

Becoming Your True Self

Transforming Anxiety into Courage

Based on a paper by Dan Jordan

Learning about the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Class – True Self2

Facing the Unknown

Facing any unknown is not easy. The prospect of it, particularly when facing the unknown in ourselves, is always accompanied by anxiety.

Facing the Unknown

An unknown outside us is nearly always seen as a potential threat to our security for it brings up a question about an unknown in ourselves — do we, or do we not have what it will take to deal successfully with that outside unknown?

Facing the Unknown

Anxiety has all of the qualities of fear, except that it usually has no clear object. Both fear and anxiety produce rising energy to deal with an emergency situation. One can handle fear more easily, since the threatening object can be removed or avoided.

Facing the Unknown

In the case of anxiety, the system prepares for an emergency when it is not clear what the emergency is. Without any object, it is difficult to know what action to take and the system is never quite certain when to declare the emergency over. Anxiety may thus be seen as energy without a goal.

Do you understand why we all feel anxiety
sometimes?

How do you deal with anxiety?

Facing the Unknown

The only successful way to deal with anxiety is to treat that energy as a gift and find a goal for it which will serve our purpose of developing capacities for loving and knowing.

Facing the Unknown

Determining what that specific goal should be is perhaps the most universally creative act. It means taking a risk and stepping into the unknown, doubting yet always hopeful of discovering some new capacity or some new limitation (which is also part of one's reality).

Taking risks by trying something new is not
easy.

Do you see why this can help you to
discover your true self?

Facing the Unknown

Being attracted to that unknown in ourselves is faith; being able to utilize the energy from anxiety by setting a goal and taking steps toward it is courage.

Facing the Unknown

Thus, faith, doubt, anxiety, and courage are all basic aspects of the process of transformation — the release of potential. If there were no unknowns, there would be no doubt or anxiety; and with no doubt or anxiety there would be no need for faith and courage.

In a world full of doubt and anxiety, do you see the importance of faith and courage?

Spiritual Transformation

The power of the Bahá'í Faith to transform human beings by releasing their potential comes directly from the fact that it keeps doubt and anxiety from becoming unmanageable and provides an incentive and motivation to deal with them constructively through faith and courage.

When you feel doubt and anxiety, do you think of turning to the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith and its prayers to find faith and courage?

Spiritual Transformation

Nobody can read Bahá'u'lláh without feeling his own loving and knowing capacities being awakened and developed. As we continually explore the Writings, we begin to see ourselves differently and to see the environment differently.

Spiritual Transformation

As we begin to see ourselves and the environment differently, we begin to feel differently about things. As we begin to feel differently, we begin to behave differently.

Spiritual Transformation

The Writings therefore serve as that force which helps us to become free from all of those attachments and fears which keep us imprisoned and unable to take that risky but creative step into the unknown.

Spiritual Transformation

The Writings also make general anxiety and doubt manageable by making sense out of human history and the world's present state of perpetual crisis.

Spiritual Transformation

A further source of courage comes from Bahá'u'lláh's showing what kinds of goals are right and in keeping with the purpose of our creation. That gives us some guidance in taking that creative step of defining a goal which can be achieved by utilizing energy from anxiety.

Have you considered setting some reasonable goals for yourself that might set you in the right direction?

We have the Nine Year Plan to suggest how we can contribute in some way.

Spiritual Transformation

Thus, the Writings stimulate our capacity to know and to love in a unique way which we may call faith and courage. That, in turn, serves to guarantee a continued growth and development of those two basic capacities.

Spiritual Transformation

In other words, knowing and loving used in the right way through faith and courage will increase our knowing and loving capacity — will release our human potential.

