

Conquer Your Fears Journal

As you know, life happens, and while some things are good, others may not be. In fact, they may be downright horrible. When that's the case, we make up a story in our head, to try to make sense of the things that have happened. These stories shape how we perceive life, and if they're negative, they can cause a lot of fear. The more fearful we become, the more we weave fear into the next stories we create.

A good way to get around this cycle is to keep a fear journal, so I've created one for you. This will help you change fearful thoughts into more realistic ones. It also helps you to get the fear out and see it from a distance, to feel validated, and to rewrite your story.

Every evening, take some time to sit down and fill out this journal - or pick it up whenever you feel anxious. It doesn't matter when or how you do it, **it is a powerful tool to learn about your thought processes**. And you can easily monitor your progress on how you deal with fears!

However, your mind might play a little trick on you, sending bad thoughts to keep you away from journaling. I want to quickly point them out, so you can be ready to start your fear journal today:

- **"I don't have any thoughts. I just feel anxious!"**

Many people think that anxiety or fears come "out of the blue", which is why they have a hard time identifying the specific trigger thoughts that lead to these fears. But this is not true. There is always a trigger, but sometimes the situation happens so fast, we don't even notice and suddenly we feel anxious. So in order to identify your triggers, ask yourself:

- What were you doing before you felt anxious?
- Did you see anyone in particular?
- Did you talk to anyone?
- What was going on around you?

Even if you don't know what you were thinking at this particular moment, write something down, even if it's something like this: "I'm not sure what I'm thinking...Maybe it has something to do with...". Generate possibilities and don't limit yourself to one. Most of the time, it helps simply to go through the process of writing in your fear diary, because it helps you ferret out important insights. It takes practice and patience, but if you keep doing it, you will eventually see the connections to your anxiety.

- **"I don't have time to write down my thoughts!"**

I won't deny that keeping a fear journal may be a chore in the beginning. But keep in mind that you don't have to write down every single thought - that would be impossible. Just use it when you feel at least moderately anxious. Also, you don't need to keep the fear journal forever. Doing it for a week or two will already get you a lot of information on how you are wired mentally.

The process will become more natural and you won't have to do it physically all the time, after you've gotten some practice with monitoring your thoughts. However, don't rush the learning process. Many people need to write out their thoughts and review them on paper, so they can make changes in their outlook on life.

- **"My thoughts sound stupid when I see them written out in black-and-white."**

Yes, it might happen that as soon as you write down your thoughts, you're surprised at how foolish they sound. And you may still feel embarrassed even though you won't show this to anyone else in your life.

But this reaction is not bad. It simply means that you are gaining perspective, just by writing your thoughts on a piece of paper. Thoughts that sounded perfectly logical in your head now look irrational in writing. So keeping this fear journal will help you to bring unrealistic thoughts into focus. And this is the ultimate key to conquering your fears: **Only when you're fully conscious of your thoughts, do you gain the power to change them!**