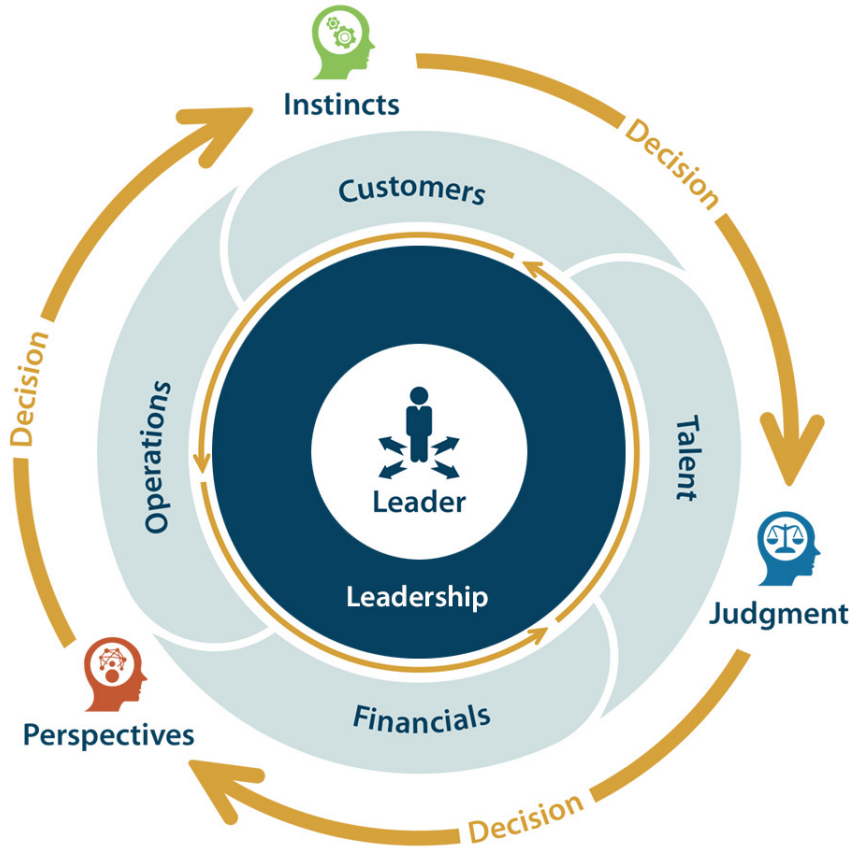


The Power of Fear in the Workplace

Jacqueline Wales

VISTAGE

Leadership Vistage Decision Model



Key Decisions

01

Recognize when fear is influencing decisions and provide strategies to manage and mitigate these effects, thereby improving overall decision-making quality and organizational outcomes.

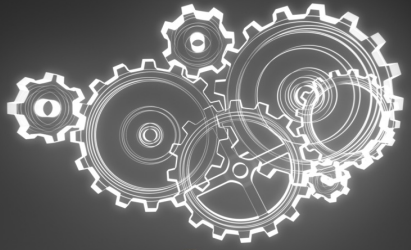
02

Implement strategies to help manage fears of loss, abandonment, rejection, success, failure, and humiliation; improving well-being, performance, and fosters a resilient, innovative workplace culture.

03

Develop initiatives that encourage viewing fear as a catalyst for growth, including self-reflection, setting achievable goals, mindfulness practices to manage fear effectively, reframing fear from a barrier to a motivator.

VISTAGE



Agenda



1. How I Learned to LOVE Fear
2. The Neurology of Fear
3. 5 Principles of Fear
4. Fear and Leadership
5. Fear as a Motivational Force
6. Conclusion and Reflection



Moneyball – “Biggest Fears”





How I Learned To LOVE Fear

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland. Lived in London, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Paris, Amsterdam, Bali, New York, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

- Author of The Fearless Factor, The Fearless Factor at Work, and When The Crow Sings (a novel)
- TEDx speaker : Unleash the Power of Fear
- Certified consultant for Human Synergetics Behavioral Assessments
- Volunteer Coach for Homeward Bound Leadership program (Australia) women in STEM
- Retired Owner: 5-star luxury boutique hotel in Bali
- Professionally trained singer
- Lay-Cantor for synagogues in Paris and Amsterdam
- Black belt in Shotokan karate
- Mother of 4 talented adults and 3 granddaughters
- Married for 44 years
- Crossfit enthusiast
- Enjoys a good pinot noir and excellent food

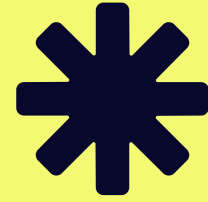
Clients include an Emmy-award winning marketer, an Oprah recognized expert on menopause, women-owned businesses, financial consultants, entrepreneurs, hospitality enterprises, executives, startups and SaaS company employees.

What Is Fear?



- 01** Fear is a natural, essential response designed to help us survive.
- 02** It's triggered by perceived threats, whether real or imagined.
- 03** When we encounter a threatening situation, a complex process unfolds in the brain, leading to noticeable changes in our behaviour.
- 04** Fear is imagination based.
- 05** Fear is the stories we tell ourselves.
- 06** Fear is a conditioned response.





How Fear Impacts Companies, Leaders and Employees at Work

Fear manifests in various ways within the workplace, significantly affecting both leaders and employees. Fear often operates below the surface, limiting performance and undermining potential success.





Impact of Fear on Job Performance and Leadership

- **95%** of American workers report experiencing stress at work, with a significant portion citing work-related anxiety.
- Only **24%** of U.S. employees believe their organization cares about their well-being.
- Employees with positive experiences are **16 times more** engaged and **8 times more** likely to stay at their company compared to those in fear-based cultures.
- Employees in constructive cultures show **40% higher levels** of discretionary effort compared to those in fear-based environments.

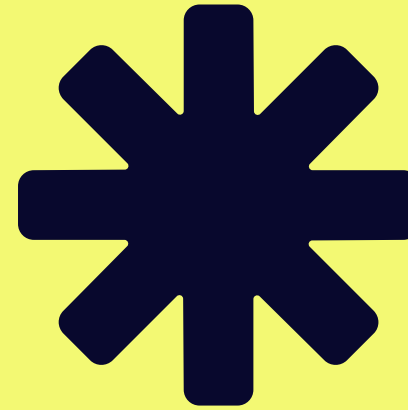
- **50%** of employees delay decisions due to fear.
- **60%** believe fear impacts team interactions.
- **70%** receive constructive feedback, but **20%** face punitive actions.
- Fear-based cultures stifle innovation and discourages risk-taking, missing growth opportunities.
- Lack of open communication in fear-based cultures leads to tension and conflicts.
- Stress-reducing programs decrease stress by **33%.**



Fear in Organizational Dynamics and Outcomes



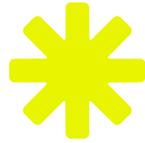
How Fear Impacts Employees at Work



- ✓ Lack of psychological safety leads to disengagement and low morale.
- ✓ Fear of repercussions makes employees less likely to speak up or take risks.
- ✓ Concerns over job security, failure, or rejection cause stress and anxiety.
- ✓ Many employees feel disconnected powerless.
- ✓ Disengaged employees do the minimum and seek other opportunities.
- ✓ Fear is perpetuated by lack of support from leadership, hindering success.



How Fear Impacts Leaders



- **Fear in leaders can lead to:**

- Micromanagement
- Poor decision-making
- Reluctance to embrace change

- **These behaviors stem from:**

- Fear-based thinking

- **Ineffective fear management in leaders may:**

- Stifle innovation and creativity
- Prioritize control over empowerment

- **This environment can create:**

- A culture of blame
- Punishment for mistakes rather than using them as learning opportunities
- Entrenched fear that inhibits growth





Jacqueline Wales
Unapologetically Raw & Real!

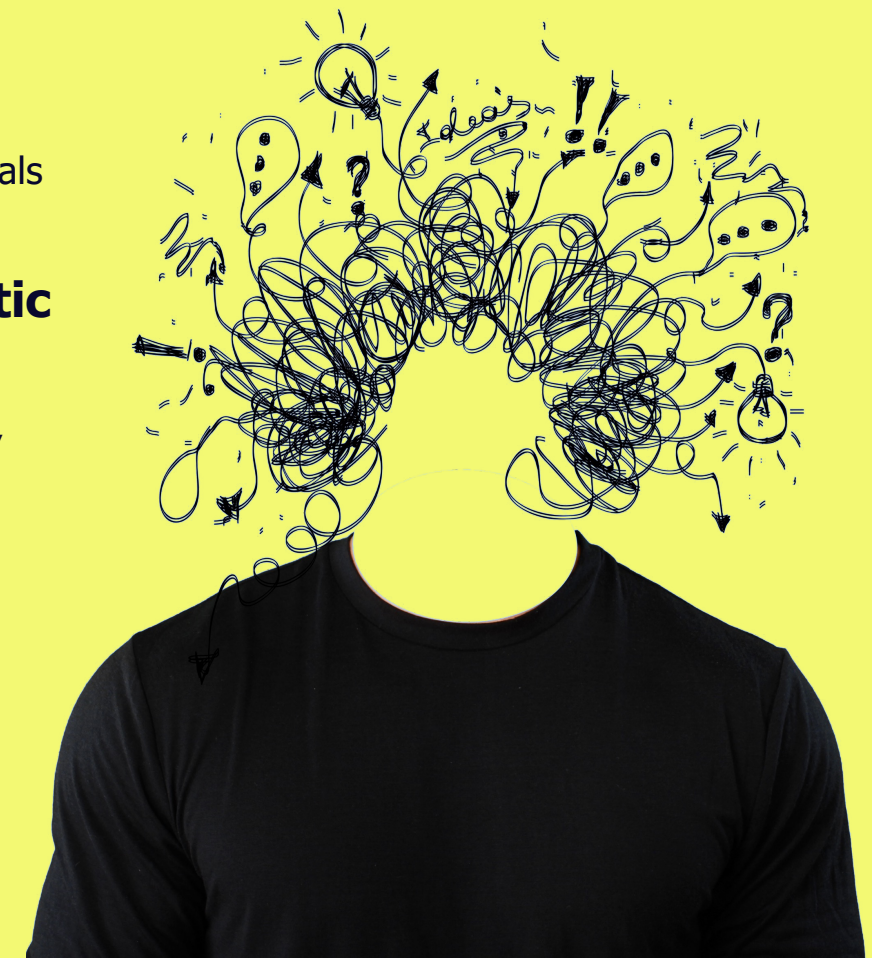


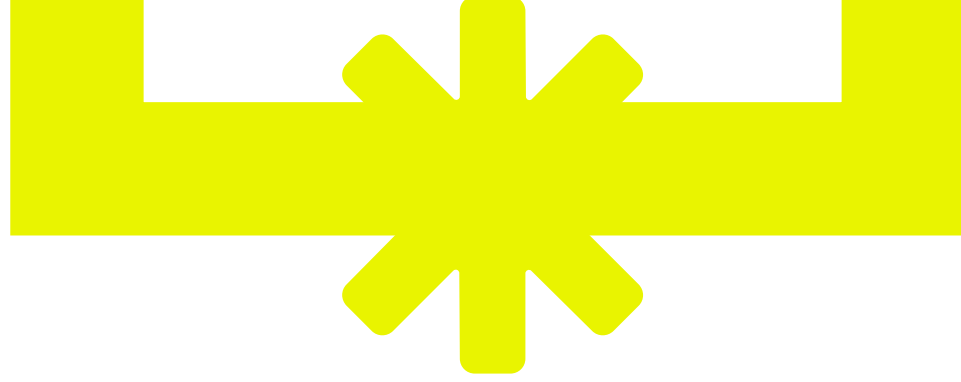
The Neurology of Fear



The Brain's Fear Response

- **Amygdala Activation**
 - Processes fear and sends distress signals
- **Hypothalamus and Sympathetic Nervous System**
 - Activates stress hormones (adrenaline, cortisol)
- **Prefrontal Cortex**
 - Responsible for higher-order thinking
 - Can amplify or dampen fear response





Physical Changes Due to Fear

- Increased Heart Rate and Blood Pressure
- Rapid Breathing
- Muscle Tension
- Sweating



Behavioral Changes

- Fight or Flight Response
- Freeze Response
- Avoidance Behavior
- Heightened Vigilance



Cognitive Impairment

- Impaired problem-solving abilities
- Hasty, irrational decisions
- Failure to consider alternative solutions
- Overly defensive
- Resistant to feedback
- Prone to blame others for mistakes

Long-Term Effects of Fear



- **Chronic Stress**
 - Can lead to anxiety disorders, depression, cardiovascular issues
- **Impaired Learning and Memory**
 - Inability to make clear decisions
- **Behavioral Change**
 - Increased caution, avoidance, changes in social interactions



* What Do YOU Fear Breakout *

What are your top three personal fears related to your personal and professional life?

Write each of them on a separate sticky note and put them on the whiteboard to discuss.

5 MINS





Discussion



How do these fears manifest in your daily decisions and actions at work?

Can you recall a specific instance where a fear influenced a decision you made at work? Explain

How do you think your work behaviour would change if you managed these fears effectively?

Confronting Personal Fears



- 01** Do you have evidence to support your fear?
- 02** Challenge the stories you are telling yourself?
- 03** Acknowledge your fears then consider what actions you can take to move forward, even if it's just incrementally.
- 04** Be courageous and create the positive life you want.

FEAR
— IS A —
REACTION
COURAGE
— IS A —
DECISION



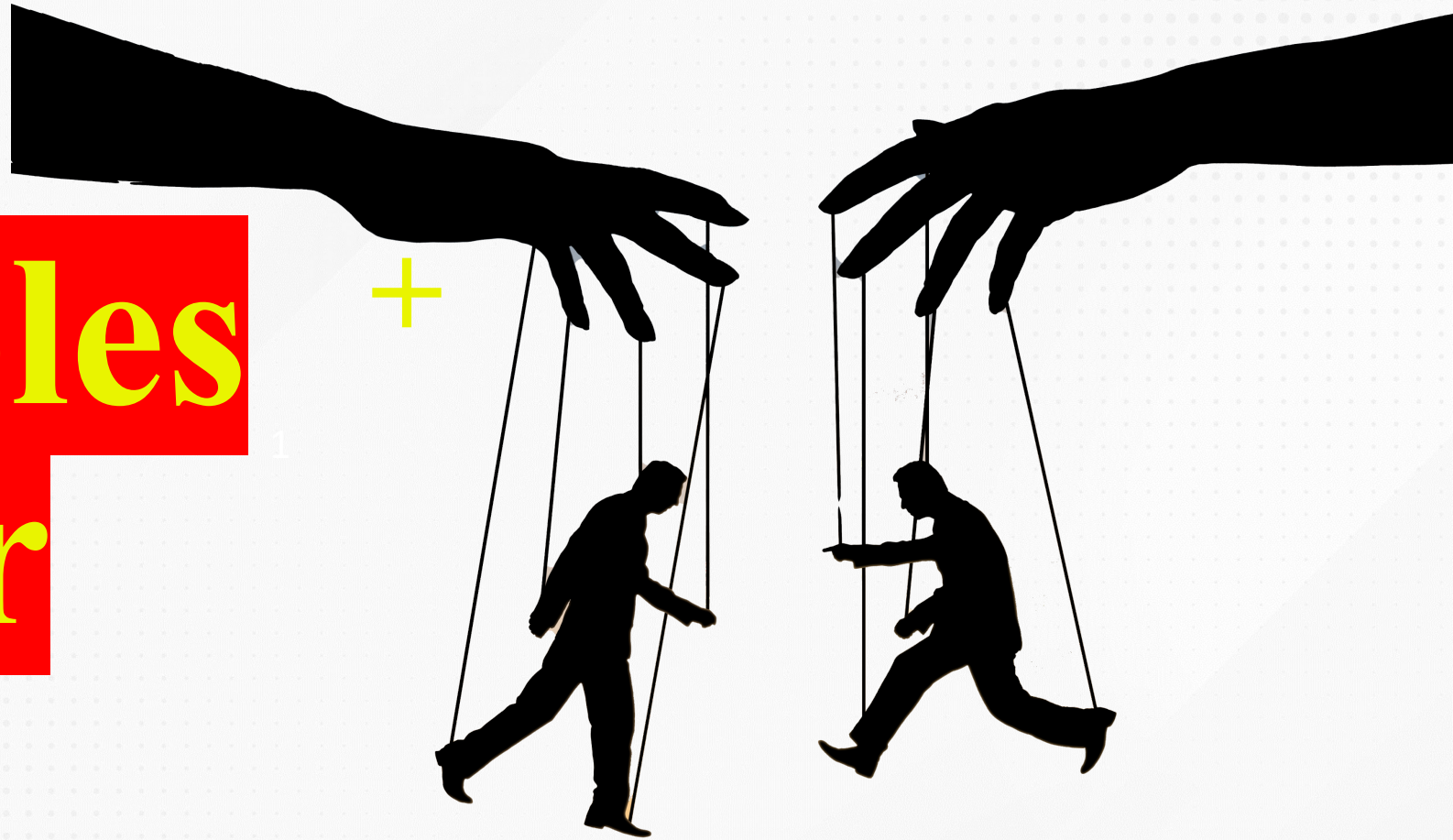


10 MINUTE BREAK



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Principles Of Fear





THE FIVE PRINCIPAL FEARS



LOSS

ABANDONMENT

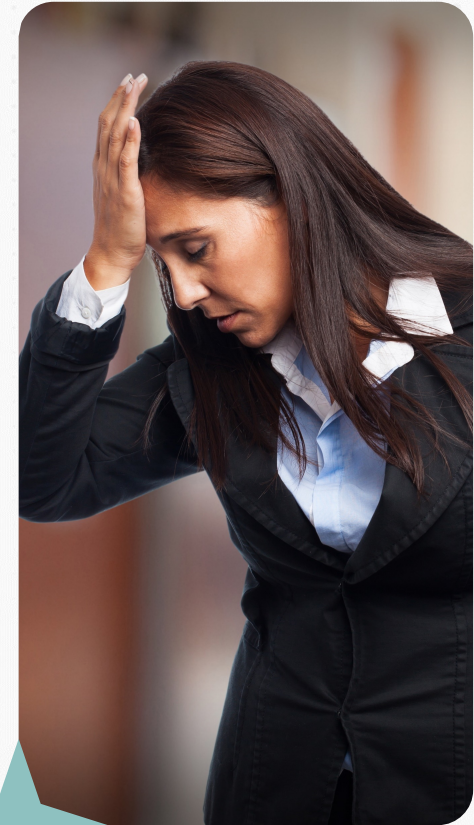
HUMILIATION

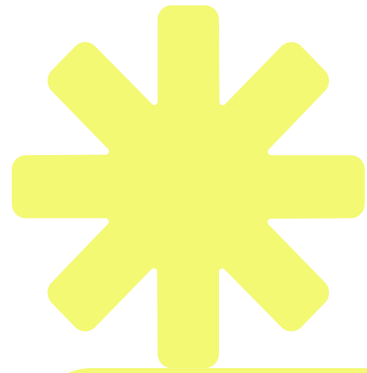
REJECTION

FAILURE/SUCCESS

Fear of Loss⁺

- 01** Involves anxiety about losing something valuable. Example: Financial, relationship, job, health, death of a significant other
- 02** Can paralyze individuals, making them hesitant to take risks or make changes.
- 03** Often future oriented and stems from imagination and negative storytelling about potential outcomes.





Fear of Abandonment

- Rooted in the need for connection and belonging.
- Can lead to behaviors aimed at securing approval and avoiding rejection. The need for validation.
- Usually stems from past experiences and emotional triggers.

Fear of Humiliation

- Involves dread of being exposed as flawed or inadequate.
- Leads to avoidance of judgment or criticism. Can invoke the need to prove oneself and overwork.
- It is mitigated by self-compassion and resilience.





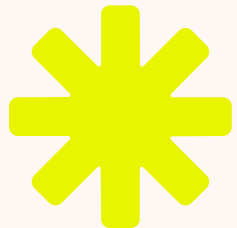
Fear of Rejection

- Closely tied to humiliation, it is the fear of not being enough or being unworthy of love and acceptance.
- Manifests in avoiding new opportunities or hesitating to share ideas.
- Based on perceived inadequacies and negative self-talk.

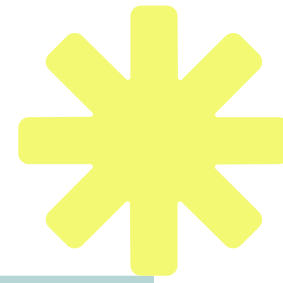


+ Fear of Success and Failure

- Both stem from uncertainty and potential change.
- Fear of failure can prevent taking on challenges; fear of success can lead to self-sabotage.
- Reframing mindset to view success and failure as learning opportunities.



Moving Beyond Fear



20 QUESTIONS





5 MINUTE BREAK



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**Leadership
& Fear**





The Importance of Leaders Confronting Their Own Fears To Build a Culture of Authenticity and Trust

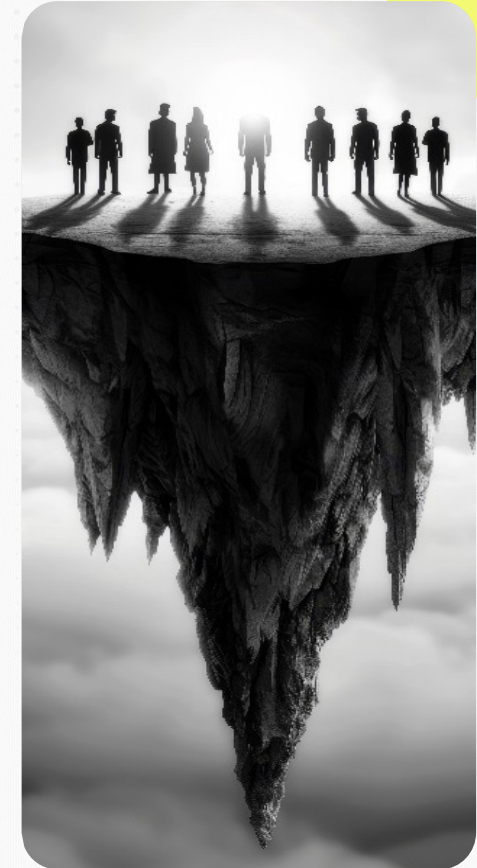
When leaders confront their fears and can share them it fosters a culture of authenticity and trust.

It builds a deeper connections with teams and a cohesive environment.

Encourages open, two-way communication to ensure all team members feel heard and valued, fostering a supportive and dynamic organizational culture.

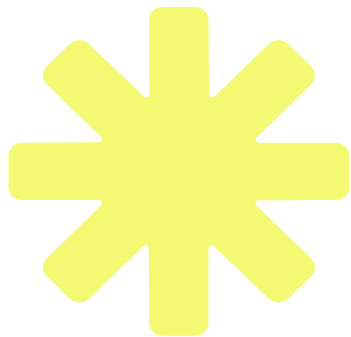
Confronting Professional Fears

- 01** Leaders who address their fears set a powerful example for their teams.
- 02** Emphasizes the importance of vulnerability and courage in leadership.
- 03** By acknowledging their fears, leaders encourage an environment where employees feel safe to express their own concerns and challenges.
- 04** Openness enhances individual growth and collective resilience.





Emotional Intelligence in Leadership



1. Leaders who confront their fears are better equipped to make clear, confident decisions.
2. Psychological research supports the effectiveness of leaders with high emotional intelligence.
3. Self-aware leaders navigate stressful situations with composure and inspire confidence among their team members.
4. Modeling emotional intelligence promotes overall organizational health and performance.



Practical Steps for Leaders



- 01 **Reflect on personal fears and acknowledge their impact on leadership.**
- 02 **Practice vulnerability and openness with your team.**
- 03 **Develop and model emotional intelligence.**
- 04 **Commit to consistent and transparent communication.**
- 05 **Foster a supportive environment that values authenticity and trust.**

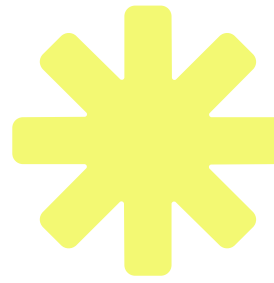
Harnessing Fear for Growth

- **Understanding and managing fear transforms it into a catalyst for growth.**
- **Harnessed fear leads to breakthroughs and innovation.**
- **Embracing fear inspires individuals to push boundaries and fosters continuous learning.**
- **Organizations that see fear as part of innovation drive long-term success.**
- **This approach ensures personal and organizational sustainability.**





Case Study: Managing Rapid Growth In SMB SaaS Company



Situation:

- **Rapid growth over the past year**
- **Secured significant new clients**
- **Expanded workforce**
- **Concerns about sustaining success**
- **Managing expectations, and maintaining quality**

Challenge:

- **Manage rapid growth without compromising values**
- **Address fear of change among team members**
- **Sustain growth without compromising relationships**

Strategy:

- **Implement wellness programs and offer professional development to strategic employees**
- **Maintain and implement new strategies and protocols**
- **Promote open communication between senior leaders and team members and establish positive feedback protocols**





“
You cannot change
how someone thinks,
but you can give
them a tool, the use
of which leads them
to think differently.”
– Buckminster Fuller.

Jacqueline Wales

BE FEARLESS
See Where It Gets You!
The Fearless FIGHT & WORK

Jacqueline Wales
Unapologetically Raw & Real!



5 MINUTE BREAK



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Fear as a

+

Motivational

Force



04-07-2024



Understanding Fear as a Motivator Rather than a Deterrent



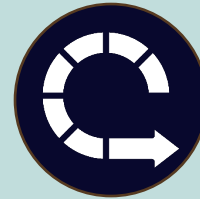
Fear as a Powerful Emotion:

- Significantly impacts actions and decisions.
- Can be a potent motivator rather than just a deterrent.



Harnessing Fear:

- Use fear to confront challenges and push beyond comfort zones.
- Recognizing fear as a signal for growth opportunities transforms it into a catalyst for positive change.



Proactive Steps:

- Instead of succumbing to fear, take proactive steps towards achieving goals.
- Shifting perspective on fear can drive personal and professional growth.



Why Understanding Fear is Critical to Your Organization



Self-Reflection and Critical Evaluation:

- Fear prompts self-reflection and critical evaluation.
- Analyzing fear's origins and personal narratives reveals limiting beliefs and assumptions.



Challenging Narratives:

- Embrace discomfort and change to cultivate resilience and adaptability.
- Proactive engagement with fear enhances personal growth.



Fostering Continuous Improvement:

- Encourages a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within organizations.
- Fear, when managed effectively, fosters a dynamic and growth-oriented environment.

Fear as a Motivator for Action

+

- ✓ Fear heightens alertness and focus, pushing individuals to work harder and strive for excellence.
- ✓ Organizational fear of becoming obsolete drives innovation and improvement in products or services.



Fear Fosters Learning

- Facing fears pushes individuals out of comfort zones, fostering skill acquisition and growth.
- Organizations that embrace fear encourage continuous learning and adaptability to change.





+



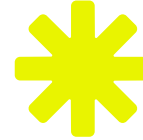
Fear Drives Innovation

- ✓ Fear of the unknown drives creative thinking and problem-solving, leading to innovative solutions.
- ✓ Creating a culture where employees feel safe to take risks fosters organizational innovation and success.

Maintain a Positive Outlook:



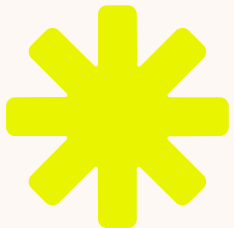
- 1. Focus on the potential benefits of taking action.**
- 2. Visualize success to counterbalance the negative impact of fear.**
- 3. Encourage proactive behavior and reduce hesitation.**





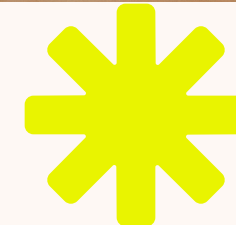
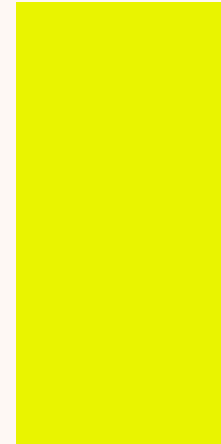
+ Self-Awareness and Mindfulness:

- 1. Engage in mindfulness practices such as meditation and deep breathing.**
- 2. Use reflective journaling to stay grounded and focused.**
- 3. Observe fears without being overwhelmed by rational decision-making.**



Set and Achieve⁺ Realistic Goals:

- 1. Break down larger tasks into manageable steps.**
- 2. Set small, incremental goals to build confidence and momentum.**
- 3. Gradually reduce fear by fostering a sense of accomplishment and progress.**



+ Build a Supportive Network:

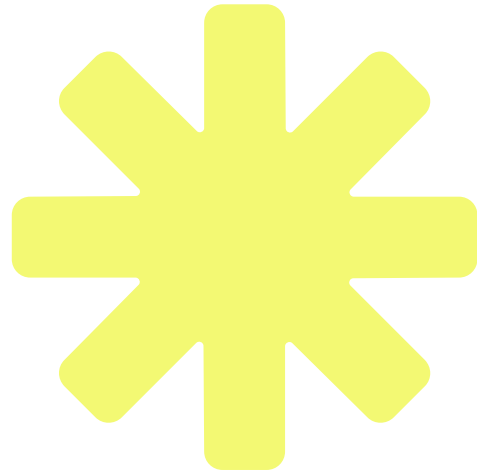
- 1. Surround yourself with trusted advisors, mentors, and peers.**
- 2. Seek encouragement and constructive feedback.**
- 3. Leverage alternative perspectives and solutions for effective fear management.**



Continuous Learning and Development +

- 01** Encourage employees to acquire new skills and adapt to new technologies.
- 02** This enhances individual capabilities and ensures organizational agility.
- 03** Examples: Providing training programs, offering online courses, and supporting personal and professional development.





Promoting Collaboration and Flexibility



- Foster a culture where team members feel empowered to share ideas and take initiative.
- Implement flexible work arrangements and ability for teams to collaborate more effectively
- Create flexibility in processes and structures to help teams stay adaptable and responsive.
- Stay open and transparent in your communication to allow for positive feedback





* Actionable Takeaways

- ✓ **Foster** trust, open communication, and authenticity to create environments where employees feel safe to share ideas and innovate.
- ✓ **Develop** programs that explore fear and uncertainty as a motivator to confront challenges, push beyond comfort zones, and recognize growth opportunities.
- ✓ **Build** resilience and agility by embracing change, promoting continuous learning, and implementing flexible work arrangements.
- ✓ **Enhance** self-awareness and mindfulness with online courses that offer skills training to overcome negative beliefs and create rational decision-making.
- ✓ **Create** a supportive network, seek constructive feedback, and maintain a positive outlook by focusing on potential benefits and visualizing success.



“

Fear is the greatest driver for success in the human experience.

But first...you must find your courage!

Jacqueline Wales



Jacqueline Wales
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[www.jacquelinewales.com/
vistage-handout/](http://www.jacquelinewales.com/vistage-handout/)



Your feedback is important to everyone in the Vistage community.
Please take a moment to share your feedback about today's session.

