

## Putting Fear in Its Place: Diagnostic Questions

So, how do we put fear in its place? It could be helpful at this point to gather up some questions from this chapter that a person or a community could ask in a situation of fear. This is not a comprehensive list, but a starting place for reflection:

- Is the thing you fear actually present or fast-approaching? Or is it far off, either in terms of distance (like a tornado that is hundreds of miles away), time (like something that won't likely happen for years), or likelihood (like something that happens to one out of a million people)?
- Is the thing you fear really powerful and able to cause you harm? Or is it something that is generally small and harmless?
- Is the thing you fear really a threat? That is, will it really cause you to lose something you love, or does it just seem scary because it is strange?
- Are you afraid of losing something that is of real importance? Or is that "something" a thing that you shouldn't be so concerned about in the first place?
- Do you fear so much that you are closing in on yourself or unjustly lashing out at others?
- Does your fear keep you from doing things you know you should do?
- Does your fear take away the joy you feel in the presence of things you love (like your family) because you are afraid of losing them?
- Is your fear the result of someone's attempt to manipulate you? Is anyone profiting from your fearfulness (like a business getting your money, a politician getting your vote, or a religious leader getting your offering)?

At this point, I'm tempted to say something like, "If you answered yes to any of these questions, please call the number on your screen." But this is not a screen, and I am not giving you my number (yeah, you guessed it, I'm afraid of what you might do with it). Rather than leading to a free thirty day trial of a quick solution to fear, these questions, preferably answered and discussed with others, are intended to begin a process (perhaps a long one) of putting fear in its place. They are intended to help us become reflective about fear rather than just reactive to it.

... Try this test. First, think about how much you fear losing your house, your car, your savings account, or your job. Then think about how much you fear being unloving, inhospitable, selfish or impatient. Which do you fear more? Why?

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