



FEAR AND CHOICES



SMART
Family & Friends

FEAR: False Evidence Appearing Real

Often we put off making difficult choices out of fear — fear of what might happen as a result of our choice. This fear can keep us stuck, unwilling to make a change because we cannot guarantee the outcome of our choices. We become immobilized, effectively afraid of an outcome which has not yet happened and *which may not ever happen*.

“No passion so effectively robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear.”
~Edmund Burke

Exercise – Resolving Fear: Divide a sheet of paper into three columns or use the worksheet below.

A	B	C
What am I afraid of?	My fear, as a “what if” question:	Then what would I do?

Example:

- A. I’m afraid she’ll get worse and I’ll feel guilty
- B. What if I do feel guilty?
- C. I won’t be able to sleep at night.

If your answer to the question in Column B is another fear (such as “I won’t be able to sleep”) in Column C, then carry that fear down to the next line in Column A and continue. Keep going with this until you have a plan in Column C. Working out a plan for these feared outcomes (which may never come to pass) gives us more control over them. It takes away the mystery and allows us to reassure ourselves that if the feared outcome does occur, we will be able to handle it.

NOTE: This exercise can be used for any source of anxiety, not just anxiety related to making a difficult choice.

“Expose yourself to your deepest fear: after that, fear has no power, and the fear — shrinks and vanishes. You are free.”
~Jim Morrison

