

# 8 Top Tools To Break Out Of The Fear-Stress Cycle



You know you're in a Fear-Stress Cycle when every situation, regardless of whether you consider it to be "good" or "bad" impacts how you show up in your world. And every situation only ever tells you variations on the same, central theme. You are not enough. You've done something wrong. No one likes you. This cycle is universal because it is baked into our biology. Your mind can't distinguish between what is real and what is imagined. So, when we perceive threat (which in this day and age is typically future fear created from our imagination), our amygdala disrupts the just right balance of stress and stimulation necessary to fully access our pre-frontal cortex (our executive function) responsible for decision-making, problem-solving, exploring possibility, accessing short-term memory and having empathy. You don't need any of those things when you are facing imminent threat, which is what your mind is telling your brain. You need to act. So, your brain floods your body with stress chemicals, like cortisol and adrenalin, to prepare for fight, flight, freeze or faint. And this now changes your perception of your reality because you are reacting, not responding. There is an urgent need to control the people and circumstances around you driven by a false, subconscious belief that it will give you safety. When you stay in that chemically-induced, reaction mode, you are caught in a Fear-Stress Cycle that changes your relationship with the world *and* with yourself. When you *live* there, it becomes your new normal negatively impacting your health and well-being across mind, body and spirit, your relationships, your leadership and your life. It's incredibly challenging to break out of The Fear-Stress Cycle on your own. So, use these tools and/or seek expert help.

## 1. FOCUS ON THE PRESENT

Be fully engaged in what is *right now*. Be aware of what's here. Register the information gained from your senses. Acknowledge and name what you're feeling. Explore all the possibilities related to what your feelings could mean before choosing one to test. Be intentional in your action. What did you learn?

## 2. LET GO OF EXPECTATION, ASSUMPTION AND PROJECTION

Don't allow future expectation, assumption or projection to steal your focus, energy and power. Remember, worry is praying for what you *don't* want. So, bring your awareness back to this present moment. The choices you make today create the future you want tomorrow.



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## 3. PRACTICE NON-ATTACHMENT

Accept whatever comes your way without trying to control or change it. You can only ever control *yourself*. Place your focus there and build your inner resilience.

## 4. TRUST THE PROCESS

Have faith that with the right awareness and attention *now*, everything will work out in the future. Valuable learning is lost when you aren't present in your experience.

## 5. EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY

Accept that the only constant in life *is* change. While you can't control your circumstances, you *can* control how you choose to be with it. And that control within yourself is the only way to truly gain the power and freedom you want.

## 6. PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Be present with and appreciative of what you *do* have in this moment, rather than what you don't. You create what you give your energy to, so keep a gratitude journal. Make using it a daily habit. It will keep you in the present and out of future fear.

## 7. KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE

Remember, the journey, and what you learn along the way, is far more important than what might or might not happen in the future. Trust that your focused awareness, attention and intention will create a rewarding journey and valuable outcomes.

## 8. BE LED BY DESIRE NOT FEAR

Your life, and the quality of it, is created from your choices. Those choices create new experiences to teach you something. And that new learning informs your next choice. You *are* change. You are iterating and evolving all the time. So, make choices based on what you want, rather than what you are afraid of, because your attention creates your present and informs your future.

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