

## 6 Strategies for Facing Fear

By Gail Sussman Miller of Inspired Choice

What aspects of marketing stir up the most fear for you entrepreneurs out there? Is it making cold calls? Writing an article? Asking for the sale? Well, for me it is speaking... *was* speaking. Now I face my fear and move through it and shift it into excitement. I end up loving every minute of holding that audience's attention and making a difference. Read on to learn my 6 strategies for facing fear.

Fear is the number one reason the solopreneur women I work with get stuck, procrastinate, avoid risks, and delay acting on bigger, more fulfilling visions for their lives. Heck, fear can stop us from even dreaming of what we really want!

My fears range from simple procrastination, like making a "cold call" or going to the doctor's office, OR it can be the gut wrenching stuff, like my fear of heights, worse as I get older... it is so visceral. In those cases, it's just easier, if possible, to avoid wall-to-wall windows like we have in the observatory on the top of Sears Tower, about 110 floors up, in Chicago. In the strategies below, as promised, I use my own fear of speaking, to share 6 strategies with you. This is one fear that I was determined to overcome so I could reach my prospects. I now get hired by at least one individual business client every time I speak. And I still get nervous (a variation on fear) before I speak in the workshops I'm currently presenting called, "How to Love Networking for Entrepreneurs."

The following strategies are in no particular order. Sometimes you'll need to try more than one. They have been road tested by me and my clients. See what works for you!

### Strategies to Face and Move through Fear

1. *Find out what the fear is behind the fear!* Even though I eventually love speaking and teaching, I sometimes feel fear about speaking to an audience I *allow* myself to judge as intimidating. Or I let myself think they know more than I do and will be critical of me. It's all a matter of perception, of course. The fear behind the fear, often the root of most performance fears, is "I'm not good enough" or "They won't like me." Identifying the true fear creates awareness, the first step in creating change.
2. *Ask, "What is REALLY true."* I love the "fear acronym" I once read, F.E.A.R. This stands for False Expectations Appearing Real. It's a great reminder that our minds think the threat is real. If I ask myself what is REALLY true, then, as with speaking, I can admit that I am good enough, know enough – maybe more than my audience. The truth is I am capable of speaking in front of *anyone* when I'm in my most confident personal power. And it's amazing how impressed audiences are. They are so willing to see you as an expert because you have gone beyond *their* fear of speaking!
3. *Play the "what if" game.* This is a close cousin to the ever popular, "what is the worst that could happen?" To play the game, ask yourself "What if my fear happens, then what? And what if THAT happens, then what?" By the time you follow this path a few times, the possible outcomes start to seem preposterous and the real risk is put into a new, less threatening, almost humorous perspective. You also start to calmly prepare for reasonable unexpected events.



4. *Make sure you are spiritually and emotionally grounded.* For each successively more challenging workshop audience or topic, I find when fear has me rattled; I am scattered and need grounding. I use deep breathing and positive present-tense affirmations to get myself centered and calm. I return to my confident state of mind by reviewing my successes and my belief in myself no matter WHAT happens. I remind myself that if only *one* person is helped in the crowd, then it was worth it.
5. *Ask for help.* Turn to someone you trust, with whom you feel safe, who you know cares about you and ask them to go with you to the event you fear; doctor's office, new singles' bar, or networking event. Before speaking, I used to have a friend attend and help me prepare. I would state my fear out loud to them. This actually releases you from its power and sometimes the shame you feel. If the fear is really strong, I've used a body/mind/spirit technique of literally handing the fear to this person. I "take" it out of my chest or stomach and place it in the palm of their hands. I ask them to throw it out of the window or put it in the trash. As my confidence and success increased, I no longer needed this help and I now have that "conversation" and symbolic fear cleansing with myself.
6. *Go to the ROAR!* Here is a great story about lions and a lesson taught to us by Mother Nature. Lions love to eat gazelle meat; however, it is very difficult for them to catch this animal because they run so fast. Instead of trying to chase their prey, a group of young lions herd the gazelles away from them. The gazelles easily outrun the lions and head off in the direction the lions have chosen, which is unknowingly towards a deep grassy area where a group of older lions are hiding. The older lions lie in wait, too old and tired to be part of the chase; many are missing teeth, and would never be able to catch their own meat. When the gazelles are driven within close range of the older lions, they jump up and ROAR loudly. Immediately, the gazelles, responding to their *perceived* fear of imminent death, turn and run in the opposite direction, right into the mouths of the young lions.

The moral is that running from your fears and not facing them can often lead you into real danger and worse outcomes. In day-to-day life, the lions lying in wait may not be life threatening, but they are often false fears. Running away may mean we remain stuck and unhappy for a long time or until we face and move through our fear. The slogan or battle cry message of this story is "Go TO the Roar!"

In summary, acknowledging and facing your fear may actually mean a better chance of survival. It is nearly always an opportunity to grow, learn, and improve your confidence and success. Fear is actually a close cousin to excitement, as with roller coasters, doing things at the last minute, driving a little too fast. The more you practice accepting, expecting and even welcoming fear, the more you increase your tolerance of risk and improve your ability to move through fear faster and more easily each time.

*Gail Sussman Miller teaches women solopreneurs how to love obstacles and overcome them with ease. She calls herself a "mid-life bloomer" Baby Boomer. After years of waiting to feel inspired, or confident, or ready, or good enough, Gail found her true passion in work, marriage, motherhood and life after the age of 44! Now she helps others do the same by getting **really** clear about what they **truly** want, reframing "yes, but" obstacle thinking, making choices and taking action. Learn more about Gail's coaching programs and "How to Love Networking" workshops and teleclasses at <http://www.inspiredchoice.com/>.*

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