

## Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **How to Unlearn Your Fears**

For many years I harboured within me two major fears - fear of abandonment and rejection and fear of spiders. It was only two years ago that I was able to unlearn these fears and am now a spider-friendly person who loves her own company and could not give a hoot about being rejected or abandoned. It didn't happen overnight, especially overcoming arachnophobia :)

Fears are learned. The environment we grow up in and the mindset we are conditioned to operate from govern our fears. I watched a horror film when I was very young called *Arachnophobia*. I had no problems with spiders until I saw that film. And then I watched *Harry Potter Chambers of Secret* and *Aragog the Spider* was enough to keep me awake a few nights. That is a classic example of physical fear.

Emotional fears are slightly different but learned in a similar way. They too are as a result of experiences and conditioning. My fear of abandonment and rejection came from childhood experiences of inadequate emotional care.

### **So how do we unlearn our fears?**

In any journey of transformation, one must first identify what needs to be transformed. Similarly, in order to unlearn fears, one must first identify what one fears.

### **5-Step Process to identify and unlearn your fears**

1. Make a list of what you are fearful of. These things could be emotional or physical.
2. Beside each fear, write down where you got this fear from? (parents, friends, TV or Film or books)
3. Write down what exactly would happen to you physically if you had to face this thing that was causing you to fear
4. Write down positive aspects of the thing you fear from a logical and rational point of view
5. Every time you feel fear, remind yourself about the positive aspects of that thing that is causing you to fear

It is the fourth step that people struggle with most. For example, one of my clients had a fear of dying in a car crash. She didn't fear death, however, the car crash was not how she wanted to die. She said she couldn't find anything positive to say about a car crash.

You may agree with her. At some level, I do too. However, let us look at this from a Muslim's perspective. Once I did this with my client she was able to overcome this fear completely.

### **Where there is FAITH there is NO FEAR.**

As Muslims, we are not to fear people, places, things or situations. We are to fear (have 'khawf') of ONLY ALLAH.

### **Example of how to unlearn fear**

Let's look at how my client unlearned her fear of dying in a car crash using the above 5 steps.

1. She listed her fear - Dying in a car crash
2. She listed how she developed this fear - She saw pictures of a car crash in a newspaper clipping when she was very young
3. She wrote down what would happen to her physically if she was in a car crash - broken bones, brain damage, blood everywhere (notice she didn't mention death)
4. She wrote down the positive aspect of this car crash - death, returning to ALLAH, and inshallah Jannah
5. She wrote what she needed to remind herself every time this fear gripped her - That dying of a car crash will not matter when her soul is released from her body because she will no longer exist in human form. She will be awaiting her judgment day. She needs to focus on the now and do good deeds to be able to reach Jannah when she dies.

This rather logical confrontation of her fear gave her a renewed perspective of her temporary existence here in this Duniya.

As Muslims, we are wonderfully equipped with this realisation that life in the Duniya is temporary. Fear is shaytaan's whispers to make you think otherwise. Faith overcomes fear. Faith and fear can never coexist.

### **ALWAYS CHOOSE FAITH OVER FEAR.**

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