# Fuck Yo Fears

Everyone feels fear, though not everyone is willing to admit it. Some people feel the effects of fear more intensely than others, while others seem to feel no fear at all. Fear sucks, and we have the Amygdala and the Hypothalamus to thank for it.

Perhaps you’ve heard of the fight-or-flight response? Well, there is also a lesser-known third response that occurs in the face of fear: \*\*Cower.\*\*

Some people fight, and some people flee…but many people just shut down. They become, quite literally, paralyzed by fear. I believe that every single one of us, at one point in time or another, has cowered in fear.

> \*“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” \*\*– Franklin D. Roosevelt\*\*\*

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Fear is one of the most powerful emotions we are capable of experiencing, and it is handled by a part of the brain that by default can overwhelm us completely. Were we simply animals, we would have no choice but to give in to our natural response to fear. But we’re more than that. We’re better, stronger…[or at least we can be](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/15/conquering-fear\_n\_3909020.html).

If your actions or inaction are dictated by fear, then you are a slave to that fear, and it becomes a part of your cage. Even worse, fear unchecked becomes a weakness that others can and will manipulate to keep you under control, sometimes on purpose, and sometimes without even thinking about it. The ones who do it without thought are the ones you really need to watch out for.

In the book \*Rich Dad, Poor Dad\*Robert Kiyosaki referred to what he calls Chicken Littles, people who constantly broadcast their fears to anyone who will listen. The odds are good that each of us has at least one Chicken Little in our lives, if not many.

I have another analogy, from my favorite movie:

\*“The Matrix is a system, Neo. That system is our enemy. But when you’re inside, you look around, what do you see? Businessmen, teachers, lawyers, carpenters. The very minds of the people we are trying to save. You have to understand, most of these people are not ready to be unplugged. Many of them are so injured, so hopelessly dependent on the system, that they will fight to protect it.”\* \*\*– Morpheus\*\*, \*The Matrix\*

It is so simple, so easy to become trapped by fear. It can and does happen to the best of us. That said, when you are fighting mightily to escape your cage, the last thing in the world that you can allow is for those who are dependent on the system to fight to keep you locked in with them. Misery, after all, loves company, and we should be far more discerning in the company we keep.

In all fairness, the people fighting to keep us locked in the cage are usually well meaning (though not always), and are often people whose opinions we trust. They’re simply afraid, both for you and for themselves. Escaping the fears of others, even well-meaning others, is complicated to say the least.

One of the most important lessons you can learn in life is to ignore detractors, and to learn to trust yourself. That doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t listen to anything anyone else has to say, but you need to take advice from others with a grain of salt or ten, and to learn to think for yourself, to weigh all options and points of view before making a decision.

“Yes, thank you, that’s all quite simple…not.”

You want actionable? OK, here goes:

# \*\*Each and every day, find a way to face one fear.\*\*

Afraid of public speaking? Volunteer to speak. Afraid of snakes? Go to a pet store and hold a snake. [Define your fears](http://www.businessinsider.com/tim-ferriss-on-exercise-to-overcome-fears-2015-4), and then face them one-by-one.

[The only way to conquer fear is to face it.](http://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/how-to-conquer-fear-4-mental-tricks.html) What is it \*\*you\*\* really have to fear?