

01/09

Learning about **Fear** From Chinese

Musings of an Ontological Coach

SWIPE



Fear - 惧怕

In Chinese, fear can be translated into two characters “惧怕” (Ju Pa).

怕 is the common character to describe fear. This character describes the heart with a white (blank) state, meaning “emptiness of the heart”. The interpretation can be something that holds a place in our heart (of great value), is emptied or lost.

惧 - the character describes what the heart is feeling when our eyes are wide open (as a result of being shocked or surprised). 🤯

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Fear - 害怕

Fear can also be described in Chinese as “害怕”. 害 means to harm. 害怕 describes a state where a person experiences harm when something of value is lost.

Thus fear is an emotion that can reveal what is important to us and the effect or harm on us when that “something” is lost.

From the two Chinese characters, the key parts lie with the eyes and the heart. We can infer that fear has to do a lot with the eyes of our hearts. Fear is actually an emotion that helps us see and sense and stay focused.



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Understanding Fear

We engage with fear when we drive. We engage with fear when we are doing an exam. We engage with fear when we are working on tasks that might cause great damage if the results go south. However, this emotion of fear is invisible. It stays in the background, until we sense a threat.

The emotion of fear helps us to anticipate danger, when we are at risk of losing something we value. It is an emotion that gives us data about what is important to us as we deal with life distractions.



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Understanding Fear

When we overdo fear or live in a mood of fear, we end up in a hyper alert mode. We become problem-oriented and we develop a tunnel vision.

Not wanting to lose something means we end up holding it very tightly. In a mood of fear, people struggle to let go and step out of their comfort zone. Fear can hinder us from taking risks and growing purposefully.



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Noticing Fear

1. Breathing practice - We can pay attention to our breathing especially in a heightened alert mode. Our breathing pattern tends to be shallow and fast when we are in a mood of fear. Being in this state reduces our ability to think clearly. We are less likely to make good decisions.

To overcome this, we can practice deep breathing through our belly. This practice can help us to slow down and not be in a hyper alert mode. This allow us to respond rather than react.



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Leveraging Fear

2. Fear communicates through our body

We often think we are in control until our body reveals that there are threats. The body responds differently from the mind. Our body communicates threat instinctively and the body does not lie.

What do you notice when fear shows up in your body and you are in heightened alert? What do you seek to control?

By paying attention to what our body is telling us, we can have greater awareness of what we seek to control and what we truly value.



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Leveraging Fear

3. Practice letting Fear be our Teacher

Fear can often reveal what is deep within our hearts and what we truly value. For example, what is the fear of rejection teaching me? What is the fear of failure revealing to me? Where is the fear of not being good enough showing up?

The answers might not be straightforward but they do reveal truth that might be hidden within our hearts. Fear is a great teacher if we allow this emotion to speak deeply to us. When we choose to reflect and let fear teach us, we gain insights and wisdom.



ONE MORE

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Intepreting Emotions from Other Languages

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