

Fear: A Little Fear Is a Good Thing

In yoga, we say that **a little fear is a good thing**.

I was reminded of this while watching *Free Solo*, the documentary about Alex Honnold — the climber who scaled El Capitan with no ropes, no gear, nothing but hands and feet.

The entire time, I was terrified — terrified *for him*.

He made it, of course, unharmed and triumphant. But what fascinated scientists was how little fear he felt. When they studied his brain, they discovered his amygdala — the fear center — was almost completely inactive.

That fear center helps keep us safe... but it can also **paralyze us**.

The Freeze of Fear

When fear takes hold, we begin to doubt ourselves. We second-guess the next move, even when it's small. It's what some call *analysis paralysis*.

And while most of us aren't clinging to the face of El Capitan, fear can make **everyday life** feel just as precarious — the next step feeling as critical as a climber's handhold.

The First Step: Movement

One of the simplest antidotes to fear is **motion**.

When we move — even gently — the body signals the mind that it's okay to act, to breathe, to live.

In yoga therapy, we start small. We honor the body as our guide.

A mindful breath, a shift of weight, a stretch of the spine — each movement whispers to the mind: *you are safe*.

Because fear lives in the body, and is ruled by the mind, our **counterbalance** is mindful movement and conscious breath. This week, we'll explore exactly that.

Reduction, Not Elimination

I use the word *reduction* intentionally.

When you take a sweet berry and warm it over a gentle flame, you reduce it — burn off impurities until what remains is pure essence.

The same is true of fear. We don't want to eliminate it.

We want to **distill it** — to keep its wisdom, its alertness, its spark.

In Sanskrit, this is called **bhaya-ānaka** — *a little fear*.

That spark keeps the nervous system awake, responsive, alive to what feels right or wrong. From that awareness, our movements become **intuitive** and **body-directed**.

From Fear to Flow

As always in The Emotional Driver Temple, we begin by *embracing* what we feel — not judging it, not fighting it.

We acknowledge: *I feel something*.

We ask: *What is its quality? Where do I feel it? How does it move?*

Then, through practice — through breath, awareness, and motion — we reduce it to its essence: the wisdom that informs our life.

Whether it's **anger, fear, or grief**, these emotions are not enemies. They are *teachers*.

Let's get moving.

Let's reduce fear to its purest note — and let that note become the song that guides us forward.

Closing Smile

As we learn what fear can teach us, may neither you nor I attempt something outside our true ability.

A little fear is a good thing — but let's leave the free-soloing to the professionals.

Go Alex Honnold. 🧡