

# Fear!

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Tips of the Day · 2 min read

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Have you ever allowed yourself to feel fear? I don't mean fearful. I don't mean anxious. I mean have you felt fear intimately? The raw emotion? The simple sensation of it? I don't mean sit by the fire. I mean jump into it. So long as there is a self, a 'me', someone there to defend, there will be fear. Because the self, that notion or view of me, that sense of me, that I am someone, knows it cannot exist for ever. It knows it will die. The fear of death is the mother of all fears. Yet who would want to sit still in the midst that experience - the cold agitation, the suffocated breath, the debilitating weakness, the exploding heartbeat, the nausea. Surely there is something we can do about it. Of course there is! We can turn to social media, nothing like talking to others about the weather, the tennis, Brexit, to get away from fear. Nothing like eating, or drinking. Alcohol is such a salve. Or perhaps the primal fear has morphed into other fears. Fear of loneliness or anger or love or spiders. I say morphed, but it's another way of guarding ourselves. To attach a fear to 'something' is more bearable than the fear of death, of annihilation, of total loss. And to guard ourselves well, we need to control. The more we control, the more we feel safe. To guard what we have. To fend off attacks real or imaginary. Yes! And anger too. Anger is good. It empowers us. 'Where there is fear, I shall fight.' Anger feels good. It frightens others. It protects me from my fear. And I love to see the fear in others. And dominate! But in the worst case scenario run. Hide. Seek seclusion. And there is always shopping, jogging ... and sex. What strategies do you have? The Buddha did not say the path was easy. He said it was gradual. Against the stream. With every fear that arises we are given a chance to feel the raw emotional material. Slowly we become accustomed. The more accustomed, the more we lose the fear of those emotional sensations. Then we realise it is the deluded heart that goads the mind into horror scenarios. And as we gradually lose our fear of fear we begin to see the possibility of fearlessness. For if we lose our fear of fear, what could possibly frighten us? And since fear is the measure of our self-delusion, so the sense of self diminishes until such time as the wrong view of self, the belief that sense of self is substantial and essential, is cut asunder completely. All the while as the materials of fear dissolve, the barriers of defence weaken. The once embattled heart begins to embrace. Then we understand how we might suffer for another – die for another.

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