

THE BIG IDEAS

Life-Changing Gifts

Another way to look at problems.

Challenge Fear Thoughts

Always.

Focusing on the Big Get

Is a recipe for fear. Shift to giving.

Something Masterful

Create it!

Tectonic Shifts

Occur when we embrace failure.

Be Someone Else

To do what you fear.

Your Own Line

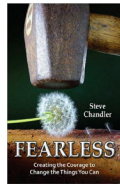
Move to the front.

The Disciplined

Shall inherit the earth.

The Secret of Life

Doing things. :)



Fearless

Creating the Courage to Change the Things You Can

BY STEVE CHANDLER · ROBERT REED PUBLISHERS © 2008 · 160 PAGES

“Courage is all any of my clients have ever wanted, too. Though they call it a million different things. Courage is always what is missing. (For example, even the solution to the time management problem is the introduction of boldness.) In all quests for success, what people really want to be is fearless. So I’ll tell you how I get them there.”

~ Steve Chandler from *Fearless*

[Steve Chandler](#) is a funny guy.

And, he’s brilliant.

I really like that combo. :)

We have Notes on two of his other great books: [100 Ways to Motivate Yourself](#) + [Time Warrior](#).

All of Steve’s books are quick-reading, wisdom-packed gems that will make you laugh as you get your wisdom on. I highly recommend them!

[Fearless](#) is packed with Big Ideas on—you guessed it!—how to eliminate fear from our lives. It’s fantastic.

Let’s have some fun taking a quick peek at a few of my favorites!

LIFE-CHANGING GIFTS

“That’s the fascinating thing about problems. When taken on, they are life-changing gifts. Once we can do the mind shift (from paranoid mode to creative mode) necessary to see them for what they are, all problems become advanced seminars in *What I Now Need to Learn to Advance on this Spiritual Journey Up the Ladder of Consciousness to Some Real Fun and Good Mischief* and a condition we’ve all heard described as fearless.”

That’s hilarious.

And wise.

First: Problems. We need to approach them as life-changing gifts.

How?

By moving from *paranoid* mode to *creative* mode. (Hah. :)

Then what happens?

As Steve so wonderfully says: “*All problems become advanced seminars in What I Now Need to Learn to Advance on this Spiritual Journey Up the Ladder of Consciousness to Some Real Fun and Good Mischief and a condition we’ve all heard described as fearless.*”

Me likes.

How can you work this formula with your current problems? :)

“Every feeling—especially fear—begins with a thought. And every thought causes a feeling. Nothing else can cause a feeling.”

~ Steve Chandler

"So rather than feeling the fear and doing it anyway-how about feeling the fear and looking for the thought that causes it?"

~ Steve Chandler

CHALLENGE THE FEAR THOUGHTS

"Thoughts create fear. Thoughts create feelings. Yet most people don't experience it that way. Most people experience feelings being created by external events, and other people. And the future hiding under the bed. So whenever I find a fear underneath something, I want to write the thought down behind that fear. I want to challenge the thought, and challenge it, and challenge it, as if I were an attorney in a very important case—challenging a witness. Because that thought is going to turn out to not be true. Try it and you'll find this out."

I love that.

First: Fear doesn't just jump out of the closet and scare the daylights out of us.

Thoughts create fear.

If we want to get rid of the fear (and the icky feelings that come along for the ride) we need to CHALLENGE those thoughts.

And challenge them some more. Then challenge them some more.

This is the essence of sound psychological functioning.

Here's how [Albert Ellis](#), one of the godfathers of the cognitive behavioral movement puts it in his classic book, [A Guide to Rational Living](#) (see Notes): "A discussion of the roots of neurosis is mainly a discussion of distorted thinking. From the point of view of mind/brain as computer, most human beings are innately poor programmers. They seldom succeed in setting themselves up to get along very happily in an imperfect world. Neurotics are especially bad at it. Although irrational behavior is sometimes due to faulty "hardware," such as neurological impairment, it is also due to faulty "software," to self-created, self-defeating Irrational Beliefs."

In [The How of Happiness](#) (see Notes), [Sonja Lyubomirsky](#) tells us: "Write down your barrier thoughts, and then consider ways to reinterpret the situation. In the process, ask yourself questions like... What else could this situation or experience mean? Can anything good come from it? Does it present any opportunities for me? What lessons can I learn and apply to the future? Did I develop any strengths as a result?"

And I love how Steve puts it in another one of his great books we profile called [100 Ways to Motivate Yourself](#) (see Notes) where he tells us: "Start to argue against your first line of reasoning. Pretend you're an attorney whose job is to prove the pessimist in you wrong. Start off on building your case for what's possible. You'll surprise yourself. Optimism is by nature expansive—it opens door after door to what's possible. Pessimism is just the opposite—it is constrictive. It shuts the door on possibility. If you really want to open up your life and motivate yourself to succeed, become an optimistic thinker."

As we discuss all the time throughout these Notes, we've gotta assume more control of our thoughts and only let the good ones hang around!

What thoughts do you have that need to be challenged?!

Get on that! :)

FOCUSING ON THE BIG GET (IS A RECIPE FOR FEAR)

"Most people focus on the big get. They want to know what their efforts will get them. But the final truth is surprising: life focused on what you're going to get is always less abundant than life focused on what you can give. Because the one (giving) requires creativity and courage, while the other (getting) is just another form of fear."

Wow.

"When I'm upset, I'm upset by thoughts (just passing thoughts) about how my life should be versus how it really is."

~ Steve Chandler

Where are YOU focusing your energy?

If you're stressed/anxious/fearful right now, odds are you're focusing more on what you're going to get (or fail to get) and not focused enough on what you can GIVE.

Switch that around and see how you feel!!!

So...

How can you give more in your life today?!

While you get to work on that, here's another way to make the get-to-give switch:

FOCUS ON CREATING SOMETHING MASTERFUL

"You can now focus on creating great things that serve others profoundly. Stay on that and money won't be a problem... There's always enough. It's always unlimited. Focus on creating something masterful and you cannot be afraid. The two can't coexist."

Stressed about money?

Focus on creating something masterful.

As Steve advises, fear and that focus simply can't coexist together.

Don't believe him?

Try it. :)

P.S. Here's how [Wayne Dyer](#) puts it in [Real Magic](#) (see Notes): *"When you are able to shift your inner awareness to how you can serve others, and when you make this the central focus of your life, you will then be in a position to know true miracles in your progress toward prosperity."*

TECTONIC SHIFTS

"James Barrie identifies a deeply profound mind shift when he says, "We are all of us failures—at least, the best of us are." It's a tectonic shift to think the best of us fail and the worst of us have never failed at anything."

Wow again.

—> *"We're all of us failures—at least, the best of us are."*

It is, in fact, a tectonic shift to think that the best of us fail and the worst of us have never failed at anything.

Forgive yourself for your shortcomings and failures and let's make the shift!

P.S. Remember T.S. Eliot's gem: *"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."*

BE SOMEONE ELSE

"When I tried to explain why I wasn't doing something that had to be done I would say, "Well, I'm not good at it" or I'd say "I'm scared about it" and he would sit back and think. Then he would say, "Well then, don't be you." I would look puzzled, and he would continue, "Be someone else; someone other than you. Someone else entirely who is doing it. Be Brando or be DeNiro or be someone who could do it." Now, this sounded really bizarre. Like I'm going to be a total phony? Then I thought to myself, Well, you are anyway ... so you might as well be a phony who can get something done. Being the person who can't do it is being even more phony because you're pretending you're incapable. Why not make up someone who would serve you instead of

"If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to. If you aren't afraid of dying, there is nothing you can't achieve."

~ Lao tzu

feeling like you're stuck in someone who does not?"

This is another funny (and brilliant!) one. :)

Who could YOU become to fearlessly deal with whatever's stressing you out right now?

As Steve suggests: *"Why not make up someone who would serve you instead of feeling like you're stuck in someone who does not?"*

This "other" person can be someone you admire or it can even be the ideal version of YOU.

In his great book, *Rethinking Depression* (see Notes), [Eric Maisel](#) tells us that one of the most powerful ways to create meaning and take effective action in our lives is to ask ourselves *"What would the person I would like to be do in this moment?"*

That's become a guiding mantra for me lately.

Along with another question from Eric: *"How can you make yourself proud?"*

I just love those questions.

So, whether you imagine acting as if you're an entirely different person or just the ideal version of you, have some fun breaking out of your bonds of fear and rock it! :)

MOVE TO THE FRONT OF YOUR OWN LINE

"Your life has capsized. It's now upside down. You are giving your most important activity (creating your life) the least attention and respect of all the things you do. Your own well-being is at the bottom of the list. Of all the people waiting to see you next week, you yourself are at the end of the line. You'll never meet with you because the line is too long."

If your life isn't quite going the way you'd like, check in and see where you are in your own line of people waiting to see you next week!

Just like the parent needs to put the oxygen mask on their face first to best serve their kids, we need to make sure we're taking care of ourselves.

ESPECIALLY when our lives have capsized and we're upside down!!!

I repeat: ESPECIALLY when our lives have capsized and we're upside down.

Here's how [Carol Dweck](#), a Stanford professor and one of the world's leading experts on motivation puts it in her great book, *Mindset* (see Notes): *"How do you act when you feel depressed? Do you work harder at things in your life or do you let them go? Next time you feel low, put yourself in a growth mindset—think about learning, challenging, confronting obstacles. Think about effort as a positive, constructive force, not as a big drag. Try it out."*

She continues: *"It would be nice if this didn't happen, but it's irrelevant. It might be easier to mobilize for action if I felt better but it doesn't matter. The plan is the plan. Remember the depressed students with the growth mindset? The worse they felt, the more they did the constructive thing. The less they felt like it, the more they made themselves do it. The critical thing is to make a concrete, growth-oriented plan, and to stick to it."*

Personally, when I'm feeling the stress gremlins start to rally, I (usually!) take the time to step back and look at what I'm NOT doing that I need to be doing.

And, I commit to *really* rockin' whatever blissipline I've identified that might have slipped.

[Tim Sanders](#) touches on this in *Today We Are Rich* (see Notes + Class). Context: Tim's coaching a friend of his, Eric, whose life has capsized. Tim asks him: *"What are you not doing today that you were doing when I first met you?"* *"I'm not sure what you mean,"* Eric said, laughing nervously. *"What investments in yourself and others are you no longer making?"* I asked.

"There is one thing in this world you must never forget to do. Human beings come into this world to do particular work. That work is their purpose, and each is specific to the person. If you forget everything else and not this, there's nothing to worry about. If you remember everything else and forget your true work, then you will have done nothing with your life."

~ Rumi

"What daily or weekly practices for a better you have fallen by the wayside?"

So, if you're struggling (or just want to turn it up a notch or ten), I ask you: What are you NOT doing today that were doing when you were *most* on fire with your life? What daily or weekly practices have fallen by the wayside?

Now a good time to get on that? :)

THE DISCIPLINED SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

"Some feel that fear is okay as a lifestyle because they've heard that the meek shall inherit the earth. So they can go on with being meek as a way of life. They become soft-spoken and compliant, never standing for themselves; always resigned to being a fluffy doormat. But scholars now say that in the scriptural texts that were translated from the Greek, the word *praos* doesn't exactly mean "meek" as people have always thought. In fact, it is more accurate to say it means "disciplined." A very big difference in those translations. It's much more encouraging to now realize that the disciplined shall inherit the earth."

That's a pretty big difference. :)

Imagine that.

The *disciplined* shall inherit the earth.

I like it.

And, in the process, the disciplined shall also inherit heaven on earth as there's no faster way to experience joy than to live in integrity with our highest values and close the gap between what we're capable of doing in any given moment and what we're actually doing.

As we've discussed many times, the Greeks called this "*areté*." Living with *areté* or virtue/excellence/expressing your highest potential was the route to true, sustainable flourishing and happiness.

So...

Let's get our discipline on and inherit heaven AND earth, shall we? :)

P.S. Discipline is synonymous with "willpower" which scientists tell us is THE most important virtue. Here's a peek at some great wisdom nuggets:

In [The Power of Habit](#) (see notes), [Charles Duhigg](#) tells us: "*Dozens of studies show that willpower is the single most important keystone habit for individual success.*"

In [Willpower](#) (see Notes), [Roy Baumeister](#) (one of the world's most cited psychologists) tells us: "*Improving willpower is the surest way to a better life.*"

And, in [The Willpower Instinct](#), Stanford professor [Kelly McGonigal](#) tells us: "*We may all have been born with the capacity for willpower, but some of us use it more than others. People who have better control of their attention, emotions, and actions are better off almost any way you look at it. They are happier and healthier. Their relationships are more satisfying and last longer. They make more money and go further in their careers. They are better able to manage stress, deal with conflict, and overcome adversity. They even live longer. When pit against other virtues, willpower comes out on top. Self-control is a better predictor of academic success than intelligence (take that, SATs), a stronger determinant of effective leadership than charisma (sorry, Tony Robbins), and more important for marital bliss than empathy (yes, the secret to lasting marriage may be learning how to keep your mouth shut). If we want to improve our lives, willpower is not a bad place to start.*"

P.P.S. This all begs the question: How can YOU get your discipline/willpower on today?

THE SECRET OF LIFE: DOING THINGS

"All hopes and wishes are born of fear. They are a clinging to an imaginary 'better' condition than this. Why just hope and dream? Work now. This is all you need. This gentle fearless moment right now."

~ Steve Chandler

"Sometimes the secret of life comes down to bold, creative moves. In the mind and in the world. And maybe a truly fearless life doesn't take a lot of accumulated wisdom. It might simply be reflected in what Southwest Airlines' brilliant founder Herb Kelleher used to say: "Yes, we have a 'strategic plan.' It's called 'doing things.'"

That's funny.

It's REALLY easy to get all wrapped up in a pretty knot of ideas and fancy plans.

Sometimes it makes a lot more sense to cut through all that and just get to work.

How about we let go of our fears and doubts and worries and lean into the strategic plan known as "doing things" a little more today (and tomorrow and... :)?

Here's to being fearless and giving our gifts to our families and world, my friend.

B

Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

P.S. "You will notice something. When you plugged in to the present moment—when you're right here loving and thriving in the now—there's no more worry or anger. Some would use the word fearless to describe how that feels."

If you liked this Note,
you'll probably like...

[Time Warrior](#)

[100 Ways to Motivate Yourself](#)

[The How of Happiness](#)

[A Guide to Rational Living](#)

About the Author of "Fearless"

STEVE CHANDLER



Steve Chandler is the author of 16 popular books translated into 20+ languages, and a highly sought-after keynote speaker; he has been called by PBS, "an insane combination of Jerry Seinfeld and Anthony Robbins." A life coach/corporate trainer, Steve has worked with 20+ Fortune 500 companies, has a degree in Creative Writing and Political Science, and spent four years in the U.S. Army in Psychological Warfare. (from Barnes & Noble)

About the Author of This Note

BRIAN JOHNSON



Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at brianjohnson.me.