles coming towards me from the other direction. Yet the reality is that millions of people drive and why would I be any different. So how did I learn to drive? The simple answer is that I took driving lessons. There are very few things in life these days that someone else has not done before that we can learn from and if it has not been done before then something close to it has been.

In my mind I hearken to the fact that if someone else can do it then I can do it too. The fact that it has been done before means that I now have a teacher who can teach me what they have done, just like the driving instructor. The only difference between them and me is that they have the training, education or practical experience to do it.

When you start to answer the ‘what ifs’ with fact then they lose their fear power over you. As long as you leave a ‘what if’ unanswered then it has power and meaning over your life. When you answer the ‘what if’ with a reply and add facts to back it up, it is amazing how quickly it gets turned around. An unexamined ‘what if’ is the most dangerous obstacle to your success.

For example, if you have a fear of public speaking what could you do? The ‘what if’ statement would look something like this, “What if I forget the words and do a poor job of giving the speech?” This person has an underlying fear of criticism. One answer may be to take training in public speaking prior to making the speech. Classes are available and you would not be expected to speak in public until the training is complete and your skills have been refined with lots of practice. In addition, you may have a friend or someone you know and trust to take the course with you to give you a level of comfort. Once you have developed the necessary public speaking skills and practice you will feel far more comfortable with proceeding. Odds are high that having given a number of speeches, that like my driving, performing this task becomes second nature to you and you will be able to do it with ease and without fear.

There is a saying that goes like this: “face the fear and do it anyway.” I wish to append this saying by adding the words “after you have the facts and completed your home work.”

Do you know someone like this? They are the ultimate perfectionist. Everything has to be perfect or it will not do. Invariably they spend hours doing something that other people would do in far less time.

It is my belief that perfection is one of the manifestations that come from fear. We want to be and do everything perfectly because we want to be okay and to be seen as okay by others. If we were perfect children our belief was that we could attract the attention of our parents or anyone that would dote on us. Or alternatively, if we were perfect we would not attract the wrath of a parent and avoid the consequences of that wrath in whatever form it may have been.

Perfectionists tend to be high-strung and high stress people. Why? The answer is that there is no such thing as perfection. Even in nature the perfect butterfly has a flaw. Chasing perfection, which cannot be achieved leads to frustration and stress within the individual who is seeking it. Yes you can do a perfect job accounting for dollars and cents but not in life with it’s many variables and twists and turns. Secret #8 - Stress deals with what stress is and how to do a better job of dealing with the impact of stress in our daily lives.

So here is a tidbit around perfectionism. In business there is an 80/20 or 90/10 rule that is used. An example of this at work is that “80% of a company’s sales are produced by 20% of its top sales people.” So what does this mean? It means that the bulk of the job or task will be completed by the first 20% of the staff and results from the rest of the personnel are gravy.

As a perfectionist would it be okay to be 90% right and let the 10% be gravy. Would it be okay if the house-painting job were 90% great and the other 10% just okay? Would anyone notice that 10% of the painting is “just okay”. Are you the only one fretting about it? Are you the only one stressing about it to the point where it is annoying to others and may be harmful to your health.

The answer to this problem is letting go. Letting go of perfection and examining the fear that is driving this need “to do” or “be” the impossible. If nature cannot be perfect how can you?

Perfectionists tend not to trust that things will turn out okay unless they, in their mind, are making it okay by being perfect. I have a 90/10 rule. This rule states that 90% of the time things go smoothly and that they occur as they are meant to. This means that 10% of the time they require fine-tuning or hands-on adjusting. The degree of this fine-tuning varies from job to job and situation to situation from very little to jumping in with both feet. You do not need to jump in with both feet nor over react on each occasion. Life is easier when 90% of the time we can trust that things will go according to plan and relax knowing that things will get done even without major effort? When this is the case we can be our best when the 10% happens, as we are not stressed out from worrying 100% of the time. Does this make sense to you?

**EXERCISE:**

What are your fears? What things do you dread in life? What would you never see yourself doing but have always wanted to do or try. Examine the list of fears below. Are your fears any of those on the list? Create a list of your own fears.

Select one of your fears and answer the ‘what if’ question with facts. Create a list of the things you would need to put in place before you perform the item you have selected? What skills or practice would you have to partake in? What safety nets would you put in place before facing the task? Set a timeline how and by when you will complete the facing of this particular fear. Go to it!

**List of Fears** (From the book "Mastering Fear" by Steven Bisyak and Michael McDermott)

	Tick Fears you have
Abandonment	
Accidents	
Change	
Confrontation	
Criticism	
Dealing with issues	
Enemies	
Finances	
Fear itself	
Flying	
Friends	
Having Children	
Life will change	
Losing your job	
Loss of relationship	
Public Speaking	
Rejection	
Responsibility	
Ridicule	
Sex	
The unknown	
The future	
Too much money	
Your mother	
Your father	