

## **IS FEAR HOLDING YOU BACK?**

By Ellen Harris, LMHC, NCC, CEAP, SAP

A colleague recently recommended the book, *Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway* by Susan Jeffers. It offers an insightful approach to overcoming the limiting thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors that keep us “stuck”, paralyzed, and stagnant.

Fear manifests in many ways. It prevents us from making changes in our lives. It causes us to isolate ourselves. And, it affects our moods as we become angry, anxious, or depressed.

What are we afraid of? Most of us are afraid of change, rejection, failure, and the ultimate fear – death. Isn't it ironic? The only constant in life is change. Any time we invest in a relationship we risk rejection. In order to succeed, we must take a chance on possibly failing. And, as much as we don't want to face it, death is a reality for all of us.

The harsh reality of life is that no one is immune to fear. It's part of the human existence. Our job is to use it creatively. Recognize the difference between the fear that keeps us safe from danger and the fear that prevents us from living a fulfilled life.

Dale Carnegie tells us to realize that fear exists in our minds and encourages us to take action, “You can conquer almost any fear if you will only make up your mind to do so. For remember, fear doesn't exist anywhere except in the mind...If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.” Eleanor Roosevelt suggests, “anyone can conquer fear by doing the things he fears to do...”

As with any type of personal transformation, you must first increase your awareness. Identify your fears. What is preventing you from living your dream? Where did these fears come from? (Your past is important because insight into unresolved issues can help you understand your fears.)

Don't be ruled by the past. Live in the present moment. And, have the courage to work towards a positive, productive, and satisfying future.

Embrace your fear. Learn to reframe your thinking. Change your mind. Open yourself to new opportunities. Remember you are not alone. And, ask for help if you need it.

For more information, contact Ellen Harris at 239-404-0862, [eharrislmhc@comcast.net](mailto:eharrislmhc@comcast.net), [www.ellenharris counseling.com](http://www.ellenharris counseling.com) .

*© Copyright 2010, Ellen Harris. All rights reserved.*