

EMOTIONAL INSIGHTS IN STUDENTS (PART 1) OVERCOMING FEARS

Ritu Sharma, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor, Sharda University

Abstract

A study was undertaken to enhance the basic understanding of creation of fear and its control in the students. The results showed that fear is instinctive and its knowledge is essential to protect from dangers. Fear which improves is healthy while the one which harms, is unhealthy. Fear is a function of the mind recording the effects of external environment in the form of emotions. We are, in fact, beyond emotional effects but by ignorance we do get affected when we identify with them. The harmful effects of fear can be overcome if we do not identify ourselves with it and act just as a witness. The acceptance of fear, without any judgement, acts as an internal alchemy. Deep breathing and stretching of joints and muscles can aid in alleviating the negative effects of fear. Besides, the value of silence and visualization of successful completion of examination in overcoming it is also stressed.



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Introduction

Emotions are a natural part of every human being. In our daily activities, we are caught up in a variety of emotions such as fear, anger, courage, discontentment, compassion, wonder, romance, peace and joyfulness etc. These emotions define as well as shape our life. Each emotion produces certain enzymes and hormones in the body which in turn control the function of glands and nervous system. So their balance is essential to maintain a proper health of the body.

The students community mostly suffers from the fear of examination, fear of expression and facing audience and interviews etc. The examination, the word itself, sends vibes of fear in the mind of the student, being examined. This results in mental depressions and other psychological disorders. At one time, it was considered that fear is likely to help to excel in ones studies but its authenticity is being questioned. Overcoming fear, especially of examination/interview is the key to a successful student. Therefore, study was undertaken to enhance the understanding of the basis of fearlessness so as to overcome fear and benefit the students. The results obtained are discussed in this paper.

How the fears are from the known

When a child is born, he has absolutely no fears. He is willing to take up any jumps. It is only when he falls and feels pain, fear sets in. The fear also sets in the child when he touches some

gadget and experiences electric shock. Likewise, while walking during the dark, one sees a rope but considers it a snake and fears as he has known that the snakes are harmful and poisonous whereas a child will not fear as he does not know whether snakes are harmful or not. We also fear the persons who create hurdles in our progress or other persons who are more powerful than us such as police personnel etc. This shows that fear is of the known and not of the unknown.

Whether the fear is healthy or unhealthy

Earlier study conducted by **Sharma (2017a)** showed that every situation or happening has both pros and cons. Likewise, fear should also have its two sides both healthy and unhealthy. Fear could be considered healthy, if it saves the life or improves the performance of the students. Thus a small degree of fear of examination etc. is likely to improve the calibre of the students, but, if fear is in excess, which disinterests the students or leads one to resign from education, is unhealthy. The basic cause of fear is the incomplete preparation or reading of the students in a particular field or subject. If a student is complete or fully prepared, within himself, he will not be fearful anymore.

What if there is no fear

Fear appears to be essential as it protects us from the future harms. If a child does not fear from falls, electric shocks or holding the hot things or crossing roads, he will put his life in danger. Fear reminds us of a sense of existence and it is an inbuilt mechanism for survival. It is the fear which helps to inculcate the value of maintaining law and order situations in the institutions.

Mechanism of creation of fear

All the emotions are the function of the mind. The mind is simply an instrument or a mechanism recording the emotions. The emotional effects are analogous to ripple effects, created in a still water when a stone is thrown on it. Likewise, the mind records the effects of events happening outside whether positive or negative. The outside events are pressing the remote control of the mind and make it fearful or joyful or tense or happy according to the nature of the events. The emotions are in the form of moods and swings. We get caught up with them as we attach or identify ourselves with them.

In reality, we are just a witness to the mind, observing its recordings in the form of emotions. We, being animate, are beyond the reach of mind, which is inanimate. It is an important fact and understanding as well as principle to be kept in mind that the observer is always different

from the objects, being observed. For instance, we see a pole, but we don't become a pole in other words, we are not a pole. So, we simply remain as observers.

How to overcome fears

Non identification with fears: The emotions are not permanent in nature although they appear to be so (**Gita, 2/14**). But we try to make them permanent by identifying ourselves with them. For centuries, the Buddhist monks have taught their followers to say "I am with fear" as opposed to "I am fearful"; "I am with unhappiness" as opposed to "I am unhappy". This practice of naming emotions shows that they are temporary in nature; they do come and go. It also helps us to maintain our real identity (**Holden, 2007**). It is also a very good practice as we stay away from emotions while honouring them.

The fear may eclipse the joy of our spirit for sometime but it can't destroy it. The spirit is immortal, always free, loving and happy 100% of time. We become fearful when we move away from the centre of our spirit (true self) to the centre of mind, may be by ignorance or mistake. Likewise, the students need to be cautioned not to get identified with fears but remain simply as their observers only. The use of this practice is very essential but it may take time to precipitate.

Acceptance of fears: After stationing yourself in the spirit, accept fear as such, don't be afraid of it. Feel, honour and appreciate its feelings with love. Don't hate it. In the due course, we will find that our fear has disappeared. This requires great courage to accept the fear but it serves as an internal alchemy. A problem disappears, the moment we accept it honestly, without any reservation. In contrast, it grows more complex if we create conflict with it as our opposition provides more energy to sustain fear. The failure in examination may not be as harmful as negative response to it. The more we condemn the failures, the more we get identified with them and more miserable, we become.

There is no such thing as a negative emotion. As long as we believe that fear is negative, we will not gain anything from its experience. So drop your judgements. Be open to accept everything including your fears, pains, guilt etc. When we truly and unconditionally are open to the emotions, we will see that nothing is bad in them. They come in our life to teach us some lesson for making us to be careful in future.

Judgement is an attribute of ego while acceptance, of the pure Self (Soul). Where there is judgement, there can't be any acceptance or peace or joy and rest etc. If you judge something bad you will definitely feel bad and vice versa. It is simple emotional mathematics.

Lack of understanding: This also leads to the development of fear in the students. This could be overcome if they pay more attention to the subjects where they are weak. They should take the help of tutors and seniors to further their understanding. In general, one should repeatedly do that activity more and more which one fears. In addition, the students should use positive language, and keep saying again and again, “ We are confident, really confident.” **David (2003)** has suggested to adopt the following techniques in their day to day activities to increase self esteem and confidence and could be adopted by students.

Be a front seater in the class room

Make eye to eye contact while talking and listening.

Speak up your fears. Don't hide them as hiding strengthens them.

Smile big.

Repeated actions or studies build up confidence and overcome fears. High self confidence does not permit the students to fear, rather the fears act as stepping stones for their future rise.

Overcoming fear of examinations: The fear of examinations can even cripple a well prepared student That the last minute steadiness may be more important than the months of hard work in studies. Steadiness is a psycho-physiological training which provides courage to the students to face any situation and requires following steps (**Prabhakar, 2006**).

a) Deep gentle stretches of muscles and joints so that they are released of all the tensions. **Siddarth and Puri (2014)** have outlined the Ganesh Kriya to build up confidence in the students, facing the examinations or interviews.

b) Deep voluntary breathing to fully activate the circulatory system add plenty of oxygen to the blood.

c) Clearing the mind of all the tensions by entering into deep silence for at least ten minutes before the event. It consists of sitting in a chair and keeping the eyes closed and doing nothing; (no physical or mental activity) just acting as a witness to the thoughts etc with letting attitude. The detail of the technique has been described by **Sharma (2017 b)**.

d) Creative mental visualisation of successful completion of examination/or any other event **Rhonda (2006b)** .The student needs to visualise before hand that he is doing his job in an excellent way.

e) Prayerfulness to invoke the blessings of divine powers to give the students required courage and confidence to face any odd situation.

Conclusions

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that fear to a small extent is healthy as it helps to improve the students while in excess, is unhealthy one when, it harms the students. The unhealthy fear can be overcome if students do not identify themselves with fear and accept it openly without any prejudice while treating it simply as an experience. Along with acceptance of fear, the use of physical as well as intellectual exercises aiming at relaxing the mind also useful to overcome fear.

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