

Strategies for Facing and Overcoming Your Fears

1. *Define the unknown.* Often our fears are unfounded, are figments of our imagination, or are simply not based on fact or reality. Research, explore, and seek out resources that help you have a better understanding of the area you are moving into. Usually, the more you know, the more comfortable you become and your fear of the unknown begins to dissipate.
2. *Become comfortable living in the unknown.* The reality is there are many situations that are out of your control and leave you unsure about what the future holds. This is particularly true when you're taking risks. Living in the unknown is an extremely uncomfortable state for most of us. However, this is the time when many experience the greatest personal/professional growth. Release expectations, focus your energy on what you can control, trust yourself and your instincts and breathe. This period won't last forever.
3. *Ask for support.* You never, ever have go through a change alone. Creating a support system to assist you in brainstorming, processing ideas, sorting through options, seeing things in new ways or simply listening and validating your strengths can help tremendously in dispelling fears and anxiety. Also, sharing personal fears with close friends or colleagues can cause the boogey man to turn into a smurf.
4. *Play the "what if" game.* Ask and answer "what is the worst thing that could possibly happen to me if I ... (whatever it is you're moving toward)?" Write the answers down. Many times we're so paralyzed by the thought of this "worst thing" coming true that we make a mountain out of a molehill. So you fall on your face. But, at least you took a risk. And, you begin to see that yes, you really will be all right, whatever the outcome. Whew, what a relief! *"To risk is to truly be free."* Jennifer White, author
5. *Take baby steps.* One of the main reasons many of us abandon ideas, job changes, new businesses, etc. is because we become overwhelmed thinking about everything that needs to be done. We literally drown in a sea of details and wonder "where am I ever going to find the energy to do this?" Break your idea down into simple, realistic goals. One meeting a week, two visits a month, research the top 3 companies in the industry, etc. You don't have to do everything right away. Ever heard the phrase "action-motivation-action?" Simply initiating the process, will give you more energy to keep going.
6. *Timing is everything.* How does the saying go "make plans and watch the universe laugh at you?" Planning and goals are wonderful but realize that

there is an ebb and flow to everything in life and often we don't accomplish things in the manner in which we had anticipated (I experienced this in December after a sick child and a writer's block kept me from making progress on a project). Relax. Trust that everything happens for a reason and when the timing is right, everything will click into place.

7. *Be gentle with yourself.* If you're battling fears, know you are in good company. Everyone on the planet faces fears and each of us is doing the best we can to work through these. Just as you would tell a friend, "keep on trying, you're doing great, I know you're on the right track," extend the same compassion to yourself. And know you'll have easy days and challenging ones.
8. *Set yourself up to succeed.* When looking at whatever it is you want to create in your life, ask yourself "what do I need to really set me up to succeed at this endeavor?" Stock the cupboards (the emotional, physical and mental cupboards, that is). Build your energy reserves, make your self care a priority, align yourself with the right individuals/ organizations, have a clear vision for what you want.