

QC0077 - How to Face Something You Dread

All of us have things that we dread, and so we let our emotions get the best of us and keep us from doing what we need to.

If you can relate, then you'll benefit from today's episode.

I saw a Calvin and Hobbs comic strip the other day where Calvin, very philosophically, says, "A day can really slip by when you're deliberately avoiding what you're suppose to do."

AVOIDING SOMETHING YOU DREAD.

If you're like me, you can relate. We've all had an unwanted situation we dreaded facing. It could be:

- Cleaning out the garage.
- Confronting a co-worker.
- Getting on a budget.
- Cleaning the bathroom.
- Ending a toxic relationship.
- Painting the house.
- Public speaking.
- Going to the dentist.
- Having "the talk" with a pre-teen.
- Giving bad news to a spouse.
- Going to an event you don't enjoy.

Whatever it may be, there are things we all dread facing. So we:

- Ignore it.
- Put it off.
- Find other things to do.
- Convince ourselves that now is not the time.
- Convince ourselves that it's really not that important.

In short, we try to find a way around the things we dread; especially if you're a timid, people-pleasing, conflict avoider like myself.

Recently, I needed to have a difficult conversation with someone. I put it off for a day, agonizing over what needed to be done. I was so dreading the conversation, that it was difficult to focus on anything else. I rehearse the worst

that could happen, and thus tried to convince myself that I shouldn't do it. But it needed to be done.

FACING SOMETHING YOU DREAD.

So, did I have the conversation? Yes I did. It wasn't easy, but it turn out better than I expected and the whole experience taught me something.

I learned there are five steps you need to take when facing something you dread:

1. Take a breath.

When you're facing something you dread, it's easy to become worried and internally tense. Mentally, it can be hard to think about anything else. Emotionally, your anxiety may increase, And physically, your heart rate, blood pressure and muscle tension may elevate.

So the first thing to do is stop and take a deep breath. (You may need to take more than one.) This will begin to relax your body and calm the alarm center of your brain. As this happens, it will allow the logic portion of your brain to remind you that what you dread is just a part of life and not the end of the world.

Taking a breath can help you take back control.

2. Take some time.

Instead of rushing into it just to get it over with, take a little time to think things through and get your ducks in a row. But don't take a lot of time. When facing something you dread, the tendency is to procrastinate by continuing to take more and more time.

Take a short period of time to clear your head, calm your nerves, and get your thoughts together. If you're a person of faith, this is a good time to pray and search the Scriptures.

When you've done these things, you are now ready to move on to step 3.

3. Take advice.

Even after taking a little time to think, chances are your dread is keeping you from thinking as clearly or as completely as you could.

It helps consult with someone you trust. They can help you think through the situation and bring up anything you might not have thought of. As the saying goes, “Two heads are better than one.”

4. Take action.

After you’ve taken a breath, taken some time, and taken some advice, it’s now time to take action. You’ve prepared, so don’t put it off any longer. Get started. Take the first step and once you’re in it you’ll find that momentum will carry you through the situation.

And finally...

5. Take the results.

More often than not, the results of facing what you dread will be better than you expect, and you’ll be glad you did it. But, even if things don’t turn out as you had hoped, you’ll have started a process that gets you unstuck and you’ll have the relief of having the dread behind you.

These five steps - taking a breath, taking some time, taking advice, taking action, and taking the results - will keep you from being stuck in dread and procrastination. They’ll help you move forward with confidence and freedom.

A FINAL WORD...

Facing things you dread may be unwanted and uncomfortable, but it’s also unavoidable. It’s a part of life.

But you don’t need to run from the things you dread. They can be opportunities for growth. Learning to face the things you dread will free you up to face the world with more confidence and joy. You can do this!