



**THE COURAGE
OF THE COMMUNITY**

**Acknowledging Fear:
The First Step to Confidence!**

The Courage Community

Acknowledging Fear:

The First Step to Confidence!



We're Not Born Brave
We Become It

By Coach Mike Direccion
September, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
A DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL	5
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK	8
THE HIDDEN CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM	10
HOW TO INFLUENCE YOUR EMOTIONS	13
THE TRUE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESS	16
FEARLESSNESS IS NOT ENOUGH	19
HAVING WHAT IT TAKES	21
SUBTLE FEARS ARE STILL MAJOR ROADBLOCKS	23
THE COURAGE TO CONNECT	29
BREAKING FREE OF FEAR	30
GET READY FOR ACTION	33
APPENDIX:	
JOURNEY MAP	36
PRODUCT MATRIX	37

INTRODUCTION

“Doubt kills more dreams than failure ever will.”

- Suzy Kassem

Hello, dear reader. If you've found this book, I think it's safe to assume that you've thought about improving your life in one of the following ways:

In your social life, you want to approach interesting and attractive strangers fearlessly, anywhere, no matter who's watching, and know exactly what to say to make them smile. You want to connect with people authentically, effortlessly, but **you feel like there are barriers in your way.**

In your professional life, you're not sure if you're in the right job, but you don't know if you should look for a different one. You'd love to be able to network like a boss and own the room in meetings. **You want the confidence to take control of your career.**

In your personal life, you want the ability to speak up for yourself in stressful situations, to be your true self more often, and to **not care so much about what other people think.** And it wouldn't hurt to be less anxious about new experiences.

Overall, you wish you could live your life with fewer fears of failure, rejection, judgment, embarrassment, or success.

I know these feelings! I've had to fight them too! But life doesn't have to be so frustrating.

Since 2012, I've been helping people **STOP holding themselves back** by teaching them a system for **increasing courage** where they need it.

Why courage? Because, if you're looking for a **more fulfilling love life, social life, or career**, you'll discover that **courage is the true source of success**.

Courage increases our willingness to take action.

Taking action gives us experience and develops our skills.

Being skilled gives us confidence.

Most of the advice you'll hear me give on dating, relationships, career, and personal development is simple to follow. There are no complex systems or secrets. The technical requirements are easy. My concepts are practical, testable, and backed up by experience. My strategies are straightforward.

The hard part is being able to overcome the emotional resistance to following the advice long enough to create change; to break your unhelpful habits and get out of your own way. To put your ego in check, keep your defenses down, and learn how vulnerability is actually strength.

It's a step-by-step process of acknowledging your fears, building the courage to face them, and converting that courage into the confidence you need to **stop missing out on life's opportunities**.

In my years as a coach, I've found that it's usually the first step that's the hardest to take. This is because we're either in too much pain to move forward, or not in enough pain *right this second* to see **which hidden demons are holding us back**.

I wrote this book to make taking that first step easier. I wrote it so you don't have to waste anymore time wondering why you've wasted so much time. By the time you're done reading, **you'll know what's been stopping you from building your best life**, and you'll know what you have to do next.

A DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

"What we fear doing most is usually what we most need to do."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

She narrowed her eyes and attempted to burn through me with an icy look of anger and disapproval on her face. It made my heart pound like it was trying to break free of my chest. I couldn't believe what I was about to do. I thought, "What is she going to say? What if I'm making a huge mistake? What if this makes me a loser, forever?"

Despite years of my best efforts to prevent it, my biggest fear in life was coming true... I was losing my relationship. I was ending my marriage.

Until recently, for some reason, I had been unwilling to admit that I was miserable and depressed... I refused to accept the reality of my situation. So a relationship that should have *never* been a marriage - a relationship that probably should have ended back in college after one year - lasted *eight* years, taking up almost the entirety of my 20s.

You might be wondering "if it was so bad, why didn't you end it sooner? Why did you double-down and get married?" You might even know some people in shitty relationships right now and not understand why they stay when it's so obvious to everyone that they're unhappy.

Imagine wanting something to work so badly, that any reminder that it's not working sends you into depression. How motivated are you to do hard things or make big life changes when you're depressed? Imagine this also being your #1 priority, and the only thing you believe life is worth living for. Now you're not only depressed, but everything is meaningless on top of it.



It felt like the only thing that gave me purpose was under constant threat of dissolving into nothingness unless I spent massive amounts of mental energy on it in the form of **worrying, anxiety, and obsessive thinking**. I believed worrying about something would prevent it from coming true, when in reality it was often the worrying itself that brought about what I was hoping to avoid (classic self-fulfilling prophecy behavior).

Most of the time, I had a nagging **feeling of being sick to my stomach** because I knew the sad truth deep down. I was frustrated all the time because nothing I was doing to improve things was working. I was angry at myself for not being “smart enough” to figure it out, at my wife for seeming to not care the way I thought she should, and at the world for just not being the way I thought it needed it to be.

Contributing to the nausea was the fact that **I never felt totally comfortable revealing my authentic/true self to my wife.** She had made it clear on many occasions that she was against things that I found no problems with, or even loved, including my friends and hobbies. I was demoralized because she reacted angrily or would go into denial about our problems at any attempt to discuss them. **I never felt like she fully accepted me for who I really was.**

Instead of standing up for myself at the potential cost of losing the relationship, I made the more common choice of hiding my true thoughts and desires and building a wall of silence and omission. This effectively blocked us from reaching the levels of honesty and intimacy that a truly healthy relationship needs. This wall between us turned into a dark cloud over my psyche; a constant reminder that I didn't have what I really wanted to have, with the person whom I wanted it most.

Time after time, I would look in the mirror and feel frustrated with my inability to make the kinds of changes I wanted to make. **My fears made me run from doing the right things, doing the wrong things made me feel ashamed of myself, and feeling shame only made me feel even more frozen in place.** I felt trapped, and I was growing more bitter and cynical about relationships every year.

I thought to myself, there's no point breaking up with my wife because I'm sure that every relationship ends up the same. Society tells me all relationships are a struggle, a sacrifice, a compromise, and tons of hard work. *So we must be normal.* Society also says women don't like sex as much as men, that we shouldn't hope for total acceptance from a lover, and that men and women have irreconcilable differences that we all just have to deal with... *so why even bother leaving just to end up right back where I started?*¹

¹ I learned that **none** of the statements in this paragraph are true!

Yet all the while, resentment grew. Loneliness grew. The distance between my wife and I grew to where we weren't even fighting anymore because we'd begun to live two separate lives under one roof. We became an example of a "life of quiet desperation." I had surrendered to my circumstances.

That's why I stayed so long: fears that led to inaction, that led to shame, that led to even more inaction.

I call that a "downward shame spiral" and it's a great way to get stuck in place for years, if not decades. My oldest students have been in their 60s.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is about acknowledging fear, so let me pause quickly to ask you:

Who, or what, are you running from? Do you have any walls between you and your loved ones? Between you and the world?

What parts of yourself have been driven underground and kept out of sight? What parts do you wish you could be accepted for?

As you read the rest of this book, ask yourself the same questions I asked myself and pay attention to what emotions come up. They might not always be pleasant, but if you keep reading through the discomfort, you will have taken a step towards overcoming the source of it.

One of my community members gave me an excellent description of how this feels to him:

When the fear bubbles up, some part of me wants to go and face it. But overwhelmingly, there's a hard ball in my chest weighing me down and paralyzing me, keeping me in place... When I don't act, the part of me that knows it wants to act turns into self-hatred for not trying. I feel ashamed and embarrassed and unworthy. I literally feel a pain in the inside of my right elbow (weirdest thing)... The frustration makes me want to smash every piece of glass in the world, destroy everything nice, stomp on some flowers, and kick a small dog. In the end, I know that I'm the only thing holding myself back, and that's the worst of it... I'm stuck, because I'm stuck, because I'm stuck...

And I was stuck.

But what finally got me unstuck? What got me to take action and break myself free from my self-imposed prison?



THE HIDDEN CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM

“Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision.”
- Winston Churchill

Much of the time, a person’s actions, or lack of actions, are motivated by the same emotion: **FEAR.**

However, most people don’t want to admit to being afraid, even if they are in a *constant* state of it. Even my father, who taught me many valuable lessons about bravery, repeatedly suggested that I not use the word “fear” in my marketing because “no one wants to think of themselves like that.”

We have ways of describing fear that feel more socially acceptable, like nervousness or anxiety. But what are you nervous about? Some fear. What are you anxious about? Fear!

Funny enough, my father proposed that I use the word “weakness” instead of fear, to which I noted that people don’t like to think of themselves as *weak* either. But, from his perspective, weakness is simply a lack of strength, and strength is obviously **a skill that we are not born with, but can choose to develop over time.**

He liked the thought of overcoming weakness better than overcoming fear because he felt like he *already knew how to do it*. There’s a lot more information about getting stronger than there is about becoming fearless. At the most basic level, even without instructions, you could always use physical exercise to make the body and mind stronger. Building strength is intuitive and feels like a goal that can be accomplished by anyone who wants it.

Well, Dad (and you, my dear reader)...

I'm here to tell you that courage is *also* a skill, and just like strength, it can be systematically developed and reliably improved over time.

Courage training is the mental and emotional equivalent of running and lifting weights. Instead of preparing you to travel long distances and move heavy objects, it enables you to endure hardships better and overcome life's obstacles easier.



Courage *is* strength!

Yet, the presence of fear is **NOT weakness.**

Throughout your life, there will always be something you are afraid will or won't happen, and this fear affects your performance and self-image. The more you give in to fear, the less capable you will feel. *The less capable, the less confident.* The less confidence you have, the less you take action, and before you know it you're alone, stuck in a rut, feeling worthless, and life just sucks!

We truly do fear "*fear itself.*" We fear being seen as weak and vulnerable. We fear it makes us a loser, or broken, or unworthy of love, success, and happiness.

BULLSHIT!

It's not the mere *existence* of fear that leads to bad results. It's how we've learned to RESPOND to fear that leads to taking, or not taking, the kinds of actions that make our lives better or worse.

Fear is an emotion that shows up without our control. We don't always know what we'll be afraid of, or when terror will strike. Even when we do, it's rare that we can *prevent* fear simply by trying to THINK differently about it. **We must also ACT.**

It can feel like fear is there until it decides to leave. **But with practice, we can decide how we *respond* to the fear, and that response can lengthen or shorten fear's effect on us.**

Although we should never expect to achieve anywhere close to total control of our responses, every bit counts, and even a fraction more can be the difference between a helpful response or a damaging one.



HOW TO INFLUENCE YOUR EMOTIONS

"We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action."
- Dr. Henry Link

Recently I was at a concert seeing one of my favorite bands (311, if you want to know). Unfortunately, I was plagued by repetitive anxious thoughts (remember, anxiety = fear) about a sour interaction I had earlier that day.



There was nothing more for me to do. The situation was settled. **Yet I kept playing events in my head on repeat, over and over again.** It was putting me in a gloomy funk when I wanted to feel anxiety-free and able to enjoy the show.

I knew that I could not simply think my way out of my emotions, but I could at least remember some common interventions (actions) for dealing with unpleasant ones.

The first, and most often ignored step, is acknowledgement. I had to stop denying the fact that I was experiencing a negative emotion. If we feel bad, and our first reaction is to hide from the feeling, then we lose our

ability to influence how we feel. I said to myself, “stop running and sit with this fear, feel this discomfort long enough to understand it.” I let out a big SIGH, which reminded me of **the second intervention: breathing.**

Now that I was accepting reality and breathing calmly, I was able to remember **the 3rd intervention: getting present.** I brought my focus to the present moment in order to cease fearing the future or feeling sad about the past. I focused on my breathing. I smelled the air, felt the weight of my body in my shoes, and tried to pick out the details of my surroundings.

Finally, I was ready to take action on the advice that *sounds* the least useful, but is actually quite powerful when you’re able to do it: **think happy thoughts! No, seriously!** Think about things that bring a smile to your face.

I looked over at my wife and my best friend who were at the show with me. They were smiling and dancing, so I let their smiles encourage my own. I tried to remember past times where we were all together: festivals, previous shows we’d gone to, funny moments seeing standup comedy. There are more interventions to try, but this time I only needed these four.

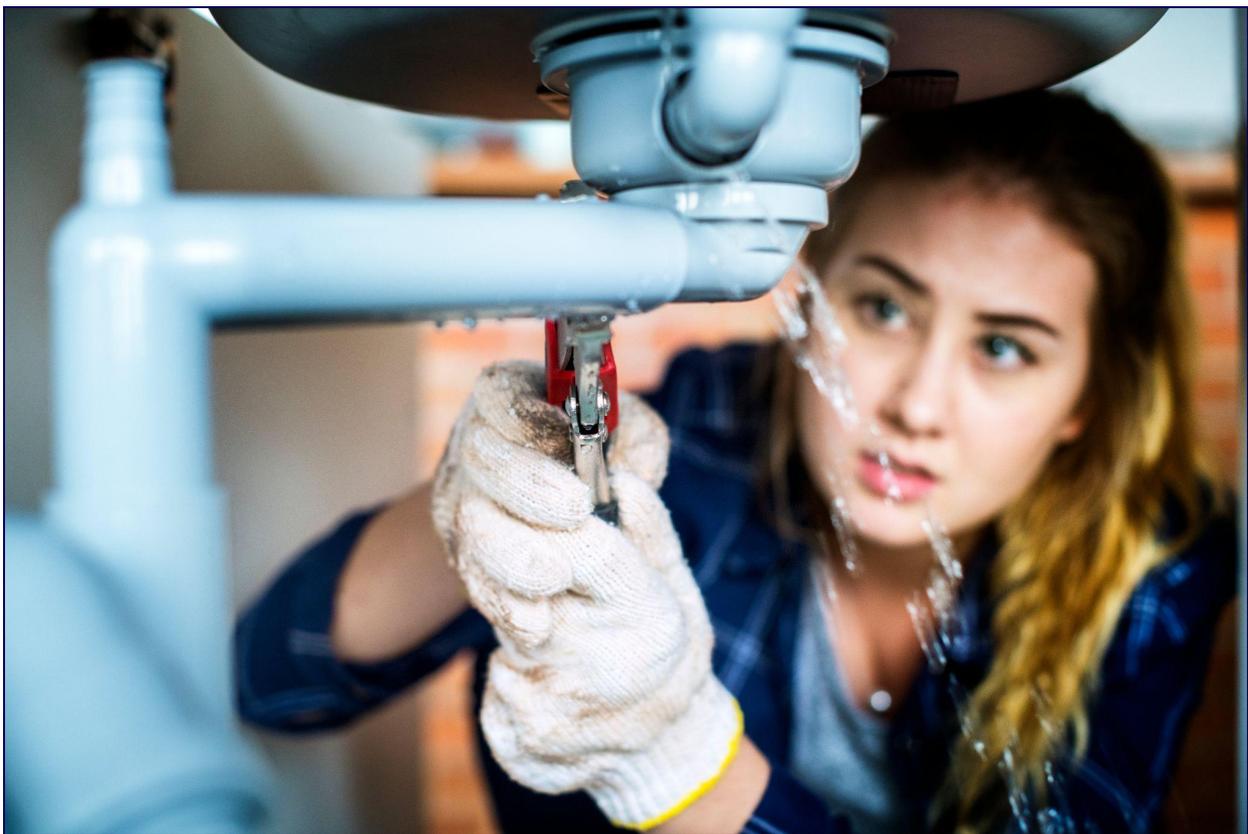
This didn’t shut off the anxiety like a light switch, instead it was more like turning off a leaky faucet. What started as a stream so powerful that it preoccupied my thoughts in the middle of a loud concert turned into a weak trickle after a short bit of focused effort on changing my mood.

Once it became a trickle, the feeling of mental exertion around “controlling” my thoughts also went away. From there the trickle turned into a few occasional droplets. I said it was a LEAKY faucet. It’ll take more than a few simple exercises to fix the leak, **but we don’t need to be 100% “fixed” before we can enjoy our lives.**

At the start of this little self-intervention, I felt awful even attempting to change my mood. It felt hard, like lifting something heavy, and there were voices in my head telling me to not waste my time, but offering no further solution. Voices saying I was broken for even feeling this way, or too weak to be effective. *If I wasn't already in the habit of challenging these discouraging voices*, I might have allowed myself to be convinced that change was impossible.

If I hadn't made the attempt though, my anxiety would have continued to plague me throughout the entire show. It would not have dissipated until I went to sleep that night, and it may have even come back the next day!

I couldn't stop the anxiety from coming, but I was able to dramatically shorten its lifespan by choosing to respond to the anxiety in a skillful way.



THE TRUE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESS

“If you do not have courage, you may not have the opportunity to use any of your other virtues”
- Samuel L. Jackson.

COURAGE, how you handle your fear, **is a SKILL that can be developed through effort.** Conscious, determined, consistent effort. Efforts that most of us need a little help to make, but are well within our ability to do.

In other words, you CAN change your life. You CAN adjust your personality. You CAN become less anxious, more outgoing, a better communicator, and more able to handle stress, change, and discomfort.

This leads to more authentic and attractive behaviors, which leads to better friends, improved relationships with family, more career opportunities, and all the love and affection you might crave.

The only real, fundamental requirement for building the life you want is having the courage to do the things needed to build it!

If that sounds too simple, here are a few examples:

Do you want to be a comedian? Even just an “ok” one? Then you need the courage to bomb on stage over and over again, and not make any money for at least half a decade, most likely much longer.

Do you want to be a rockstar? Then you need the courage to get booed by crowds, travel to intimidating venues, and get repeatedly rejected by the industry for years on end.



Do you want to be a coach like me? Then you'll need the courage to repeatedly try and fail in social situations and not get discouraged. You'll need to go through plenty of negative experiences and make a ton of mistakes so that you can know the right advice to give to your clients. You'll need to invest *decades* of time into getting those life experiences and that doesn't even count all the entrepreneurial skills that you will also need to develop on top of everything else.

But courage is not just for comedians, rockstars, and CEOs - anyone can benefit from developing more courage.

Do you simply want a meaningful career, an attractive soulmate, and a close relationship with your kids and family? Then you need to have the guts, the grit, the chutzpah to go after all the opportunities you think will

get you those things, no matter the amount of rejection, failure, embarrassment, or concerns about what other people might think!

Are you seeing it now? **Courage is *the* necessary skill for success!**

Courage is *the true cost* of confidence!

At the end of the day, you have to ask yourself, “Do I really want these outcomes? Am I therefore willing to do whatever it takes to achieve them? Or would I rather allow my fears and excuses to get in the way?”



In sports, you often hear commentators asking the rhetorical question of “who wants it more?” whenever two opposing sides are evenly matched on skill. This is because the side with the greater desire to succeed will put in more effort, *take more action*, and win.

When it comes to personal development and achieving your important life goals, your only real competition is yourself. You aren’t playing against anyone else. Today’s match pits you against you, just like yesterday, and just like tomorrow. So you can always ask yourself, “do I really want this enough to do the work to achieve my goal?” If the answer is truly yes, then nothing will be able to stop you. **With time and effort and a little bit of help, you will find the courage you need to succeed.**

FEARLESSNESS IS NOT ENOUGH

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear."
- Mark Twain

We don't only dress up our fears in softer, vaguer, less useful terms, we also tend to deceive, delude, and trick ourselves into believing that we are not actually afraid at all. Apathy ("I don't really care about getting a girlfriend"), long-term discounting ("asking for a raise is not my priority right now"), making comparisons ("at least my life isn't as bad as Jim's"), and more all prevent us from acknowledging the fear-based causes of our dissatisfactions.

Further, it seems people assume that a complete LACK of fear somehow guarantees success; that confidence doesn't merely improve your odds of success, but is *the root cause of it*. As if enough confidence EQUALS results, and therefore a lack of confidence must *guarantee* failure. That having this perfectly normal human emotion makes you somehow flawed, broken, or incapable.

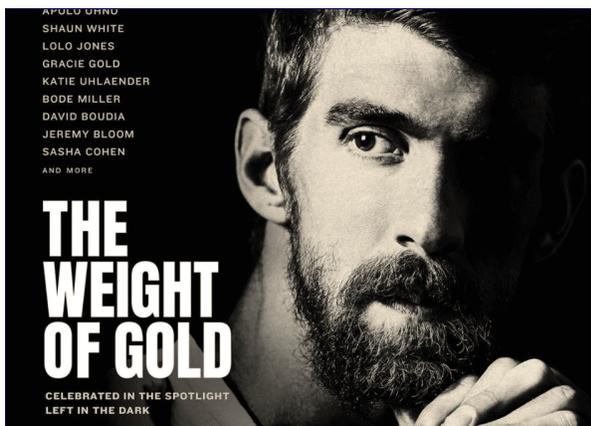
NONE of that is true!

First off, success requires a lot more than just being confident. Confidence can help. Confidence can even get you pretty far. Sometimes it can even get you into situations that you are really not qualified for. That can be fun (or anxiety inducing) but eventually you'll have to back up that confidence with performance. *Simply not being afraid of what you have to do is not sufficient enough to be good at doing it*. This is why we focus on building skills as our foundation for confidence.

Second, it doesn't take much work to find endless examples of successful, even famous people, who perform in spite of being afraid.

They feel their fears and take action anyway (aka courage), and THAT is what leads them to success.

Would all those scared people rather be fearless and absolutely confident in themselves? Sure! There are plenty of athletes and musicians who would greatly appreciate NOT having to vomit because of nerves before every performance. But the point is that even downright terror doesn't have to stop you from a happy, successful life.



Third - and this is one that most people don't realize - if you actually were fearless all the time, you might be a sociopath! At the very least, you might turn people off because you wouldn't be relatable. People might not trust you. They might be uncomfortable around you. Your total calmness and supreme confidence might make you appear inauthentic, scammy, or creepy.

For these reasons, can we finally agree that fearlessness really isn't what everyone thinks it is? **It's not a requirement**, or even a crucial ingredient, for a successful, satisfying life.

Courage, on the other hand, absolutely is! And that is what our Community is all about!

HAVING WHAT IT TAKES

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow."

- Mary Anne Radmacher

By this point in the book, if it's obvious to you that you have some fears that are holding you back, I hope you are feeling encouraged and empowered to acknowledge them. **Acknowledging your fear is the first step to courage.** Consider it the first exercise that you'll perform.

In other words, simply naming your fears is an act of bravery! You cannot overcome fear before you acknowledge it, so you should reward yourself by removing a drop of self-doubt around your chances of success. **If you've gone from being less willing to acknowledge fear, to being even just slightly more willing, then you've already made progress!**

This is something to be proud of! It might not feel like important progress yet, but if you stick to the journey of facing your fear, you'll look back on this moment and realize this was when you started to change your perception of yourself. As the saying goes, "perception is reality." **Let today be the day that your reality begins to change!**

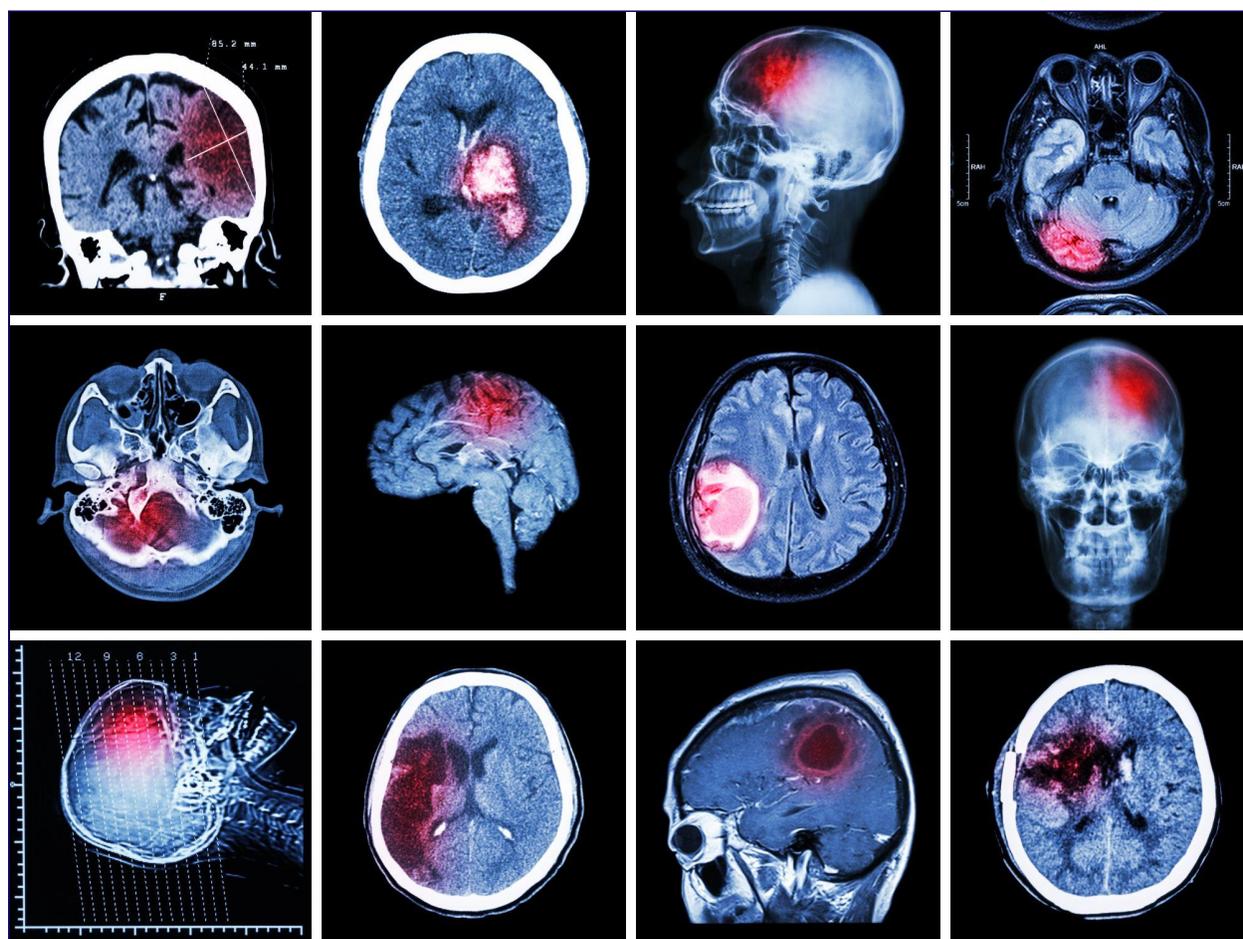
If you feel inspired by this, that tells me that you already have enough courage to start training. You don't have to wonder if you've got what it takes if you're willing to put in the effort. That willingness ALONE is all the evidence you need to know that you can start building courage, and then confidence.

Or, as the Henry Ford quote goes: "whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right." Willingness might not *seem* like enough, but it's obvious that nothing can be gained with an attitude of defeat.

So, if you're one of the people that thinks you CAN, and you're ready to improve your life, then [get in touch with me](#) to see what your **next steps** are. It only takes 5 minutes.

If you've reached this point in the book and are not sure if you have any fears worth working on, then **don't stop reading yet!**

You'll want to keep reading because we're just about to uncover the ways that fear tries to hide from our awareness. **Since subtle, hidden fears are the most difficult to acknowledge, they are actually the WORST kind of fear to deal with.** Like a slowly growing tumor, hidden fears have the power to harm your life without you realizing it until it's too late.



SUBTLE FEARS ARE STILL MAJOR ROADBLOCKS

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."

- Thomas Edison

I have the usual anxieties about money or the future, but I wouldn't consider myself a fearful person or someone who is plagued or ruled by fear. In fact, I prefer to see myself as someone who "should"² have fewer fears and be generally confident because, well, my job is teaching others to do exactly that!

But the *worst* fears can actually be the most subtle.



The more hidden a fear is, or the fewer chances we give ourselves to experience it, the more powerful an obstacle it can become. If a fear is difficult to acknowledge, then it can be hard to make any progress on it, and impossible to permanently remove it.

Add to this the risk of developing a *harmful coping mechanism* around the fear like denial, apathy, or withdrawal and you've got **a recipe for a life-long, self-imposed limitation on your sense of power, freedom, and satisfaction.**

² "Shoulds" are inherently critical and unhelpful. We replace "should" with "could" or "want".

Here's my example: *I was actually quite afraid to write this book. But I only felt the fear clearly in the moment when I seriously considered taking action to work on it.* Can you relate?

It's funny because when I'm not actually sitting down to do the action of typing, aka working directly on the goal, I don't feel any fear or worry or concern. I can think through hypotheticals about how to lay out the book, what concepts to include, and all the things I want to say, and none of that will be accompanied by any negative emotion whatsoever.

In fact, just thinking about the project *feels good* and encouraging! If I didn't know any better, **I could even convince myself that I'm not afraid of this at all.** Why should I think of myself as scared when 99% of the time I'm not experiencing that emotion?

This is often how we feel about our goals or projects or plans for the future. We have some rosey vision in our heads and we don't foresee any problems... *until* we actually attempt to take action on the goal and discover we're not performing like we expected. Then all of a sudden shit gets real. **All of a sudden we experience strong negative emotions discouraging us from taking further action.**

But do we see that as a reaction to fear? Usually not at first.

Again, *WHY* would we register our failure to act as "fear" when nearly all the rest of the time, when we think about the goal, we are not *actually* afraid? Therefore, our first failed attempts at taking action go *unanalyzed* and labelled as an anomaly.

Maybe you tell yourself that the first attempts were just a glitch, probably due to poor planning. The solution is simple. You seek more information about the goal you're trying to accomplish. As you get more info you start to feel better about the first failure. Clearly you just didn't know enough

before, and now that you have more knowledge your next attempt will be successful.

Until you try to take real action on your goal again, and this time you don't even get as far as you did the last time! What the hell happened? Now you may finally start to notice that it's not something logical that's stopping you, but something emotional.

It's the feeling of an **elephant sitting on your chest**³ preventing you from approaching that person you want to meet. It's the **dry mouth and closed throat** stopping you from announcing your desire to join the group. It's the unexpected **racing heart and throbbing pressure** in your head that scrambles your thoughts when you're trying to tell someone something that might disappoint them. These are just some of the ways that we experience acute fear in our bodies.



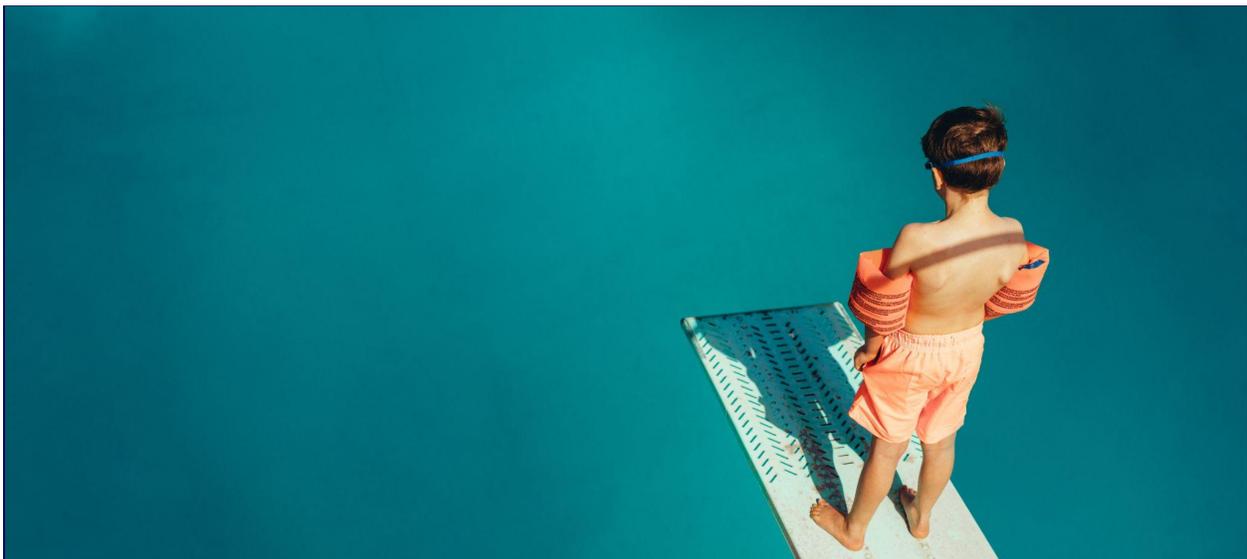
³ [Image by David Blackwell CC](#) / Original Background Removed

“But Coach Mike,” you ask, “**if I’m so afraid, why aren't I more aware of it?** Why doesn’t it show up whenever I think about my goal?”

Well, for some people the fear IS present at all times on some level. You might call that *chronic anxiety*. You could describe anxiety as the fear of an uncertain future. You have hopes about what’s going to happen but you lack the experience to assume success. You lack the confidence that things will go well, but you’re not exactly sure what might go wrong. You carry an on-going sense of *vague dread* that makes it difficult to remain present, and discourages you from taking action even sooner.

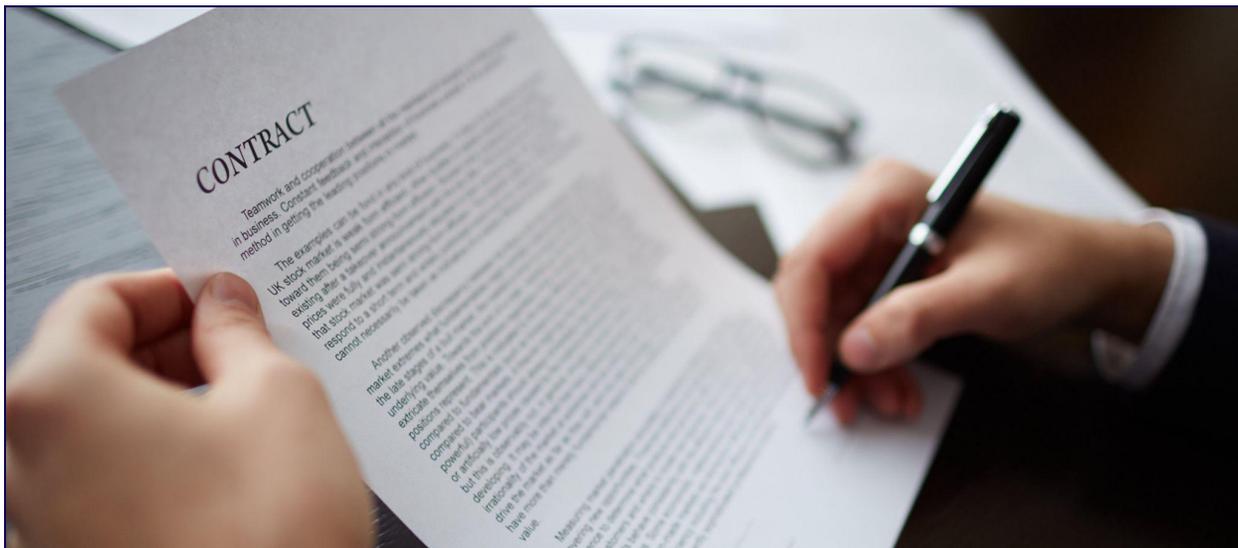
However, for our purposes the distinction between anxiety and fear is that anxiety is often long-term while fear is short-term. In other words, TRUE fear is experienced in a moment and can also disappear in a moment, while anxiety tends to stick around before, during, and after the triggering event. This is an oversimplification of course, but it is a helpful way to compare the two.

Therefore, if you’re not a generally anxious person, it’s probably normal for you to not experience fear until the *exact moment* you commit to taking real action on your goal.



Your subconscious is smart! *It knows when you are about to commit to something for real.* It knows the difference between a hypothetical and a true investment of your time/money/mental/emotional/physical resources. This is the reason behind all forms of last-second resistance.

Let's imagine you have to speak with a salesperson in order to buy a car. You will probably feel really good at first. This is because the first part of the conversation is simply hypothetically matching up your problems with their solutions. That makes you feel good. It gives you hope for a happier future. And, most importantly, there's no commitment taking place. You're just talking. Just considering the possibilities.



But then, when it's time to *actually* commit to the purchase, your mood takes a complete 180° turn. Now, you may feel defensive. You may suddenly have objections that you didn't have before. These objections feel important to you in the moment, but on later examination they will prove to be excuses. Where was this sense of danger before? What happened to your good mood? Logically it doesn't make sense, but emotionally it does...

Fear is supposed to be there to stop you from making costly mistakes like *not* running from a predator, or taking one too many steps off a tall cliff. In those examples, you can see why fear only shows up in the moment, yet has such power to fully hijack your brain and stop your actions in a fraction of a second.

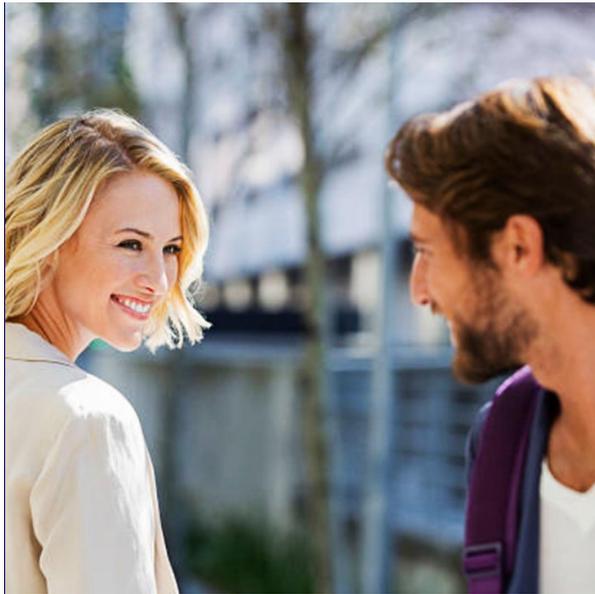


In the sales example, the conversation wasn't actually a "real" threat until it was time for you to take an action that would be *difficult for you to take back*. Then you reacted with caution the same as if you were in *physical* danger.

This is why merely signing up to join our community counts as a courage exercise! You have to overcome that initial fear of commitment.

Even if you're not an anxious person, these momentary experiences of fear can have a discouraging effect on taking action in the future. As mentioned above, over time this can lead to harmful coping mechanisms like denial, apathy, and withdrawal.

“I’m not scared to talk to people, I just don’t see the point” is a common excuse used by people who have given up trying to improve their social skills. You’ll hear similar excuses around a person’s stalled career, or estranged relationships with their family.



THE COURAGE TO CONNECT

If you are a single person then dating will most likely be the 1st thing that you’ll use courage and confidence for! Here’s what a student had to say about how The Courage Community helps with dating:

I wanted a skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced coach, and that’s what I got... But the program is really more about challenging that little stupid voice in your head telling you what’s “wrong” and realizing “I’m alright, nothing bad will happen, I am doing the right thing regardless of the outcome.” And it turns out, that feeling of assuredness is actually the best way to attract people because they feel it and want to be around it.

BREAKING FREE OF FEAR

"Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy." - Dale Carnegie

Now when you think about your life, do you see some places where fear might be getting in your way? **Are you truly able to take unhesitating, unflinching action on all of your authentic desires?** Or are you making excuses in order to avoid experiencing those rare, but powerful, moments of fear?

What about my miserable marriage? Is it obvious now how I managed to break free of that situation?

I'm sure by this point you know that **I first had to come to grips with the reality of my fears.** I had to acknowledge how scared I was of ending up alone, of failing at life, and of dealing with the Pandora's Box of uncertainty that I was about to open.

Having accepted my fears, I realized that I already had solutions to some of my concerns.

First, the martial arts community (specifically Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu) offered me the moral support and social acceptance I needed to feel like I wouldn't be totally alone. I haven't spent any time discussing the *power of community* in this book, but as you can tell from the name of my business, **I consider being part of a community one of the *most important* ingredients for life satisfaction and personal development.** In The Courage Community there is a sense of belonging and support. We work together to overcome our fears.



Your community doesn't have to be my community, but if you want to change your life and maintain those changes permanently, then you'll need a community that supports you. Life is just too hard to be successful alone, and humans wither and die without connection.

After community, I wanted to learn why my marriage and other relationships failed, and how to avoid making the same mistakes again. **Properly acknowledging my fear of failure enabled me to stop being ashamed to ask for help.** You might think that being afraid to fail would *encourage* a person to ask for help more often, but usually it's the exact opposite because of the shame around expressing vulnerability that I mentioned earlier.

Seeking answers led me to the dating/pick-up community where I then had to face the challenge of figuring out who gave healthy advice, and who was an *asshole*. I learned to avoid the misogynistic and slimy aspects of that scene and I coach my students to do the same. **The Courage Community opposes manipulation in favor of direct, honest communication** (“diretto” means “direct” by the way).

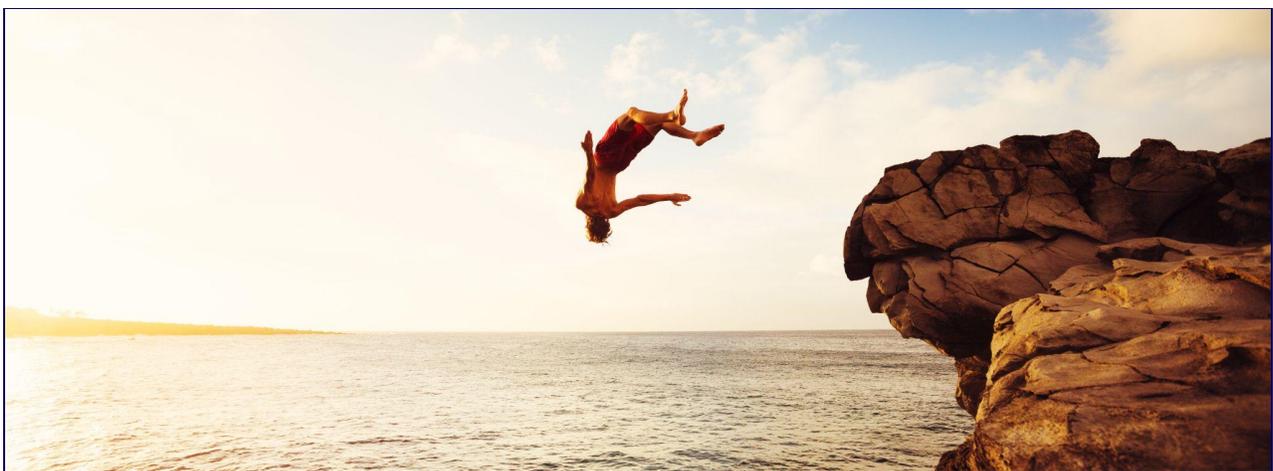
That said, I'm glad I had to go through the experience because combating their TERRIBLE advice gave me a greater sense of purpose.

After a little while, I ended up meeting the man who taught me the process that transformed my world. Afterwards, we worked together for years, right up until he retired from teaching. On the night we met I had one opportunity to say yes to training with him, and I knew I had to take it without hesitation (in case you didn't realize it, *this is your chance*).

I did the training, immediately saw results, and I knew I had found something extremely special and powerful. So special in fact, that it changed the course of my life and sent me off on an adventure that I never could have predicted!

I was so inspired by what happened to me, that I've spent the last decade teaching this process to others, and witnessing them experience similar success. These days, nothing makes me happier than the look on a student's face when they realize their fears won't hold them back anymore.

That is the moment when courage takes over, and their response to fear changes from "fight, flee, or freeze," into "FOLLOW!"



GET READY FOR ACTION

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'"

- Eleanor Roosevelt

So what conclusions are you coming to? Are you now more conscious of all the fears in your life? Do you know which ones are holding you back from living the life you really want to live? **Are you ready to acknowledge your fears, admit you want to overcome them, and start working towards doing exactly that?** And do you see how developing courage and social freedom will make you a stronger, more capable person who can wield the #1 most important tool for high levels of life satisfaction and success?

You've already heard my personal horror story about my old life with my ex-wife. Perhaps you have a similar story. Perhaps your story is different and could be full of loss, trauma, bullying, or abuse.

Regardless of your individual story, the process of overcoming fear and developing confidence is the same. **Our personal experiences may be unique, but we are all still human beings. We all need support, encouragement, acceptance, love, affection, understanding, and community.** We all need to feel we have meaning. And we all want to belong somewhere and to someone.

I could tell you more stories about my big challenges and how I overcame them. After my divorce, my next biggest challenge was becoming an entrepreneur after being raised to be terrified of not having a stable income. I still have to use courage daily, and my life right now is amazing because of it. I could go on and on about the benefits I experience from



challenging my fears, but I don't want to brag about my life without first telling you how to replicate my results.

So for the rest of this story and more, [please consider joining our community, scheduling a coaching session,](#) or [applying for a free consultation call.](#)

Acknowledging fear was your first step. It was your first *courage exercise* and *proof* that you are actually capable of becoming a stronger person.

The next step will be learning how to face your specific fears, and which skills you'll need to develop to feel confident in your abilities.

But what if you want to *skip* a few steps?

Our flagship program, and the main course that I've been teaching with amazing results for the last 10 years, is called **The Courage Community Bootcamp.**

The program is delivered over a weekend with additional days available by request. Each day is unique, with day 1 focusing on courage and social freedom training, and day 2 focusing on creating authentic conversations and connections customized to your social or career goals.

By the end of this course you will have overcome the fear of rejection, judgement, embarrassment, and failure, experienced the feeling of complete social freedom, and made practical use of it in conversation.

If you're intrigued by what I'm offering here, the next best step is to quickly [complete the application form](#) for a free consultation call with me.



The form asks you to be vulnerable and reveal the fears and limiting beliefs that are holding you back, so you can even consider it the first short writing exercise in the program! It's a safe and easy test to see if you're ready to move forward. ***Just don't let fear stop you from clicking the link and looking at the form.*** I assure you it's easier than you think.

I hope you've enjoyed this book about acknowledging fear, and were able to use it to become more honest with yourself and conscious of any aspects of your life that might need attention.

We hope you'll join us inside [The Courage Community!](#)

Cheers, and until next time, remember...

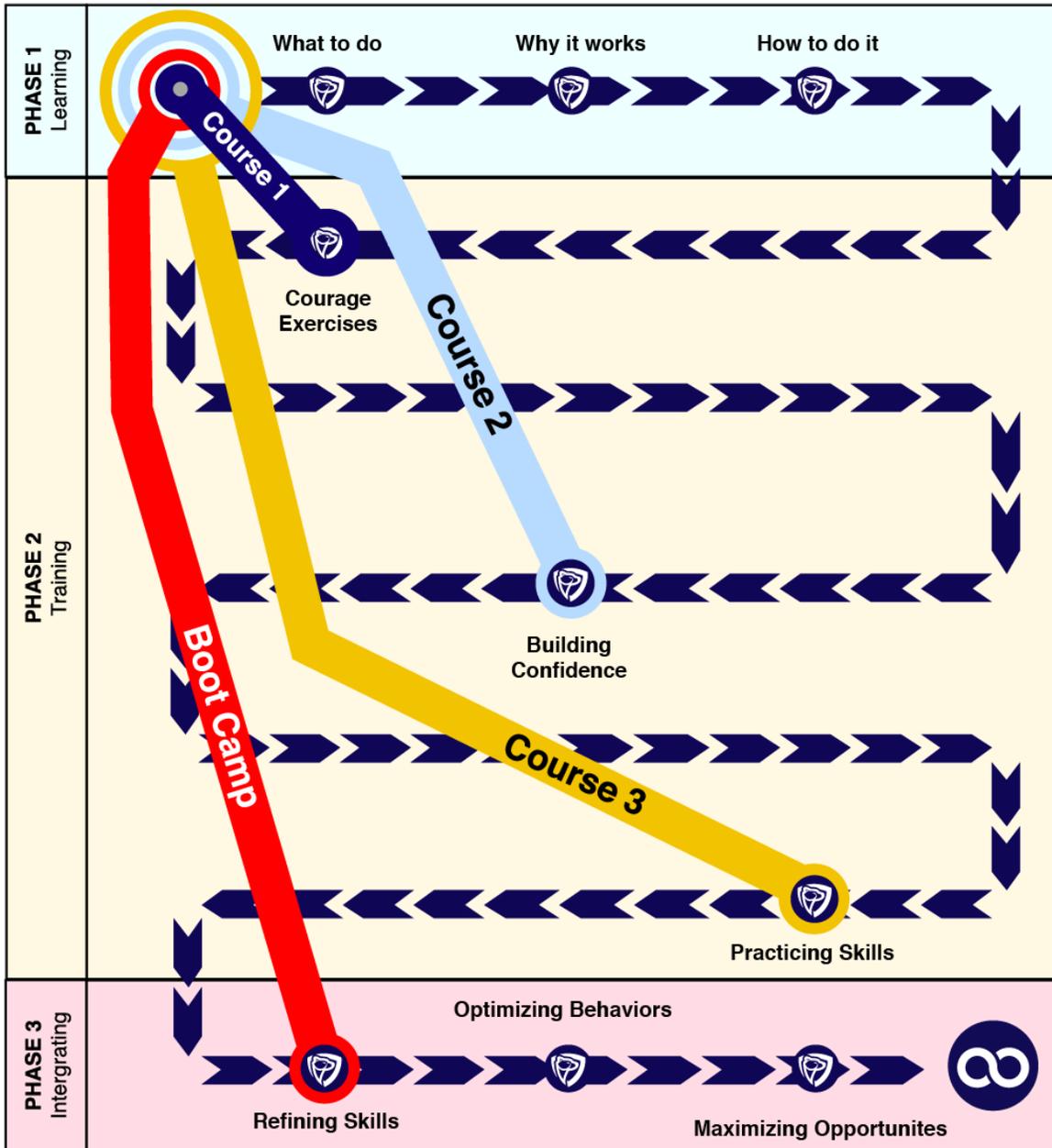
We're not born brave, we become it.

-Coach Mike Diretto

JOURNEY MAP



Select a Shortcut to Success!



Start Fearful, Finish Confident!

PRODUCT MATRIX

Choose a product according to your level of need, speed, and budget.

	I'M CONFIDENT AND I'D LIKE SOME SPECIFIC HELP	I'M NOT CONFIDENT AT ALL	I WANT TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT WITH PEOPLE	
I'M NOT IN A RUSH TO SEE PROGRESS	<u>Support 1</u> \$17/month	<u>Course 1</u> \$97	<u>Course 2</u> \$1000	\$
I WANT PROGRESS SOON	<u>Support 2</u> \$47/month or <u>1-1 Coaching</u> \$247-\$500/hour	<u>Course 2 or 3</u> \$1000-\$2000	<u>Course 3</u> \$2000	\$\$
I NEED IMMEDIATE RESULTS	<u>Support 3</u> \$97/month or <u>1-1 Coaching Pack</u> \$600-\$2000	<u>Bootcamp 1 or 2 Days</u> \$3000-\$6000	<u>Bootcamp 2 Days</u> \$6000	\$\$\$