

5 Ways Fear Attacks Your Soul

Do you find yourself hocking up anxiety over and over like a Guernsey regurgitating her cud?

Does worrying about the what-ifs suck the joy out of your soul?

If so, you're not alone.

My goal for my new book, *Fear, Faith, and a Fistful of Chocolate*, is to introduce a few simple but effective tools to help us find comfort, healing, power, and peace through our struggles with the often paralyzing and debilitating fears that prevent us from fulfilling Papa God's purpose for our lives.

The first step in defeating these fears is to recognize the monster hiding behind the fear mask. There are as many different fears as there are diets in this world, but for the sake of simplicity, I've grouped common fears into five basic categories, all beginning with the letter "S".

Spurting Fear: Raw, reactive emotion, not unlike blood spurting from a fresh puncture wound. This is naked emotion. The unpremeditated, gut-level, internal reaction incited by something that makes us break out in a cold sweat, quiver like a tower of Jell-O, and maybe even toss our cookies. Your reactive choices are fight, flight, freeze, or freak out. An example of spurting fear would be glimpsing a snake slither through the grass at your feet.

Saturating Fear: The invasive type of fear that often originates in childhood and permeates our adult lives in ways we don't always see. These fears, often manifested as phobias, are enmeshed within our personalities. Saturating fears are probably the hardest fears to eradicate because they soak into our personalities and become so enmeshed in the fiber of our being, we have difficulty recognizing their individual threads. An example would be an underlying fear of abandonment that pervades your adult relationships because your father

left your family when you were small.

As a side note here, saturating fears can be benign and still affect our thoughts and behaviors. An example is my hat fetish. I had no idea why I've always chosen to wear hats most of my life until an innocent comment by a childhood friend a not long ago flashed me back to a long-forgotten (I thought) humiliating incident about my messy hair in the sixth grade. Oddly enough – or not – it was about that time I bought my first hat.

Ah ha.

Hats, of course, are neither good nor bad, but it was quite enlightening to finally understand the root of one of my seemingly random long-standing behaviors.

Savory Fear: The delicious thrill elicited by a specific, controlled thing or event. This is an intentional, emotion-driven temporary fear that we subject ourselves to because we know there's no real danger (or damage) involved. It's fear within the parameters of our safety zones, like riding roller coasters, driving fast, or entering a House of Horrors.

Simmering Fear: The fear of the unknown, of things we've never experienced but have developed an underlying dread of based on other people's experience and our own speculation. Simmering fears include fear of the future, dependency on others, loss of employment or possessions, and the great unknown, death. The what-if's, my own personal nemesis that loves to keep me awake at night, also falls in this category.

Sovereign Fear: Born of respect, this is the subjection under which we willingly place ourselves to those in authority, such as our parents, teachers, pastor, bosses, spouse, and above all, our Creator. Did you know there are over 100 scriptures advising us to "fear God" Oh, not in the sphincter-pucker sense, but through awe and respect due to the sovereign, powerful, almighty Commander of our universe.

Regardless of what category your specific fear monster falls

into, naming it, confronting it, and boldly yanking off its mask is the only way to defuse its power over you. Because tolerating our fear monsters only makes 'em growl louder.

Which fear monsters are currently stalking you?

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