

Phobics have nothing to fear but fear itself and fear of fear itself

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Body

I think I'm coming down with phobophobia, the **fear** of contracting some sort of debilitating phobia that would prevent me from doing my job, whatever that job might be.

I've felt this way since I discovered phobias.com, a Web site featuring a comprehensive list of phobias.

Some of the phobias I consider common. I mean, who doesn't suffer from ballistophobia, which is a **fear** of bullets? I know I do, especially when those bullets are flying through the air in random directions.

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Then there's odontophobia, a **fear** of oral surgery. I don't know anyone who jumps out of bed in the morning, grins and says, "Hooray! Today I get my root canal."

Necrophobia is a **fear** of dead bodies. I don't suffer from this, but I certainly don't like being around them. Going hand in hand, so to speak, with this is placophobia, a **fear** of tombstones. Yes! If it's mine!

True story: My wife and I own a small patch of real estate in the same cemetery where our parents and grandparents are buried, so every time we are there placing flowers on graves, that particular glimpse into my future is extremely disconcerting.

I almost expect to see a "Coming Soon" sign on the plot.

And what yahoo came up with the idea of calling it the "final resting place?" It's not as though you spend eternity there, seated in a recliner with a TV remote and a cold beer.

A **fear** of laughter is called geliophobia. I don't suffer from this, but I once worked for a boss who did. He also had a case of allodoxaphobia, which is a **fear** of opinions. Unless they were his.

I do have a touch of syngenesophobia, a **fear** of relatives. To understand this, you would have to meet my uncle.

There was a time I suffered from metrophobia, a **fear** of poetry, but that was in junior high school when my English teachers, Mrs. Moyer and Mr. Bostic, made us memorize parts of Shakespeare plays or anything by Edna St. Vincent Millay. I never understood that. In all the years since I graduated, not once has anyone asked me to recite "The quality of mercy is not strained"

Sometimes this led to didaskaleinophobia, or a **fear** of school. What saved me were my goofier teachers, such as my favorite science teacher, Tex, who would light a match to ignite the Bunsen burner, then start talking to the class, oblivious to the flame until it reached his fingers; he also accidentally smashed a tomato on his desk. Role models such as him made me the person I am today.

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Sometimes these phobia names cover more than one ailment. For example, coulrophobia, a **fear** of clowns, and politicophobia, a **fear** of politicians, are interchangeable.

Aerophobia is a **fear** of drafts. I experienced this while in college during the Vietnam War. I did not, however, suffer from aulophobia, or a **fear** of flutes.

But I did invent a new problem that I call accordiphobia, because my Polish college roommate loved polkas.

There's not a parent alive who at one time hasn't felt a tinge of pedophobia, a **fear** of children, especially at Christmas, when we also grow to dread the phrases "accessories sold separately" and "batteries not included."

On the subject of kids, one thing my boyhood friends and I didn't suffer from was hobophobia, a **fear** of hobos. Many a day we'd form pint-sized vigilante groups and scour the local railroad line looking for hobo camps; once we found them, we would throw things at the hobos. In our neighborhood, it was the hobos who suffered from pedophobia.

Athazagoraphobia is a **fear** of being ignored. I used to complain about this, but no one paid me any attention. (Badda boom!)

For most of my life, I never suffered from iatrophobia, or a **fear** of going to the doctor. However, that has changed. Since I hit 50, every time I see him, it seems the only thing he wants to do is check my prostate.

If none of these phobias makes you search the Yellow Pages for an analyst, come back next week when we look at phobias that are really bizarre. E-mail Larry at laalexander@lnpnews.com.

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