

Life: Running Toward or Running Away?

The two primary motivations in life are fear and love. We make decisions and practice relationships based on either running away from or running toward challenges we face. What we find helpful are very specific and practical ways to differentiate between reactions of fear and love, in order that our thoughts, feelings and behaviors will be less fear-based and more love-based.



Fear is defined as an unpleasant and often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. Fear is commonly accompanied by a loss of courage. It is this loss of courage that causes us to run from the expectation of danger. **A definition of love is an unselfish, loyal and benevolent concern for the good of another.** Love is the choice to put the good of someone else first, especially above your own comfort or desires.

You may find yourself moving back and forth between both fear and love at the same time.

Being loved in this way reminds us we have worth and value, and that we are not alone. God, our extended and immediate family, close friends and even loved ones who have preceded us in death are with us and inspire us infusing us with courage. Surrounded by and linking arms with those who love us, we find renewed courage once chased away by fear, to run toward the expectation of danger.

Note the characteristics below of fear and love-based reactions to adversity.

Fear-Based Reactions to Adversity	Love-Based Reactions to Adversity
Worst-case scenario thinking	Balanced scenario thinking
Offering maximum headspace to fear	Increasing headspace to love-based ideas
Sharing fear-based thoughts without a filter	Speaking love-based thoughts freely
Experiencing fear-based emotions	Experiencing love-based emotions
Making fear-based decisions	Making love-based decisions

Fear and love-based thoughts, feelings and behaviors shape our experience of life. As you read the examples below consider how often you experience each one, and how the love of those around you can stimulate you to a greater focus on living a love-based life.

Fear-Based Thoughts	Love-Based Thoughts
Good does not exist in culture	Good exists in all manifestations of culture
Culture intends evil toward me personally	Culture intends good things for me personally
Evil is predominant in culture	Good is everywhere in culture
Evil will always affect my life in negative ways	Good will always affect my life in positive ways
<i>*Evil is present, personal, pervasive & permanent</i>	<i>*Good is present, personal, pervasive & permanent</i>

Fear-Based Feelings

Anxiety, panic, worry, stress
Alone, helpless, hopeless, doom
Impatience, inability to focus, agitation, irritation
Loss, lack of control of any kind
Inability to cope with discomfort or pain

Love-Based Feelings

Comfort, calm, trust, coherence
Not alone, hope, resourced, favorable future
Patience, focus, understanding, empathy
Loss, acceptance of what I do and do not control
Resources helping me cope with discomfort or pain

Fear-Based Behaviors

Outbursts of impatience or anger
Arguing, win/lose communication
Unbalanced focus on the negative
Emotion-driven reactions and responses
Pessimism, inability to decide, give up and quit

Love-Based Behaviors

Empathetic responses
Understand/Be understood communication
Balanced focus on the positive
Thoughtful and measured action and reaction
Active optimism, decisive action, tenacity



Along the continuum of life, when you are faced with everything from an economic adversity in life to the excruciating pain of losing a loved one to death, your response will be to either **run away** from the painful experience, or to **run toward** the challenge.

It is the love surrounding you in this moment that will fuel your decision to stand in the face of struggle, and help you win. **You are not a victim.** You do not have to surrender. You can stand and fight.

*When fear rushes in, pause to breathe, a little slower and a little more deeply than normal. As your body begins to relax, choose to focus your thoughts on images that create appreciation, joy, happiness, peace and past successes. Bring to the forefront of your mind, all the **sources of love in your life** allowing them to permeate your thinking – the **beginning of being love-based.***

You have at your disposal, power and strength to overcome adversity that you have no idea exists. Whether you've lived in fear your entire life, or something recent has overtaken you and threatens your very survival, **the power of love is alive and well in and around you.** You are not alone, and you will find your way through this challenge.

