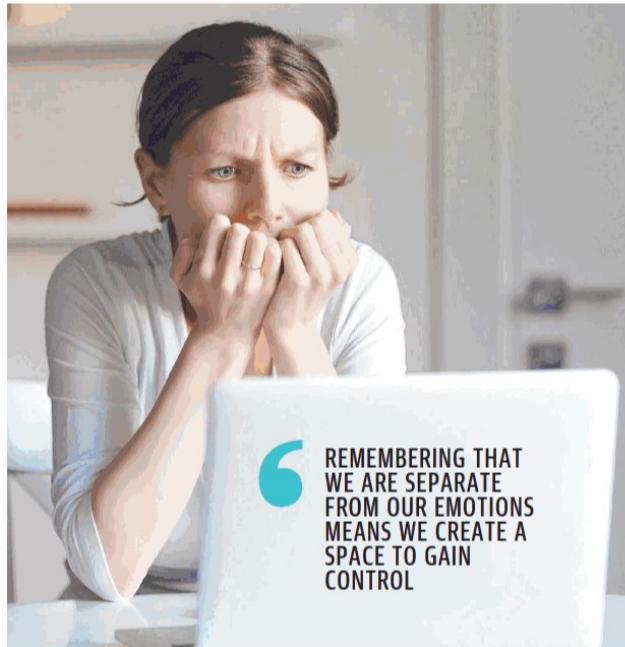


Careers

HOW TO USE FEAR IN YOUR FAVOUR



FEAR stops many workers from achieving success, whether it be speaking up in a meeting or pursuing a career change later in life. Psychologist Dr Amy Silver, author of *The Loudest Guest: How to control and change your relationship with fear*, reveals six steps to overcome this barrier.

UNDERSTAND FEAR

Ask yourself how fear makes you feel, and what it wants you to do. "Perhaps you will start to see times, situations, people, conversations, tasks where the fear voice starts to dominate and control your feelings and your actions," she says.

"Learning the patterns is essential if you are going to gain control."

ACCEPT FEAR

Fear has helped humans to survive when they have perceived something to be a threat, so accept it is a natural feeling to have.

"We are often very critical of our difficult feelings," Silver says. "We can try to shut them down, ignore them or add on a heap of other negative feelings such as shame or guilt."

"There is nothing wrong with the feeling of fear, and nothing wrong with us for having it."

SEPARATE FEAR

Fear wants to control us but we do not have to do what fear tells us to do, Silver says.

"Remembering that we are separate from our emotions means we create a space to gain control," she says. "Even the difference between 'I feel worried' rather than 'I am worried' reminds us that we are not the feeling, we are the person experiencing the feeling."

LISTEN TO FEAR

Work out the message that fear is trying to send you. Ask yourself if it is true and useful information or chatter that will hold you back.

"Is any of what fear says relevant in the past but not relevant now?" Silver says.

"Is it fair to you or those around you to listen to the fear as much as it wants us to?"

"What would someone you love say if they could hear what the fear voice is saying?"

ANALYSE FEAR

Fear may be trying to protect you but if it always had its way, you would always avoid failure, growth and change.

"We may experience thoughts about not being good enough or being rejected," Silver says. "We may worry about our performance or the way others may judge us. We may hold ourselves back, put ourselves down or become preoccupied with thoughts about failing. Behaviourally we can start to favour avoidance, preferring to pull back, keep quiet, not stand out, not tell our truth or stand up for what we think or feel."

However, fear also can push you towards unrealistic expectations, say yes instead of saying no, or trying to please others.

"Ask yourself, 'What do I want?' and 'How much does fear get in the way of that?'" Silver says. "Spend time writing about what you could do if fear was less in control and you could hear more from your courage voice."

SHIFT FEAR

"Create experiments – tiny steps you can use to evaluate, learn and refine as you progress," Silver says. "Learn how to control fear so fear doesn't control you."