

FEAR RE-VISITED

Rashel is my social network marketing consultant. Out of the blue, she suggested that I do an article on fear. I followed her suggestion simply because I had not come up with a topic that I was really interested in writing about. To be quite honest, it sounded easy because fear is a topic that I discuss on a daily basis with the families I see. I am in the middle of teaching Beyond Consequences Parent Training. This is a ten week course. Therefore, I'm being challenged to help these families identify their own fears. Many times this is not an easy task because we are so resistant to admitting that we are afraid. I encountered this when I met Bryan Post for the first time in 2003. We can resist that information in our brains but that is only the first step. Understanding any new concept is a process. It is a process because our own emotional experiences tell us differently. It takes a paradigm shift in our belief system. We are conditioned to not experience fear. Fear is not an acceptable emotion in our society. Men are supposed to be strong and not show emotions. Women are perceived as weak and unable to take care of themselves. We live in an emotionally suppressed and emotionally phobic society. It takes a lot of courage to express our true feelings, especially fear. My process with this paradigm shift continues as I become more self aware. New challenges give u opportunities to continue to shift our paradigms.

It is helpful to understand how our brain processes information. I hired Rashel as a consultant somewhat out of fear. I became very overwhelmed with how to use social network marketing. I understood the concept. However, putting it into practice was very challenging. Everything I read caused stress. Bruce Perry says that every new stimulus is coded by the brain as being not safe until it is deemed otherwise. My brain was being bombarded with all kinds of new stimuli (information). I couldn't make sense out of it. It seemed like the harder I tried, the worse it got. Therefore I stayed in a dys-regulated state around social network marketing. I hired Rashel out of my fear. I needed someone to help me stay regulated. My negative behavior manifested itself in confusion, self doubt, and uncertainty. It was through the processing of my fears that I eventually became regulated. There was no real or even a perceived threat to me physically. Nothing bad was going to happen if I never Facebooked or never Tweeted. Simply put, I was over simulated by unfamiliar information and became fearful. The information itself was totally benign. It could not hurt me. However, my reality at the time was that I was experiencing stress caused by underlying fear.

How does this apply to parenting? How does this help parent a child with challenging behaviors? Let's start with two basic principles from Bryan Post's [Stress Model](#). Principle #1: All behaviors arise from a state of stress. Principle #2: There are only two primary emotions - love and fear. The stress model tells us that we need to move from a place of fear to a place of love to help our children heal. By calming the stress through love, we help our children extinguish their negative, challenging behaviors. Bruce Perry says that optimal functioning occurs when a person is regulated, i.e. being in a state of love. Fear blocks us from being in a regulated state or a state of love. I believe the spiritual basis for these principles are found in Genesis 1:1-5. In the garden, there was perfect love. There was peace, happiness, and joy. Then sin entered and the fall of man. When Adam and Eve were hiding, God was looking for them.

God asked them where they were. They answered that they were hiding because they were afraid. A word search in the NIV reveals that love is mentioned 697 times and fear is mentioned 326 times. This is another clue that love and fear are the two basic emotions. The only other feeling word I searched for was anger. It is mentioned 270 times. Anger is an emotion that alerts us to the fact that something is wrong or that we are in danger. I don't believe it's too hard to realize that underneath our anger is the basic emotion of fear.

Staying regulated is extremely challenging because we live in such a stressful and chaotic world. That can put us in a state of dys-regulation. Our children are very sensitive to our emotional states. Their brains are highly sensitive to stress. Their brains do not have the regulatory ability to calm their own stress. The stress then bounces back and forth between the parent and the child. A negative neurological feedback loop is developed. It is the parent's responsibility to interrupt this neurological feedback loop. If it is not interrupted with love, the loop will become a conditioned response between the parent and child. As a parent and adoptive parent, I know how challenging this can be. As we become emotionally safe, our children will be drawn to us. This is how God draws us near to him. He is always there. He is always safe. When we connect vertically with our Father in Heaven, we become regulated. God's peace and love helps us get to a place to be able to step into the love that is available. We can then step into this with our children. We can then provide a safe emotional base to help our children functional at their optimal level. They learn, grow, and heal just like we do when connected to our Father.

My other [articles](#) and [newsletters](#) on fear are available to you as a free resource. My book, Christian Parent Wisdom is an excellent resource that combines stress model principles with scriptures in a daily meditation format. Buy Christian Parent Wisdom at <http://bit.ly/mVZggY> and receive a FREE 30 minute consult with me when you mention that heard about this FREE offer though this September Love in Action Newsletter on your order.

Follow my bi-weekly October blogs at Ken Thom [BlogSpot](#) or [Christian Prayer Group](#) to gain more understanding of fear and how to step into love.

In Christ,

Ken Thom, LPC