



BeliefBusters

Special Report

Fear Works, But Love Works Better

Choosing love is simply accepting not-fear as the beacon to guide you in how to proceed. Both love and fear can propel you to the same course of action, but fear causes suffering.

Ray Dodd

I recently had a discussion with a group of students at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida who had read my book, *The Power of Belief*. Their perspective was refreshing and it was a lively conversation.

Quite a few of the students had a strong objection to the statement:

“What is really true is that in every moment of your life you have done the best you could. As much as the Demon of Perfection argues to the contrary, it is not possible in the moments that have passed you could have done any better. You get it when you get it. You realize something the minute you realize it and not one minute before.”

They argued that this is just an excuse for poor performance.

If you make a mistake, if you screw-up, if you ignore what you are responsible for you should feel guilty and be punished.

No doubt, if we go out and play when there is work to be done (like ignoring homework and risk failing a class) or do a poor job, or don't pay attention and make a mess of things, it creates problems. But invoking a non-stop dialog in your head of worry and self-punishment never actually solves anything. It may launch you into action, but it's action driven by fear.

I'm not talking about the authentic emotion of fear in the moment of danger that is revealing the truth of the situation, I'm talking about unfounded fear, fear based on lies.

Every moment has an emotional perspective.

So, all our experiences, no matter how old, have emotional memory. Past experiences have an emotional point of view that was, in the moment they happened, telling the truth.

So, what happens if someone takes credit for your work, criticizes you, or is unkind? What happens if you do something that turns out poorly and you're not proud of? Your initial reaction is authentic – this doesn't feel good. But then what? Normally we launch into a story about who's right, who's wrong and what should have happened. Perhaps an old wound has been touched, and our belief about it - our point of view, ignites an internal dialog that defines and defends that point of view.

If emotional drama and judgment follow then the perspective is full of fear. Fear we won't be accepted. Fear we are not enough. Fear we won't get it right. Fear we're not safe.

But these fears are not about any clear or present danger, they are the emotions attached to old memories that in this moment simply are not true.

There is another way. Choose Love. What does that look like? It has a lot to do with noticing how your response feels to you. When we take some action there is always a re-action, a consequence - feedback that occurs. If you don't like the feedback, do something else. Take a different action. Dwelling on what happened, kicking yourself over "mistakes" solves nothing and is a waste of energy. People often stumble upon great success and trip badly over carefully laid plans. So, what is a mistake, really?

Choosing love is simply accepting not-fear as the beacon to guide you in how to proceed. Both love and fear can propel you to the same course of action, but fear causes suffering. We learn to choose fear and don't forgive ourselves or anyone else for mistakes until they suffer just the right amount. We are sure we are right about what should have happened and

have no intention of giving up being right. But what does that solve? Are we all destined to suffer? I don't think so.

Sure, fear works but love works better.

There is a wonderful story – the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In fact, the essence of this parable exists in many cultures, not just the Bible, as a lesson about forgiveness and choosing love.

In this ancient story, an elderly man has two sons and divides his estate among them. Not long after, the younger son sets off with his new found wealth to far distant lands. He enjoys himself and lives wildly, never letting his father know where he is or what he is doing.

The older son stays with his father. He takes care of the estate and is the good son. In a few short years the younger son spends all his money and begins to go hungry.

In his suffering he realizes what he has done and starts the long trek back to his father house to ask for forgiveness, but he is afraid his father will never forgive him.

As he nears the end of his journey, one of his father's servants sees the younger son coming up the road. He runs to give the news to his master and the father tells the servant to prepare a feast for his son's homecoming.

The younger son is welcomed with open arms and there is a big party in his honor with food and dancing. The older son is out working in fields, hears the music and is angry, refusing to join the party. He tells his father, "I have been a faithful son, always here, and you never gave me a party!" His father replies, "My son, you are always with me and I have given you freely what is yours. We should celebrate and be glad, because your brother was lost and now is found."

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the younger son realizes that his actions don't feel good and are not producing what he wants. He sees what he has done and takes steps to repair the harm he has caused. His brother thinks he should be shunned and punished. His father sees that his son has

realized his mistake, immediately forgives him and is ready to move on to the next level of living.

We notice our mistakes when we notice them and not one minute before.

Surely, there are consequences for our actions but only the servants of fear do not forgive.

Sometimes we make choices that don't work out and we later regret. It can be a learning experience, or a lifelong wound. It's up to you to choose.

So, if you don't like the results of your actions do something else. Don't be so hard on yourself. You are constantly changing, evolving and growing. Your best self is what you are right now, nothing more, and nothing less. Your best self in the future is whatever you decide it will be when you take action to make it so. Take good care of yourself. If you don't, who will? Choose love when deciding on your next move. Remember, fear works but love works better.



In 1996, after a chance meeting at the pyramid ruins in Teotihuacán, Mexico, **Ray Dodd** embarked on a 6-year apprenticeship with don Miguel Ruiz M.D. (author of the best-selling book, *The Four Agreements*). Now author of *BeliefWorks* and *The Power of Belief*, he helps both individuals and businesses forge new beliefs to affect lasting and positive change. A former professional musician and engineer with many years in corporate management, he is a leading authority on the subject of belief, teaching seminars about *BeliefWorks™*, and applying the age-less wisdom of the Toltec to life and business. Ray can be reached at ray@everydaywisdom.us and his website is: <http://www.everydaywisdom.us/>
