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Philippos Aristotelous

Business Strategist, Author, Coach,
Consultant, Philarist.com

Fear is always linked to future related narratives, predictions and stories habitually woven by our minds to help us remain properly oriented when navigating the uncertain terrains of life:

- **What will happen to me at work if I lose this important client?**
- **How bad will I feel if I fail to get a bonus at the end of the year?**
- **Will I manage to keep my composure during my appraisal meeting tomorrow?**
- **Will I be able to deliver my speech at the upcoming conference without blacking out?**

Our minds constantly strive to interpret, predict and narrate reality so as to help us maintain our sense of control.

Our ability to control our fear is closely linked to the degree of our preparedness and familiarity in relation to a situation:

1. The less information, data and facts we possess relevant to the situation, the more assumptions will be woven by our minds so as to fill in gaps, connect dots and produce (often flawed) predictions on how a situation is likely to play out or unfold.
2. The more extensive the web of assumptions we subconsciously employ to address unknown aspects of a situation, the more fearful, uncertain and tensed we become.
3. Fear always equals fear of the unknown.

The unknown can be symbolized by a terrifying dragon.



Slay the Dragon And Take the Gold

The less information we have relating to an upcoming situation, the larger the surface of the unknown – hence the larger the size of the 'dragon' in our mind. Since fear = fear of the unknown, the only valid antidote to fear is to decrease the

surface of the unknown. Thus to "slay the dragon" we need to cut it into smaller pieces first. We cut it into smaller pieces by accumulating more and more information, data and facts on the situation or task at



"Dragons hoard gold because the thing you most need is always to be found where you least want to look."

Jordan Peterson

Clinical psychologist and author

more light into the various aspects of the project so as to expand the surface of the known:

1. Spend time studying, researching, collating information and perfecting your presentation to ensure you feel 100% comfortable with it.
2. Visit and fully familiarise yourself with the venue where the presentation will take place at least a day before the event. Aim to notice even the smallest nuances – where the parking area is, the table arrangements in the ballroom, the texture on the carpet, your view from the stage, where the restroom is, how you access the stage from your seat, the range of your clicker and wireless microphone etc.
3. Talk to the organisers to ensure they have your slides in order and that all technical issues are taken care of (e.g the kind of mic you may want to be using).
4. Select and prepare the clothes you will be wearing at the event well in advance.
5. Rehearse your presentation a few times (ideally with a coach or friend) to ensure your messages get conveyed clearly and that you will not exceed the time limit allocated to you.
6. Study the full agenda of the conference to get the full picture as regards the purpose and general mission of the conference.
7. Arrive at the venue early and if your speech is one of the later ones during the conference, make an effort to watch all speeches before yours as this may also provide you with some ammunition / additional points you could refer back or use during your speech or the Q&A that may follow.

What all the above points aim to do are to help us collect more information on the various aspects, logistics and angles of the matter in hand – thus helping us improve our overall sense of control over the future event. The more prepared we become the more we reduce the surface of the unknown. The smaller the surface of the unknown, the smaller the size of the dragon. The smaller the dragon, the less fear and anxiety we feel. The less fear and anxiety we feel, the less reluctant we will be to sneak into the dragon's lair to capture the gold; the gold represents the courage to live the life you are most proud of.

Are you ready to confront your next dragon?

hand thus gradually making the unknown less unknown.

We make the unknown less unknown by improving our level of knowledge, experience and mastery in the areas concerned.

Take the example of a future presentation causing us fear.

In this case the dragon symbolizes our primitive fear of humiliation in relation to our performance during the presentation. The way to "slay the dragon" is to shed