

There's one person in the entire world who has the power to free you from your fears, and it's you.

There's a tipping point at the edge of ourselves, a place where the ramblings of the mind soften to make room for the whisperings of the soul. It's from the precipice of this awakened brain that we step into our full power, gracefully balancing between Earth and stars, self and soul. This is the spiritual sweetspot the steady space from which we come alive and are able to give our gifts fully and freely to the world. Welcome, sweet soul. I'm Ashley Melillo, and you're listening to the soul horizon podcast.

Welcome, welcome. Welcome. I'm thrilled you're here today.

And before we get into the bulk of our conversation around fear, I just want to take a quick moment to share an exciting giveaway opportunity with you. So if you like what you hear today, please, please please, if you could take a moment to review this podcast on iTunes, it would mean so much to me, and it would help it reach more years. If you do this before April 15, you'll be automatically entered to win an inner balance wired sensor from Heart Math Institute. I won't get into the details of what that is here. But in a future episode, we will be discussing this and how it can be used to access the wisdom of the higher self. If you are interested in participating in this giveaway. Again, leave a review for this podcast and see the show notes for additional giveaway details. All right, now let's get to the show.

As you've likely gathered from the title of this episode, today, we're talking all about fear. Now, because there are so many different types of fear, I want to first clarify what we're not talking about, and then what we are talking about. So today, we're not going to get into the type of fear of which there is a real threat of physical danger. We're also not going to talk about fear consciousness today, or the sort of mass fear that pervades the world because of happenings and events. Those are both equally important topics, but for another day, just because it's too much to get into at once.

So the type of fears we're discussing today are the types of which we feel personally a threat of potential failure, embarrassment, we fear, discomfort, we fear uncertainty, these are limiting fears. These are the type of fears that keep us safe, but also keep your life smaller than you'd like it to be their mind arrived. And they convince you to play small, essentially, whether that's with your career, or your passions, hobbies, your choices, whatever it may be, you might be sitting here and thinking that, Oh, I'm actually not that fearful of a person. But the thing about fear is that it often masquerades within other emotions and identities. So you might experience apathy, boredom, procrastination, or even avoidance. And oftentimes, the root of these things is actually fear. It's fear of the unknown or fear of

putting ourselves out there to do something that we really genuinely want to do, but are afraid that we're not going to be good at we're going to fail at whatever it might be.

On the topic of procrastination, I want to quickly share that it's my belief that procrastination has a lot more to do with fear than it does with laziness. I don't really believe in laziness. And I think it's usually other emotions that are stopping or prohibiting us from taking action on the things that we really want to do or sometimes have to do. And underlying those feelings. It's fear, it's, it's really fear that stops us from getting started in the first place. And so because we fear failure, we therefore quit before we start. For some reason, self sabotage is somehow more palatable to the ego than going for it and failing and really putting ourselves out there.

Alright, now that we know which flavor of fear we're talking about, and that it's this self limiting type of fear, I want to discuss it further from two distinct perspectives. And those perspectives are from the self and from the soul. So how do each of those sort of entities or perspectives feel about fear, the self views fear as a way or a method of keeping you safe? So it has these limiting beliefs about your capabilities and your potential? And this is because the perspective of self stems from the ego and the ego is always seeking to preserve its identity in its most current state. As strange as this sounds, that version of you the self or ego for Have you doesn't want you to grow because it doesn't know who that person is it seeks familiarity, and it really wants you to stay the same to stay small and perhaps even shrink smaller so that it can predict outcomes. It can keep you from putting yourself out there and potentially being rejected or failing because it fears losing itself in the process of your expansion and your failures. So the self craves safety, consistency and comfort.

I'm not going to go too far into the ego now, but I will be discussing that in an upcoming episode. So make sure to tune in there if this isn't making sense to you. Or if you feel like you need a little bit more background on that it is available now as well.

All right, so now how does the soul or heart perceive fear so your soul views fear as a messenger inviting you to change your beliefs or your behaviors to expand outward to the fullest, richest, and most complete version of you, it's really looking for you to expand into your full self and your full capabilities and potential from the perspective of the soul. Your fears are there, because they're guiding you towards the life you're destined to live. Simply put, fear is a compass guiding us towards our edges. And again, the type of fear we're talking about is that sort of invigorating fear, where it's these things that we want to be doing. And yet the mind then jumps in and says, I don't think so because x, y, z, it has all the excuses in the world to stop us from doing those things that we feel called

towards, or it puts them off, because putting them off sometimes feels like we're still moving forward on them. But it's really just an illusion, and a tactic that the mind uses to stop us from pursuing our passions, our dreams, our purpose and our calling. If we listen carefully, our higher self is always guiding us towards what I like to call our daily fear work by way of gentle whispers nudges encouragement, sometimes it's a little flashes in our minds, like, oh, go do this or talk to this person, or Wouldn't that be fun? Our gut reaction knows that there's joy, and there's meaning to be found, and whatever it is that we're being pulled towards by our heart and our higher self.

And yet, as soon as the mind gets a hold of the idea, it comes up with all these reasons why it's dangerous, terrible, stupid, why someone else has done that before you don't have anything to add, or what do you have to bring to this conversation, or perhaps you need to get a degree in X, Y, or Z before you can talk about that or do that, again, the mind rejects what it's uncomfortable with as a means of self preservation and protection. It thinks it's protecting us by doing this.

But as we listen to it, and we listen to fear, and allow fear to stop us from doing the things that we genuinely, truly want to do, our life starts to close in on us and it sort of it shrinks. And that's not a great feeling. It does not feel good to constantly play small because the voice in our head is telling us that we're not good enough, we're going to fail whatever it might be. I love this quote from Steven Pressfield. If you haven't already read *The War of Art*, I highly recommend it. I'll go ahead and drop the name and information in the show notes. So be sure to check there if you're interested. But this quote from Stephen goes like this, are you paralyzed with fear? That's a good sign. Fear is good. Like self doubt, fear is an indicator fear tells us what we have to do. Remember one rule of thumb, the more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it the first time I read that I got full body chills, because it's so true. And it's so reassuring to know that everyone has these immense fears. And we're all in our heads all the time and trying to put ourselves down and keep ourselves from living the life that we genuinely want to live.

Alright, so now we're going to get into what I like to call fear spots, fear spots are the fears, big or small, that stop you from living your life fully. Again, these are all those limiting beliefs that we've been talking about and hinting at so far. Your fierce bots are entirely unique to you. And only you know what they are. So likely, they're the first things popping into your mind right now.

So whatever it is, you're thinking, Ah, like, that's, that's the thing. That's the thing I want to be doing. And yes, it's my mind that keeps telling me no, that's probably one of your fear spots. We have

lots of them and they disguise themselves in all different ways. But at their core fear spots are the things that we truly want to do or get done. And yet our mind stands in the way so your heart says yes, and yet the mind is so convincing and so persuasive that we just can't seem to make any sort of forward movement or take the first step or perhaps we take a couple steps and then it's just way too scary. And we putter out and we feel like we just need to turn around and stop.

Here is the tricky thing. with fear, unfortunately, fear thrives and grows and expands, the more we allow it to dictate our choices, actions and behaviors. Left unchecked, these fear spots began to push in on us, making real life smaller and smaller, they kind of take on a mind of their own, and they start to grow. So you're either actively pushing yourself out towards your edges, as I like to call them and shrinking these fear spots by pushing outward on them or your fears, thoughts are actively pushing in on you and making your life smaller.

For a quick moment to better understand and visualize these fear spots in your life, I want you to imagine yourself within a circle. So the line that forms the periphery of the circle is the edge of your comfort zone as it currently stands. And I know this feels a little cliché, the comfort zone, talk and everything, but just bear with me for a moment. So inside the circle are all the things that you're totally comfortable doing inside the circle is your life as it currently exists, right. It's everything that you do all the time and feel totally comfortable doing it's like second nature in that zone. Now, outside the circle, I want you to imagine all the things you want to do, but avoid doing out of fear. Maybe think of a few that are top of mind for you right now. And these things are always changing. So just go with whatever flows to you right now.

If you're having any trouble pinpointing the spear spots, or identifying them, here's a quick exercise to figure out what they are. And this might seem a touch morbid, but it is effective. So you can pinpoint your current fear spots by zooming forward in time, take a moment to imagine yourself on your final day on this planet. And if you continued on with life from now until then, exactly as you currently are today, without changing anything, what would you regret. So think about the things that you're not doing that you would regret never doing. And then also think about the things that you are doing that you would regret spending so much time on.

Again, remember that left unchecked these fears, thoughts that you're identifying, end up growing, sort of taking on a life of their own, and began to shrink the periphery of our comfort zone. So it allows or it forces essentially our life to close in on us. Because fear thrives, grows and expands, the more we allow it to dictate our choices. And that's the irony of fear, right? Because we don't do these things that we want to do, because our mind tells us that they're scary for XYZ reason. And we think that by not doing those

things, and by keeping ourselves safe and shielded and protected from failure, or criticism, whatever it might be, we think that by avoiding that, that we'll be happier, but in the process of avoiding avoiding avoiding life shrinks and closes in on us and ultimately robs us of the joy that we experience in the process in the journey of putting ourselves out on the line and just seeing what happens.

The goal is not to tackle everything at once, but rather to work consistently to lean into the edges of our comfort zone to push that boundary outward. As we do that circle expands and what was once uncomfortable or scary becomes part of our comfort zone, as you've probably gathered here is the huge secret with fear. There's one person in the entire world who has the power to free you from your fears. And it's you, no one can do that work for you. We each have to do our own fear work. And every single person on this planet is afraid of something, I guarantee it.

Interestingly, anxiety and fear tend to be a bit counterintuitive. So because fear is counterintuitive, it also requires a counter intuitive solution. And the process is simple. That requires consistency and being consistently available to challenge and face your fears. It's what I like to call fear opee kind of like therapy, but with yours, if that makes sense. So fear says walk away. But the answer is to walk through as sort of icky and difficult as that sounds depending on the nature of our fears at any given moment in time. This is because part of freeing ourselves from fear involves releasing the need to define exactly how life needs to look, in order for us to be okay.

Essentially, we need to be okay with uncertainty that comes with facing our fears and stepping into the unknown, because it's in this clinging and trying to control that fear builds bigger and bigger and life shrinks in on us this process of fair opee. I'm going to stop saying that because it's really hard to say but the idea behind it is a sort of micro exposure therapy. What is exposure therapy. So first, I'm going to give you the APA definition that's the American Psychological Association's definition. According to the APA exposure therapy is a psychological treatment that was developed to help people confront their fears when people are fearful of something they To avoid the fear of objects, activities or situations, and although this avoidance might help reduce feelings of fear in the short term, over the long term, that fear becomes much worse.

Again, fear is counter intuitive, right? We think we're helping ourselves by avoiding the feared stimulus. And yet, over the long term, that fear actually grows and takes on a mind of its own and makes our actions, behaviors etc, smaller, smaller, smaller, because we must shrink in order to accommodate fear. And it's many ideas of how we should be living. With this in mind, exposure therapy seeks to incrementally expose an individual to the feared stimulus over time. And this enhances tolerance to the feared stimulus and promotes

resilience and decreases the whole the fear has on a person's life. Exposure therapy, as it's used in psychology tends to address fears and anxieties that are quite extreme in terms of how they're impacting an individual's life. So do keep that in mind. But the fundamental principle of the method of therapy holds true for fear regardless of its applications. And that's this, avoid your fears, and they will grow, face your fears, and they will shrink. I love that Zig Ziglar. Quote, I think it's F E, A R, forget everything and run or face everything and rise. That's the idea here.

So how can we leverage this practice. So this sort of micro exposure practice to face our fears in a meaningful way. And this is where that idea of therapy comes into play. I laugh every time I say that, but it's essentially that micro exposure practice where we can lean into the edges of our comfort zone by tackling our fear spots head on day after day. It's incremental, it's methodical, but not too methodical, because you want to be able to flex and bend as your fears change. Alright, now that we've covered the why of this practice, and how it can help us, let's get into the nitty gritty of what that looks like on a day to day basis, and just some of the rules and guidelines and then I'll cover a few examples.

Each day, I'll pick one fear spot. And that's again, a task or activity that you've been fearing, or you've been putting off procrastinating, whatever it might be, and just do it. And it can be totally tiny. In fact, tackling those tiny micro fears is a really great place to start. Because again, this will allow you to build confidence with the practice. Keep in mind that sometimes the fear busting actions that we need to tackle require us to not do something rather than to do something. So for instance, to stay quiet when we'd normally speak out to let go when we typically try to control a situation to embrace and listen rather than to defend ourselves if we tend to be defensive, to not numb out our feelings, things like that. And I'll give more examples in a moment. And you're just going to do this day after day.

There are a few rules for this. And I want to go over those now.

So number one, meet yourself where you are. In the moment, this is so important, what is a brave, bold leap for you maybe at the center of someone else's comfort zone, do not get into the habit of comparing your fears to someone else's, we're all individual. And we all have strengths and weaknesses. And we all have things that make us more afraid and things that just seem completely habitual and normal and don't trigger that fear for us.

Along a similar line is rule number two, which is that this is an entirely personal process only you know, what will be the most soul expanding life eliminating fears to conquer. And this also means that you're the only one who can hold yourself accountable. No one else can

tell whether you're really doing this work day in and day out. So if you want to do it, commit to it and do it fully and be really honest with yourself. In fact, being honest with ourselves is sometimes one of the fears that we need to tackle because the mind can trick us into pretending that we're doing this type of work. But perhaps we're not think about that for yourself and whether or not that's you. And I know for sure that has been me at many times. So there is no shame in that game.

Rule number three is that your fear barometer will vary from day to day, month to month, life season to life season. So flow with it, don't try and resist it. And just be gentle with yourself. So it's okay if the things that were once in your comfort zone somehow find themselves on the periphery and our fear spots. Once again, just face them again, that happens. It's completely okay. It's completely normal, go easy on yourself.

And rule number four is that failure is fun. So in every failure, there is a lesson to be learned. It's a boundary that's been expanded perhaps it's a self imposed limitation that's been shattered. Find the beauty and the lesson in your failures and welcome failure into this practice and into your life. If you've read the book, *The Subtle Art* I'm not giving an F, I'm not going to say because I don't want to end up in the explicit category. But Mark Manson has a great quote about this, the quote goes like this, if someone is better than you at something, then it's likely because she has failed at it more than you have. If someone is worse than you, it's likely because he hasn't been through all the painful learning experiences you have. And I love that. And it's so applicable to this idea of fear facing on a daily basis, I want to take a moment to share some practical examples of this daily fear facing or micro exposure therapy.

So here are some ideas, perhaps it's sitting down to write the first page to brush the first stroke across the canvas or to draw the first line, shaking up your routine to incorporate something joyful randomly into your day. This may sound silly in the moment, but there are definitely times when we just feel so rushed, that it scares us to stop and slow down and just do something that feels good. So that can be if you're facing.

Another idea is allowing yourself to move forward and take the first step on a project or creative endeavor that your soul has been calling you towards. Even though you're just entirely uncertain about the next steps like you can't figure out where your foot is going to stop if you'd go for it, but you just go for it anyway.

Closing out of a social media app, when you hear that whisper to do so. Or abstaining from social media altogether, this can be a truly brave thing to do, because that constant scrolling is so addictive. And actually in the next episode, I'll be talking about that and the

dopamine driven feedback loop. But it is so numbing to and it can really block out a lot of the ramblings that we hear internally that were maybe afraid to hear or deal with.

Taking up a new hobby, I recently decided to start knitting and the first, I don't even know four hours were a bit scary. I mean, scary looking and scary. For me, personally, I kept having to unwind and unravel everything because a loop or thread would go missing, and it would unravel itself. And I almost stopped because I was like perhaps I'm just not good at this. And then I kept going and it's actually really enjoyable.

This next one is a bit different. And I there is a bit of a disclaimer on this one at the end. So make sure you listen to the whole thing. But it could be eating a feared food that your mind has told you is bad, again, quotations or to be avoided simply as a means of controlling some desired outcome. If you do this, proceed without guilt and without later engaging in compensatory behaviors, like restricting or exercising. And again, be very careful. If you're not ready to do this, like maybe this is a much bigger fear for you. It's not like a tiny fear spot on the periphery of that comfort zone. Wait, don't push yourself too far.

Replying to texts that you've forgotten to reply to and now feel guilty about there's like that quote about the elephant graveyard, that is my text messages or whatever. And that is so true. For me personally, I always want to give a thoughtful response. And so I often will see a text, not reply in the moment, then forget, then feel guilty, then feel afraid that, oh, gosh, now I have to explain to this person that I really do care. But I just forgot and then felt guilty and this whole silly cycle. And so sometimes it's just doing something as simple as that. And just going through and getting that off your mind. Because all these little fears too, not only do they push in on our lives, but they take up so much mental space and energy and those little two dues that we're not crossing off, because we're afraid they drain us over time. And they really sap the energy from the things that are more important and more meaningful in our lives too.

Another example would be reaching out to ask for help or support when you need it. Some of us are really great at asking for support or help some of us are not I personally am not great at that. And that's something that has often been scary for me is to say, hey, I need a little help here with whatever it may be, whether it's mental health, or it's just something like, you know, I need to move this piece of furniture can someone come help me, we don't have to do it all on our own. And sometimes the fears we need to face are simply saying I need some help.

The last example I'll mention is this idea of each year frogs. If you haven't heard of this, it comes from a motivational speech given by I

believe it was Brian Tracy, if it's not, I will definitely make note of the correct author in the show notes. So the idea here is that your frogs are those tasks again, kind of going back to the text messages that was nagging, sort of draining their sapping the energy from you. It seems like a small procrastination when you just put off one of them. But then as they mount or as time goes on, it builds and builds and builds and they can actually these small, somewhat mundane tasks can actually spiral into the sort of monumental feeling fear based activities.

So the idea here is like for example, let's say your email inbox is just completely overflowing. I totally get it. I've been there and you've been neglecting it and you feel this pang of fear or overwhelm or guilt or whatever it is every time you think about it or go into it and it's like you don't even want to click into it because all those icky feelings come up. Not fun. So the idea here is you if you eat your frog, no one wants to eat a frog, right? So your frog is your email inbox, you recognize that it's not going away, you take a step bravely towards it, and you just handle it. Eat That Frog, I find that my fears often come in this form, when life is really busy. I won't necessarily be like thinking about, you know, when you kind of go into survival mode, like things are just so busy that really the only thing you're afraid of is just the mounting to dues of everyday life. And so these are good ones to tackle in those moments when you're like I can't possibly take on anything else. Let me just get the laundry done. Let me just clear out this email inbox. I need to keep my fears fairly simple and straightforward, and they need to feel productive. If this idea of micro exposure therapy or therapy has sparked something within you, I do hope you give it a try this week and moving forward even if you're not doing it every single day. When you think about it and have that Inkling go for it.

Face your fears, especially the small ones, the small ones seem tiny. They seem like they're not hurting and yet they are so limiting in the long term. So just face them head on, toss out the minds excuses, because it's inevitably going to have plenty of them. The mind is never short on excuses to keep us playing small and just take the first step towards whatever it is your heart is calling you to do.

Thank you so much for listening. Time is precious, and I'm grateful that you've spent some of yours with me today.

In the next episode, we're talking about instant gratification versus enduring satisfaction. If you want to learn how to break free from the dopamine driven feedback loop that keeps us seeking quick thrills Be sure to tune in. If you've enjoyed what you've heard today. Remember to subscribe to the soul horizon on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, wherever you enjoy listening and be sure to leave a review if you have a moment your reviews help get more ears on this podcast and are so so appreciated. read and learn more on AshleyMelillo.com Or follow along

on Instagram. Thanks for being here, sweet soul.