

# CHAPTER 4

## *Face Fear and Welcome Courage*

# DISCIPLINE NUMBER FOUR

The noble warrior overcomes fear to find courage.



## Lesson

The novice warrior may live under the assumption that to become courageous is to live with the absence of fear. This is untrue and is setting up the warrior to experience a good deal of shame and sense of failure. This is because the elimination of fear is virtually impossible, and unnatural. Fear is built into our systems so that we will take action to protect ourselves. Without it, we would not survive. Real courage is not the elimination of fear, but moving through fear. It is the ability to take appropriate action despite the fear, and to use fear in a subservient role as a weapon of defense.

A friend of mine, who served in the Vietnam war, and who was decorated with the Silver Star for bravery, tells the story of how he had to be dropped alone into a fire-fight to rescue the crew of a downed chopper. After he told the story of risking his life, being shot at, chased, locating and rescuing the survivors, and ending up being the last man back on the chopper to be safely whisked away, I asked him if he was scared.

He said, "Of course I was scared. I was only twenty years old. I was terrified."  
"Why did you do it, then?" I asked.

"You gotta do what you gotta do," he replied, "I just did what I knew I had to in spite of the fear. It wasn't till afterwards, when I was back at base camp, explaining what had happened in the debriefing, that it hit me how incredibly precarious the situation was and how lucky I had been." This is the warrior response to fear, to move through it to accomplish one's mission, rather than to allow it to paralyze you into non-action.

When fear paralyzes the warrior and stops that warrior from taking appropriate action, it becomes a snare and a death-trap. Inaction in times of challenge to one's well-being is the most dangerous course one can take. It is like a deer standing in the middle of the road, stone-struck from the headlights of an oncoming truck. Disaster soon follows. However, when one moves through the fear, and takes appropriate actions according to the external circumstances at hand, the fear doesn't vanish, but acts as a valuable tool during such times. It becomes an early warning system, detecting danger and transmitting important messages to the conscious decision making self. When used properly, fear is like radar, identifying and alerting the conscious self to the enemy and potential danger. Learn to use your fear rather than having it rule you.

Fear is the greatest gift to keeping the warrior out of harm's way, and it is the greatest obstacle to achieving the mission. At the heart of true warriorship is the commitment to achieve the mission regardless of the sacrifice one might be forced to make, regardless of the fear. The mission may be one of reaching out to others. The fear of rejection must be overcome regardless of whether we are rejected or not. The mission may be one of taking a great personal risk in order to lead a more fulfilling life. We may wish to change occupations to follow our calling, pursue a dream that takes us into unfamiliar territory. Fear of failure stands in our way. We must call upon the deepest sense of commitment and trust in ourselves, God, and the universe to overcome it. When we are able to take action to achieve the mission, regardless of the fear, we are living the life of the warrior. When we are able to take those steps, even in our fear, toward achieving the mission, we find courage. Courage lies on the other side. To work through fear, and to gain courage, remind yourself of the goal, realize that you are not alone, and that higher powers that come from the Creator are there to help you. In times when fear arises, consciously put yourself into God's hands, and ask for help, not to be free from fear, but to move through the fear. If you can do this, and do it enough times to learn a new pattern, the fear will diminish, and rather than becoming a barrier or a trap, it becomes a supporting weapon in your spiritual arsenal.

## Gems from the Masters

Those who fear life  
Are already three parts dead.

Bertrand Russell

Be strong and of good courage;  
Do not be afraid,  
Nor be dismayed,  
For the Lord your God is with you  
Wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

Courage is the foremost of the virtues  
For upon it all the others depend.

Sir Winston Churchill

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
Whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the strength of my life;  
Of whom shall I be afraid?  
When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh,  
My enemies and my foes,  
They stumbled and fell.  
Though an army should encamp against me,  
My heart shall not fear;  
Though war should rise against me,  
In this I will be confident.

Psalm 27:1-3

The only thing  
We have to fear  
Is fear itself.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

When the anchors that faith has cast  
Are dragging in the gale,  
I am quietly hold fast  
To the things that cannot fail. . . .  
In the darkest night of the year,  
When the stars have all gone out,  
That courage is better than fear,  
That faith is truer than doubt.

Washington Gladden

Cowards die many times  
before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death  
but once.

Caesar in William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar



## Questions for Personal Reflection and Discussion

What does the concept of mastering yourself mean to you personally?

Where do you find you lack self discipline?

What do you think are the major keys to mastering the self?



## Meditation

Relax. Take a deep breath and let your body get comfortable. You are safe, and in the perfect place at the perfect time. Let all your worries and troubles go. You can always call them back after the meditation if you want to. Now pay attention to your body, especially your upper body and head. Imagine there is a warm golden light shining down on you from above. It shimmers and sparkles as it covers first the top of your head and makes its way over your face, neck, shoulders, all the way down your body to your toes. This golden light is warm and comforting. It is alive and you can sense its power. The golden light fills you with a sense of well being, comfort, security. You know that when you are bathed in this light that you are safe. Nothing can harm you. Imagine that this light surrounds you and creates a protective sphere around you. Nothing can penetrate it. Nothing harmful can approach you, frighten you, hurt you in any way. Now imagine you are traveling down into a dark cavern, but the light continues to surround and protect you. Deep inside this cavern live all your fears. As you travel through this cavern you are safe, and you can explore those fears without apprehension. The fears come to you in different forms. The first fear which appears to you comes in the form of a very old person. What fear would this be? Is it the fear of death? Fear of disease or frailty? Is it an old fear you have never been able to shake? What fear does this old person represent to you? Name it.... This old person speaks to you. What does the person say? How does this fear hurt you? How does it serve you? Still protected in your sphere of light, ask this fear to leave these caverns and head toward the light. Watch the old person rise from the ground and float into the light above the cavern--released into the golden light coming down from above. Now another fear presents itself to you. This fear comes in the form of a teenager. Look at the teenager's face. What fear does this teenager represent to you? Name the fear. What does the teenager say to you? How does this fear hurt you? How does it serve you? Ask this fear to leave the cavern and head toward the light. Watch it ascend above the cavern and become enveloped in the sparkling gold light. Now see a new fear come to you in the form of a child. Perhaps this child represents a fear you had in childhood. Maybe it is a new fear, not fully developed. What fear does this child represent? Name it. What does this child say to you? How does this fear harm you? What use does this fear serve in your life. Ask the child to leave the cavern and head for the light. Watch the child float up and be caught in this beautiful light which only offers peace and security. See the child smile as it is caught up in the light. It is free

at last, just as the other fears that have gone before are now free. Look around the cavern into the darkness. There is one fear hiding in the shadows. See its shadow? Don't be afraid. You are safe in the light. Ask that fear to present itself to you. See it move into the light. What form does it take? What does it look like? What fear does this being represent in you. It is your hidden fear, the one you don't like to think or talk about. Name it. Let it speak to you. What does it say? What harm does it bring to you? How does it serve you? Now ask that fear to ascend into the light. Watch it ascend, dissipate and be absorbed into the light. It is free. Look around the cavern. It is empty. The fears are no longer hiding there. You are now free. Turn your face upward into the brilliance of the light above. Feel yourself rising gently from the cavern into the light. You are safe now, completely at peace. You are free. And with that light still surrounding you, you may now become aware of your body, your physical surroundings, and come back to this place with the full awareness that you are always protected by that light.



## Process

Light a candle and set it in the middle of the room, or on a table. Place an empty fire-proof can or large bowl beside it. Get a pencil and several small pieces of paper {about the size of a Post It note). Take some time to reflect in silence. Can you identify one of the strongest fears you face in your life? Write down the name of that fear on a piece of paper (e.g. fear of rejection). What does that fear prevent you from accomplishing? Write it down in one sentence (e.g.. It stops me from being loving.). Describe in a few words the feelings surrounding this fear and write those words on that piece of paper (e.g.. sad, frustrated, angry). Next, reflect on your life again. What is another major fear in your life? Write it on another piece of paper. Write down in one sentence what it stops you from accomplishing. Write down the feelings surrounding this fear. Reflect again. And repeat the process until you have all the major fears that surround your life sitting in a little pile of papers in front of you.

If in a group, all stand and surround the candle and empty can or bowl. (Individuals not in a group can follow these same instructions and complete the process by themselves.)

A volunteer will step into the circle. The volunteer will repeat the following:

“These are the illusions that have bound me. I name them to release their power over me.”

The volunteer will then read everything that he/she wrote on each piece of paper, naming the fear, what it blocks the person from doing, and what feelings surround it. After all the pieces of paper have been read the person ignites each piece of paper at a time, using the candle, and drops them into the can or bowl. Before or after doing this, the volunteer repeats the following:

“I now let these illusions go by giving them to the universe and to the Creator who watches over me.”

When finished the person steps back into the outer circle and the next volunteer enters and begins the process. When all are finished the process is over. What was that like for you?



What are your closing thoughts about Fear and Courage?

End this lesson with a prayer.