

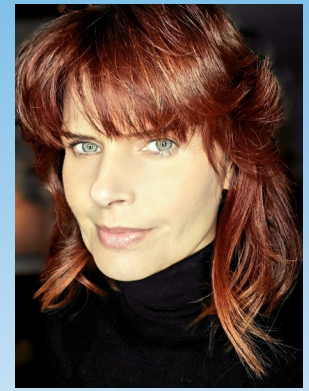
a i r Fear *by Carrie Genzel*

Attitudes
In Reverse®

Most of us have fears, but when our focus is on them we can become what we fear. We invite our fear to take power over us. I am a big believer in attracting the energy we want in our lives, and when we are living in fear, or negativity, that is often the energy that comes back to us, when we live in fear of something we are sending that energy out and that fear energy may come back. We may even take on characteristics of what we fear by constantly thinking about it, we may adopt mannerisms or habits that contribute to us turning into what we fear most.

When I was living in my illness, I feared most of life. All of my energy was based in fear. As my illness got worse so did my fear and it began to affect most of my life. I was aware that my fear was taking over and yet I felt paralyzed by it, unable to stop it. I tried to distract or numb myself from it, but that became more difficult as my fear grew and I began to become exactly what I feared. I was aware that it was happening and instead of making better choices, or seeking help, I fed into my fears even more and they continued to get worse and dominate my life. I was fortunate that the good fear, that fear that keeps us safe and helps to make good decisions for ourselves kicked in when things got really dark and I was able to find the courage to reach out for help. There was fear wrapped up in that as well, I feared that I would be judged, that I would be thought of as crazy, or that I was beyond help. None of those fears were realized. What I found was an abundance of help and support as I began my road in recovery. While on this path I learned to tame my fears, to focus on the positive and put my energy toward things I want to see happen in my life, things I am hoping to come into my life and I've learned to be open to change. I've learned that when I keep an open mind and an open heart that life gives me signals and guidance as to where to go next and what opportunities I should take advantage of. That's not to say that I am never afraid, I am, and I acknowledge that fear when it comes up, but I don't live in it today, and I don't let it make decisions for me.

When I am afraid, I try to practice contrary action. I think about my fear and think of what hope I can counter that fear with.



Changing my focus from fear to hope gets me out of a fight or flight way of thinking and into positive thinking and gratitude.

For example: I am fearful about my depression, but I am hopeful that I have picked up tools today that help me through difficult

times and remind me that dark days always pass when I am taking care of myself and my mental health.

By focusing on what I do have instead of the feeling of fear and powerlessness I am able to place my energy on positive steps that get me out of my head and into action. When I am in action, I am setting a path to move forward instead of staying stuck or falling back.

Another example: I am fearful of being judged, but I am hopeful that I have friends, family or counselors who encourage me and support me just as I am.

When I remind myself that how I am feeling today is not how I will feel forever and that I am not alone on my journey, I allow myself to be myself and love myself through challenging times. I also have made connecting with others like myself, as well as professionals, a priority as isolation is part of what holds me back from my recovery and good mental health.

It can be easy to live in fear and let that fear be the driving force in our lives, but when we do we become what we are most afraid of. This is a challenging time, but the perfect time to focus on the good things you would like to see for yourself and the community around you. Use that energy to bring positivity into your life and focus on overcoming your fears, often we can do this just by asking ourselves what action we can take to work through our fear today. We have the power to keep our fears at bay, to not let them control us and to live a healthy and happy life.

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