



The Monthly LOVELetter

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NOTHING TO FEAR...

But fear itself, is what one of our most beloved former presidents once told us. On the brink, and in the depth of The Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt—a man the citizenry, and even his closest advisors, may not have known well outside of his buoyant, affable wit—wanted to reassure his nation. After winning the election in 1932 against Herbert Hoover, Roosevelt knew his fellow Americans were struggling, were afraid to face the future if it looked as bleak as the present felt.

Sound familiar?

Fear is a natural human instinct, some psychologists and biologists will say it is our most basic human instinct—alongside love or anger. It protects us; it makes us cautious and careful. But, in a world where we don't (rather, we shouldn't have to, but people keep proving this wrong) fear what awaits us right outside our door—like the pio-

neers who settled the West might have—fear can hold us back. Fear, irrational and given free rein, can keep us from pursuing our dreams. FDR wanted his fellow Americans to dream of a brighter future; he understood that he needed to support them in standing up against the “nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror” that trapped them, that kept them from “convert[ing] retreat into advance.” He knew that coming together, supporting each other in the face of utter collapse would be the act that turned that Depression on its ear. He needed them to hope again.

Hope is not a natural human instinct. It needs to be cultivated with a sense of discovery and bravery. With a knowledge of those who discovered and led with their courage before us: “Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for.”

We still have so much to be thankful for. Gratitude will put a cluster of stars in your hand to guide you through the dark of the loneliest night. But gratitude isn't always easy to muster when your first reaction is fear, disgust, or doubt. Gratitude can't be empty platitudes, though, or words landing on deaf ears. “There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.” Show your gratitude—like the children's gospel song says, “Let your little light shine / Hide it under a bushel, no!” Acting in and through your gratitude is the only real way to face your fears, to face your demons, build your confidence, and pursue your dreams. The only thing we have to fear is the fear against carrying on when it feels like that is the very last thing we can do.

FDR First Inaugural Address quotes source: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5057/>



“Light at the End” by MeliSwenk (2008)

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GIVE SELF CONFIDENCE

Today it feels like the whole world can see what you're doing, even if you're just eating lunch or if you're considering starting a new company. With the Internet's propensity to create viral sensations, and the world's obsession with image and celebrity, it can feel like all eyes are on you before SELF can even begin. There are people who shine under such conditions. Others will sense the glare and instinctually cower from the potential burn of the limelight.

When you are faced with the potential of failure, even if it isn't on the grand global stage, how can SELF boost the confidence to carry on in the face of fear? The dream can feel too big, the stakes too high. "If I fail, I'll lose my job"; "If they laugh at me, I'll just die"; "If I pursue this, I'll never make enough money to live"; "I just can't do this right now because everyone is relying on me." How do we combat the inner instinct that knocks SELF off the path to success before we even take the first step?

By realizing that we are always in control of SELF: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We can change the stream of thoughts we hear day in and day out in our heads. Your mind can often work against SELF, sending out fear vibes as soon as an obstacle appears or when the idea of a dream brings us too much joy. We fear losing that joy or the potential that our dream won't be as we imagine it once we begin pursuing it. We're afraid that this one obstacle will dismantle everything we've constructed so far.

But, as Jonathan Larson wrote in the song "La Vie Boheme" from the musical *Rent: The opposite of war isn't peace, it's creation*. Sometimes, everything you've built needs to be knocked down in order to make space for the great stuff that's about to come. Sure, it's easier to say than to embrace, but fearing destruction is like

being afraid of getting your suit wet at the pool. You know it's going to happen, and you're pretty sure you're going to have a good time afterward. Why not send fear to the wind and have some confidence in SELF?

You didn't always fail; that's the first thing you have to admit to SELF. There are things you've succeeded at; otherwise, you probably wouldn't be here reading this right now. When you think of your dream, even the destruction it may cause, and the good time you'll have pursuing it, think about your past successes and let that be just one of the things that propel SELF down the path to pure peace and happiness.

Here are five ways to begin cultivating SELF's sense of confidence:

- ◇ **Embrace, then shift negative thoughts.** When we make a mistake, SELF is the first to acknowledge it and then seems to become our own worst enemy. SELF never forgets, and rarely seems to forgive. When you trip up the stairs at a company luncheon, go ahead and mentally slap your forehead. It makes you look silly for a second, but don't go out of your way to avoid stairs at every other luncheon for the rest of your tenure at that company because of that one slip. Admitting defeat once does not mean SELF gets to belabor the point; give yourself a chance at redemption and see bullet point number one.
- ◇ **Be you, flaws and all.** Unapologetically. This can be a struggle for someone living in an environment where they face external threats for doing just that. Keep in mind that your way of living life may offend others, and to say that other people's thoughts are none of your business can seem flip when people go out of their way to make their thoughts and opinions your business. It takes courage to stand up and be who you are, but the more people who have that courage, who pursue in that kind of bravery, the implication is that there will be fewer people who stand up to take offense. Be brave. Stand up. Be you.
- ◇ **Give SELF a pep talk.** Practice positive self-talk, even when it feels like all you can do mess things up. We all make mistakes; only God is perfect, and while trying to achieve that goal is admirable, it cannot be all-consuming. It is not the end all, be all to living a functional, effective, and inspiring life. That's actually all tied up in how you face those mistakes and then learn from them.
- ◇ **Stand up straight.** Literally, change the way you carry yourself. Body language speaks universally, and how you move your body, how you sit, how you stand among your peers will reflect how you feel about SELF. Stand up straight, sit up from your hips and roll your shoulders back. Even pull yourself away from the back of the seat if it tempts you to lose your posture. Being the image of strength and resilience will generate an emotional ripple effect.
- ◇ **Do what scares SELF.** Public speaking. Pursuing music or writing or art or medical school when your entire family is made up of lawyers. Maybe you're afraid of settling down and getting married. Maybe you're afraid of going into business for yourself, opening that restaurant or boutique store front art gallery. Fear makes you hesitate, makes you think and plan to prevent the outcome that would "doom" SELF. Use that very instinct to your advantage and go for your dream, whatever it is.

MAKE BOSS'S DAY A GOAL

Besides Halloween, October is home to the Boss's Day holiday. Annually, it is celebrated on October 16, unless it falls on a weekend, which then the closest working day—Monday through Friday, of course—is employed to observe the office holiday.

In the late 1950s, Patricia Bays Haroski was working at a State Farm Insurance office in Deerfield, Illinois. So moved by the qualities held by her boss, she chose to approach the US Chamber of Commerce to register the annual holiday, celebrating managers and business owners for the effort they expend to support their employees. She chose October 16 as the celebratory date because it was her father's birthday, and he just happened to be her boss at that Midwest insurance office. Though she submitted the application in 1958, the holiday was not acknowledged nationally until 1962. Hallmark didn't honor it with its own greeting card until 17 years later. Now, it is acknowledged globally in countries as far away as Australia and South Africa.

Though, there's been some backlash recently—in light of the income gap between management/administrative and lower level employees—the holiday is intended to generate positive and strong interpersonal relationships among people who work together regularly and want to reach common goals. Soliciting appreciation, especially from the lower tier employees toward those "in power" over them, can seem hokey or inappropriately "forced" when money collections are sought. When employees feel like their dollars are already stretched far enough, and it seems like CEOs and even immediate supervisors are getting paid for doing nothing, chipping in for even a balloon in appreciation of someone who doesn't seem to appreciate you feels like adding insult to injury.

If that last bit feels like SELF's current situation, consider making next year's Boss's Day a goal, a finish line. If you're chipping in for gift cards, balloons, or even a piece of candy for a boss who isn't working for you, consider going to work for SELF. We discussed last month just a couple ways for you to begin pursuing your dreams professionally, and those can be the building blocks toward being celebrated next year by the people you choose to help you achieve your dreams! So, make next year's Boss's Day the deadline for meeting your work-for-SELF goals.

"Once you become fearless
Life becomes limitless."
-Unknown



Cleopatra will Tranquilize Your Fear

Aromatic mix of European Sea & Epsom salts features Eucalyptus & Lemongrass Essential Oils combined with delicate Dried Peonies for a soothing bath blend.

BUILDING EMOTIONAL MUSCLE

Facing SELF's Demons

To build upon last month's concept of Emotional Intelligence, emotional awareness and knowledge can act like a double-edged sword. Being more aware means a couple of different things: responsibility, action, and forgiveness. Taking the courageous steps to being more self-aware leaves you with new information and the need to make it work in your current, day-to-day life; this means, then, having to take responsibility for your ignorance, take action to no longer be ignorant, and then being compassionate enough to forgive SELF for what you've done in ignorance. The pain from stretching your awareness will make you hyperaware of how that pain of stretching will affect others. That is Emotional Intelligence, and as Stan Lee tells us via *Spiderman's* Peter Parker—with power comes responsibility. Not just to others, though, but to SELF as well.

We are only human; we will make mistakes. We all start out in ignorance and we have to grow through that. Usually after sustaining cases of emotional abuse, mental strain, and spiritual pain. Growing through that ignorance also means that we may inflict pain on others, even on ourselves, simply because we did not know any better. That reason will only work once, though, because after that first pain—either yours or someone else's—you need to face SELF and change

your behavior, if not your perspective and established thought patterns. That kind of change stimulates all shades of fear: anxiety, worry, depression.

It sucks to realize that you've done something wrong. It sucks even more to realize what you've done wrong might have hurt someone else. What's worst? Willfully inflicting pain on others to achieve feelings of vengeance or comeuppance. While it sounds petty from an outsider's perspective, in the moment, in the very moment of that anguish, all we want is to make that person feel the pain we're feeling. If someone can treat SELF like dirt, like you have no worth, why shouldn't SELF lash out like that?

It takes courage to answer that question with, "Because it puts SELF on their level."

Don't perpetuate what you hate, what makes you feel pain. Facing SELF's demons, your dark side, is no easy feat. To borrow another pop culture reference, facing your demon—your fear, your anger, your hate, etc.—might feel a lot like fighting your own father, as you discover he's been the enemy you've been facing since you joined your cause for freedom. Like you're fighting yourself, or the deepest, most hidden part of yourself.

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Mindful Minute: Fearless SELF

What does being fearless mean to you? Is it carrying a shield and sword? Is it standing up to a bully? Is it speaking out when you see something bad or wrong happening? Being fearless is all of those things and then some. Even when it isn't such a grand gesture. Sometimes being fearless is just pulling yourself out of bed when SELF can't see a reason why. Sometimes facing your demons is as simple as looking in the mirror and embracing the mistakes you made at work yesterday, or admitting that you put your foot in your mouth during a family dinner. To be a more fearless SELF takes the bravery to stand up, the courage to admit your mistakes, and the willingness to accept responsibility for SELF, even in your worst moments.

Here are five things to remember to be a more fearless SELF:

- <3 iMatter!
- <3 God gives you what SELF can handle.
- <3 I am worthy of love...Just because.
- <3 I can act in the face of fear or doubt.
- <3 Worrying for tomorrow robs SELF of today's joy.

Lovin Self without fear brings inner peace!

Contact Us

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No one wants to admit they messed up. No one likes to feel angry. No one likes to feel sad. These things can feel like demons, but they are the very emotions that make us human. More importantly, they can make us humane, because the more willing we are to embrace what makes us dark, the brighter we can make the parts that light up SELF's world. Numbing the weight of the darkness with avoidance tendencies like substance abuse, hyper-exercising, or "diving into" work, dims your ability to shine after surviving the pain. Remember, your ignorance and the pain from growth are only temporary, and as temporary as you make it.

Once you embrace your darkness as an integral part of your humanity, you then claim control over it. You'll own a deeper sense of understanding SELF and you can then move more comfortably through the world.

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