

# *Becoming A Beacon of Light*

*By Janet Bennett*

In this time of economic stress and global upheaval, I would like to offer a positive way forward out of the darkness: become a beacon of light to yourself and the world around you.

The only true antidote to fear is faith—and faith is much stronger than anything you might fear in your life, whether it is within your own personal life situation or the larger world context.

Faith is your path out of stress—which is only fear wrapped in modern language.

I am sure that I don't need to spend time listing all the stressful things that are occurring in our world today—we are all too well aware of what is happening in our economy, our social institutions, and global politics. It leaves us—all too often—feeling hopeless and helpless to positively affect what is occurring in our own lives let alone what is occurring in the world around us.

But I know better, and that is what has motivated me to write this piece. It would be very unloving to know a path to peace and not share it with others. So I offer some thoughts on my own journey that has allowed me to learn how to face fear, see it for the boogie man that it is, and move past it into a life of peace and joy.

You may remember FDR's famous saying, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." That sentiment is as true today as it was when he uttered it in the context of WW II.

His point was that when we focus our thinking and attention on what we are afraid of, we give it power over us. Our thoughts generate our emotions which then, all too often, determine our actions.

When we allow fear to rule our thoughts, it generates all sorts of negative emotions, and we tend to make life choices that have negative consequences. That is the path of fear.

On the other hand, when we learn to rise above letting fear rule our thoughts, we give our minds the opportunity to be creative and discover solutions to our life situations that we otherwise would probably never be able to conceive. That is the path of faith.

I use the word faith to mean an acceptance and appreciation of a power greater than ourselves—call it divine universe, God, Buddha, Allah, Mother Nature, or whatever you choose.

Faith is that feeling of awe that you have when you stare up into a star-studded sky and realize just how small we humans really are in the grand scheme of things.

Awe puts our lives into perspective.

That acceptance and appreciation of a power greater than ourselves is key to moderating and even removing fear from your life. Fear resides in the trenches of life—it can never exist or be maintained when you feel a sense of awe. Faith pulls us up and out of the reach of fear.

So how does one make the transition from a fear-driven life to one guided by faith?

The first step is to recognize and accept that you have a *choice* in the matter.

Too often we live our lives in a sense of powerlessness, when, ironically, we have all the power in the world to create peace and joy in our lives. But first you have to understand that you do indeed have that fundamental choice.

And the choice is very simple: do I *choose* to allow fear to control my life with all sorts of negative projections of the future or regrets and guilt over the past? Or do I learn to *control* my thoughts and release these fearful thoughts to faith? And to know that every experience that I have ever had has given me a positive lesson and my task is to receive it, learn from it, and move on?

The choice is simple to understand, but it may take some practice to make the change in your life since you have probably had many years of conditioning to believe in the worst. It is, unfortunately, part of our current social conditioning, but it can be overcome. *You* are in charge of your mind, and you can decide what thoughts you are going to allow into it with enough practice.

If you are in doubt about the inner power that you possess, please read the classic, *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Victor Frankel. If he can learn to maintain joy in a concentration camp, we ought to be able to learn to do it in our lives today.

Second, learn to observe or “witness” how fear is currently running your life. Just watch your thoughts and see how they make you feel and the actions that those thoughts and emotions motivate you to do.

This is part of the reconditioning process: making the shift from a life *driven* by fear to one *guided* by faith.

I use those words—driven and guided—very intentionally.

When you live a life driven by fear, you do indeed feel powerless because you have given your power away to fear. When you live a life guided by faith, you have reclaimed your personal power and are allowing a greater force to guide you. This leaves you feeling incredibly powerful because the outside world is no longer controlling your life.

It is ironic that we are taught to try and control everything around us out of fear, when in reality, we can never control the external world. The only world that we have any true control over is our inner world, and that is where our true power resides.

And as you watch/witness yourself—your thoughts, emotions, and actions—be gentle with yourself and non-judgmental. Fear will want you to find fault with yourself and try and convince you that you will never change—but you will. I did and a lot of other people are doing it too—and have been doing it since time began.

It helps if you can bring a sense of humor to the process: learning to laugh at yourself is incredibly healing. It teaches us to take ourselves more lightly, and the less pressure and tension we put on ourselves, the more creative we can be.

Openness, acceptance, creativity, joy—these are all signs that we are making progress on the path of change. These are the feelings that are generated from a life perspective that is based in love and faith rather than fear.

The more you can live in this state the better—and living there all the time is our ultimate goal and one that is obtainable with practice.

Living in this state of grace is living as a beacon of light.

You will literally feel lighter and will generate a light and loving energy everywhere you go. You will be a channel of divine light unto the world, and play a very important role in reducing fear and stress in the people and world around you.

I hope these few thoughts will motivate you to take a look at your own life and understand that you do indeed have more power over how you live it than you may realize. You *do* have the power to transform your life from one of stress and fear to one of hope and faith.

We are all on this life transformation path together, and need to support and encourage each other along the way. I hope that these words support and encourage you to become the beacon of light that you are meant to be.

In peace,  
Janet and Max

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