

BusinessMantra™

Run your business with confidence and achieve peak performance



What Do You FEAR Most?

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One of the biggest challenges most business executives face is overcoming fear. Every business owner or executive has been afraid of at one time or another. Some admit it, others hide it but everyone has experienced fear. What are you afraid of? What are some of your fears?

In this *Mantra™* I will share some of my fears and how I overcame them. This will help you run your business with confidence.

But first what is Fear?

Emotions play an important role in our daily lives. Fear is one such emotion that is pre-programmed into us as an instinctual response to *potential* danger. It arises out of dangers created by actual or perceived threats and can be experienced with or without any specific attention to the threatening object.

Over the years, both as a person as well as a business owner and executive, I have experienced fear in many different forms. These fears are not exclusive to me; rather they are common to many. See if you can relate to my stories.

Fear of public speaking

Many years ago when I was in 8th grade, our Headmaster Mr. Joseph, created a debate contest in the school. He went to each class and described the contest and urged the students to sign up. When he addressed my class, no one stepped up to participate. We were all afraid of getting on the stage and speaking to an audience. Josie (as Mr. Joseph was popularly known) tried to motivate us. When that failed he screamed at us and then threatened us. But none of us stepped forward because we were scared of public speaking. Then I heard Josie say “What’s the worst that can happen to you when you are on the stage”. I thought about it and reluctantly decided to sign up for the contest. Indeed what I had done was confronted danger by walking right into it. Years later, every time step up to a podium to give a talk, I remember Josie’s words “What’s the worst that can happen to you when you are on the stage”, even when I am not afraid. This is how I overcame the fear of public speaking.

Fear of rejection

A few years ago I purchased a small business. In my entire career prior to that I had never had any sales assignment. Upon purchasing the business I decided to assume the sales responsibilities for the

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business. My first sales call was to a person called Waldo. On my way to Waldo's office I was gripped with fear. I was going to do something I had never done before. I feared rejection. Just the thought of meeting Waldo was raising my blood pressure. I felt tightening of muscles and I was sweating. All this was happening for no reason but I was clearly in a grip of fear with visible symptoms. I had to do something to overcome my feelings. Then I remembered Josie. I thought of what he had said 30 years ago. What's the worst that can happen when I face Waldo, I thought. My fears began to subside. When I did meet Waldo, it was a piece of cake because he was one of nicest people I had met. My fear was imaginary.

Fear of change

Many years ago, I was working as a project manager for a company in Florida. The company really liked me and appreciated what I did for them. Life was good and quite comfortable. One morning my boss Dave called me in and said the company wanted me take a transfer to Pittsburgh. Although this was an opportunity for higher position and more income, I got afraid. I feared change although the thought of a better and more paying position appealed to me. I agonized for days while Dave waited for an answer. Finally when Dave did not hear from me, he called me and demanded a response. I blurted out an answer, I would take the transfer. My fear subsided when I confronted it by putting myself in the middle of the danger that I feared.

Fear of making decisions and making mistakes

When we make decisions, we are never really sure about our choices. When we are not sure, we procrastinate. Fear of making the wrong decision and having to deal with the consequences is the reason people put off making a decision. Business executives do not have the luxury to procrastinate. When people procrastinate about decision-making, it can be costly. It can cause people and companies to miss out on great opportunities. I have procrastinated many times and I have seen executives procrastinate. Every time this happened to me I remembered Josie. This invariably got me through.

Fear of failure

Failure is one of the "dirtiest" words in our society. The fear of failure is perhaps the strongest force holding people below their potential. In a world full of uncertainty, a delicate economy, and countless misfortunes that could happen to anyone, it's easy to see why most people are inclined to play it safe. But playing it safe has risks as well. If you never dare to fail your success will have a low ceiling. Most people underestimate their merit and ability to recover from failure, leading them to pass up valuable opportunities. The ability to fail big and fail often has been a mark of the spectacularly successful throughout history.

What are some of the things people fear in the business world?

The most destructive element in the human mind is fear. An important point to remember is, if you hesitate, the fear will only enlarge; it will magnify and try to over take your confidence. Some of the things business executives fear are fear of rejection; fear of making decisions; fear of change; fear of confrontation; fear of public speaking; fear of loss; fear of failure; fear of success and others. Regardless

of whether these fears are real or perceived, their mere existence creates indecisiveness and seriously affects the performance of executives.

From the Coach's TOOLBOX - Things you can do to overcome FEAR

Next time you encounter fear; ask yourself the Josie question – “What’s the worst that can happen?” Once you begin to speculate the outcome and think about it, your mind will become constructive and will drive your thinking to some action and you can judge whether the action is necessary or the fear was imaginary. You will build self-confidence and self-discipline that will enable you to deal with fear.

Try the following to overcome fear:

1. Isolate your fear. Nail it down. Determine what your fear is, what you are afraid of. Always ask the question “what is the worst that can happen”.
2. Whatever you fear, there is an action you can take to eliminate it. Make the decision and take action.
3. Build your confidence and believe that whatever you choose to do, you will be successful.
4. No one is born with confidence. The people you know who exude confidence have conquered their worry and then acquired confidence. Read the quotes below and get inspired.
5. Run your business with confidence and you will achieve peak performance.

Some inspirational quotes

These great people learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.

- ✚ There was never any fear for me, no fear of failure. If I miss a shot, so what - *Michael Jordan*
- ✚ I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear - *Nelson Mandela*
- ✚ The conquest of fear lies in the moment of its acceptance - *Unknown*
- ✚ Fear defeats more people than any other one thing in the world - *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- ✚ Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear - *Mark Twain*
- ✚ Only thing we have to fear is fear itself – *Franklin D. Roosevelt*