

IS FEAR OBLIGATORY?

Translation by Achille Cattaneo/Gordon Leonard Symons

Men on Earth fear contagion, and they bring this fear to the Subtle World, where it becomes terror. Is it possible that nobody notices that they are bringing their earthly prejudices into the Subtle World?

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There are many evils that cause men to suffer, but they suffer even more from all those misfortunes and cataclysms that will never happen, but which the human being fears.

Fear is an intense, unpleasant emotion, brought about by a dangerous situation that may be current or anticipated, or imagined. The dangerous situation then causes an anxious emotional state.

Fear causes emotional closing which blocks the realization of projects and of awareness, it blocks evolution. Together with hunger it is one of the known dominant legacies of the animal kingdom. Fear can be poured onto a real object or something to which we attribute an unconscious meaning.

Fear that lasts over time, in the absence of a specific stimulus, where the danger is irrationally and exaggeratedly assessed, is pathological and is called *phobia*.

Since it applies to a defined object (for example: dirt, microbes, closed spaces, open spaces, insects and so on) of which the individual is afraid, it represents a defense mechanism against an objectless anxiety.

To some extent, fear can be helpful in preparing a defense: this is based on an appropriate assessment of a danger. It is linked to the instinct for self-preservation, it aids survival.

Usually, once the stimulus is gone, one returns to normal.

When faced with a stimulus that causes fear, an individual usually fights or flees, sometimes they become paralyzed.

One of its consequences is aggression. In this regard,

fear can take on aspects of violence: it is known that a frightened individual who is somehow prevented from escaping can become very dangerous and may attack.

Fear often takes the place of the understanding of things, indeed it often hinders or distorts it. That is, it obscures thought.

Fear gives rise to a “tunnel” vision or to a “segmented” partial perception, in which a person is blind to a large part of his sensory field.

Attention focuses solely on the elements that cause fear. Fear is not tied to reason, it is instinctive, it belongs to the history of humanity, it is common to human consciousness as a whole. But it uses your mind to find justifications: for example, the fear of strangers looks for justifications in common places, in thought forms, stereotypes, etc.

The fear of microbes and infections is justified by exaggerating the data we have and by avoiding contextualizing their meaning.

There are fears that transversally cross humanity and specific fears of a people, an ethnic group, a family, an individual, linked to the history of that people, that family, that individual.

Fears are deeply rooted in our lower unconscious from where we can bring them out with awareness.

Why is one afraid?

Because of our excessive concern for our own security which our culture presents as “external”.

We feel confident if we have a good economic position, good insurance, well-protected homes, good work, if others have a positive image of us and so on.

In reality, true security is that which is born “within us”, building itself day after day, and manifests itself with the growing ability to face different situations and difficulties.

Because of the difficulty in facing the “unknown”, what is unfamiliar to us, we often behave like animals: we must win and keep possession of the territory. Becoming aware of the many difficulties and problems we have overcome helps to strengthen this security and to form our character.

Help can come from observing and studying the new situation and agreeing to:

- a) enter into relationship avoiding closed behavior
 - b) experimenting, using discernment, to choose between the various hypotheses and solutions that come to us.
- Because of the lack of trust in our Immortal Soul that modern psychology defines as the Transpersonal Self.

There is an Evolutionary Project for each of us that guides our journey. Each difficulty is proportionate to our ability to overcome it. Addressing it we activate unexpected resources and abilities that we did not know or believed we had. After overcoming the difficulty, we often realize that we have learned a lot from our experience.

In summary, we can recognize that fear is the expression of the personality's lack of security.

You can be afraid of practically everything, it has no limits or measure.

Fear reaches very deep and is based on two fundamental needs:

- 1) The need to survive that generates the original fear of physical annihilation due to dangers such as wild beasts, diseases, accidents and famine, the fear of actually starving.
- 2) The need for self-growth without limits that generates an insatiable form of greed, which in turn causes the fear of not having enough of what we believe is fundamental for living.

If we think carefully about it, these two fears cause most of the human problems, conflicts and terrible suffering that exists in the World.

Power has always used fear to keep human beings ignorant and submissive.

It makes full use of fear, for example when it decides to declare war on another nation, which is presented as dangerous, malevolent and full of threatening intentions towards us.

Or when a certain political line has to be crossed, those in power are always unprepared and unable to solve the people's problems.

Advertising also uses fear in a certain sense when it induces us to buy something that will certainly do us good or

improve our appearance and be more pleasing to others, or will even make a physical symptom disappear.

The same goes for the media that have a frightening power of persuasion in all or almost all the matters pertaining to human life and who often use the available data in an absolutely manipulative way. They were called the "hidden persuaders", although lately they are not even very hidden, but rather obvious.

Assagioli warned us in 1934 already saying "Who in fact would eat food without caring if it is healthy or bad? Who would ingest medicines choosing them only on the basis of their more or less pleasant taste, and without taking care about their composition and their effects? Yet we continually do just that, with those medicines and those psychic poisons that are the gatherings, the shows, the readings, etc. We do this by believing that we cannot be influenced, that we are not "suggestible", but this is a wrong idea, a dangerous illusion. Even if we reject certain influences with the conscious part of us, they still operate on our unconscious. It is therefore a fundamental norm of a healthy psychic life to avoid as much as possible the harmful influences of the environment ". 1) We must keep in mind that fear is an emotion that is devastating in our consciousness and creates damage far superior to anything else, including bacteria and viruses. The more we feed fear, the more we attract what we fear.

Why?

For the simple reason that each emotion tends to produce the corresponding thoughts and physical conditions and the corresponding actions.

Fear determines a peripheral vasoconstriction, pallor, cold sweat, sometimes trembling and momentary paralysis of the internal organs.

Through a series of very complex mechanisms, highlighted by modern research of Psychoneuroendocrin-immunology (new science that groups four of them: psychology, neurology, endocrinology and immunology), these physiological events can become disease, that is, physical symptom.

There is a place in the brain where sensations, emotions, thoughts, mental images become matter.

Faced with any event in life, each of us has a personal reaction, made of thoughts, emotions, images, mental

defense mechanisms which tend to protect us, but which at the same time enhance the emotional reaction.

We make an assessment of what happened and on the basis of this we react.

The cortex and the limbic system that communicate with each other with a series of references are activated, the whole leads to the secretion of specific neurotransmitters which stimulate the hypothalamus which in turn secretes molecules that influence the pituitary gland, a very important gland that produces different types of hormones. It is precisely the place where “the spirit becomes flesh”. The pituitary gland directly influences the endocrine glands, especially the adrenals that produce a whole series of hormones and substances, including cortisol, which affect the target tissues, i.e. metabolism, the immune system, the circulatory system, etc.

But it doesn't end there.

The individual unconsciously predisposes himself to put himself in situations and to enact those behaviors that sooner or later will produce exactly what he feared. Like when we are afraid of an exam and we start to stutter and the mind becomes a “tabula rasa” so that we get the result we had feared, of being rejected.

Concluding this short paper on fear and its deleterious effects, what can we reasonably do to overcome it?

Certainly we can cultivate a positive thought, nurture trust in our natural defenses, contextualize the data that is communicated to us and think about what we feel.

In a word, we can cultivate a healthy and reasonable detachment from emotion and implement everything in our power to relax and calm the emotions, for example with breathing, meditation or prayer.

1) R. Assagioli, Lessons Course on: “The latent energies in us and their use in education and medicine” (1934)

WORDS HAVE PURPOSE

Edited by Walter Polt

Words are the guardians of meaning: They hide and reveal.

A word, silently and almost “without a word” leads to the goal it stands for. Otherwise said: every word has a potential power, and this potential is constituted by, and paradoxically also constitutes the very substance the Purpose is made of.

Before my sessions with Assagioli, no one had kindly helped me understand the processes underlying the production of speech. I did not know the cause- and-effect relationship between A) myself (the one in the driver's seat), B) how I used my psychological functions, and C) the effects (of my discourse or silence) on the outer world. So, what were the results? Idle speech? Small talk? Irritated shouting? Loving whispering? Determined command? Or indeed true affirmation of Purpose? I indiscriminately thought all of these were simply a “sincere” expression of myself.

“On the contrary” said Assagioli, “sincerity and spontaneity require real self-control in the sense ‘control by the Self’.”

How was Assagioli going to “teach” me—without making me feel guilty for my old idle habits of speech—to become conscious of the power everyone has: the capability for right speech (and therefore right thinking)? It was not obvious to me at all. Yes, I did need to learn this vital lesson.

Why? First, because if we don't have at least a little awareness of how thoughts become words, and words action (and therefore expressions of a will, of a purpose), we are in trouble: Life circumstances can lead us in circles. We're on a carousel, endlessly repeating the same mistakes. And then we are also easily manipulated. That means we cannot exercise free will. We need free will to achieve our main Life Purpose as a human being: to grow from “seed” to full “maturity”—something the vegetable kingdom illustrates perfectly.