

CHAPTER 24

Women's Club: 1980 **HOW TO OVERCOME FEAR** **AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

Most incoming freshmen (and even sophomores, juniors and some seniors) are concerned with how they 'come across' and whether they will be 'accepted' by their peers. Many people are afraid of rejection by others! With some, the fear of people and their opinions is morbid and unhealthy.

Fear must be dealt with. Uncontrolled, it can frustrate you and paralyze your achievements. It can literally wreck your life. You will not be able to do what's necessary to gain the respect of others. It will stifle your service to those around you.

Tonight we will discuss how to overcome fear. Of course, we cannot cover the whole gamut, because the subject is far too large. But, I do want to offer SEVEN practical points which will help you — and which will enable you to achieve the goals you desire.

THE KEY

The Bible shows that the KEY to overcoming fear is love!

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love..." (1 John 4:18).

This love is not just a sentiment — it is ACTION! It is realizing that if you stay in your little hemmed-in corner, never reaching out to others, you will not rise to higher plateaus.

Your life is like a small rosebud growing in the garden where God has set it. But, as long as it's closed tightly upon itself, no one will ever see the radiant, beautiful flower that's hidden. Only when the rose unfurls itself — reaches out — can others enjoy its beauty, fragrance and richness.

As you allow God to work in your life — to give you love for others — only then will you lose your fear of others.

SEVEN WAYS TO ACQUIRE LOVE AND OVERCOME YOUR FEARS

1. SET A GOAL TO OVERCOME FEAR AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

At the outset of this new Club year, make it your goal to overcome self-consciousness, fear, and shyness. Make it one of your priorities. Determine to put forth the effort. Take initiative. Push yourselves. This will result in productive growth.

Resolve to participate in Club. Most fears involve a feeling of a lack of 'self-worth' or 'self-achievement.' Taking an active part in Club can help you with fears that may not even be directly related to Club. Even if you stand up to answer a question with only 'Yes' or 'No' — that's an accomplishment, and a beginning step.

Let love and service be the motivation. And, the very things you desire most you will begin to attain — confidence, acceptance, usefulness and the ability to edify.

2. PRAY TO GOD FOR HELP AND GUIDANCE

Consider exactly what you are afraid of. Analyze yourself. Get down to the 'nitty gritty.' Ask God to show you what you may have overlooked. Pray for the courage and strength to overcome your fears. Remember that the proper fear of God in our lives will dispel the fear of men.

3. FACE YOUR FEARS

Your fears can grip and hold you down — they will enslave you. Until you face your fears, you will

remain their prisoner. Confront your fears, whether they are fear of people, fear of rejection, fear that people won't like you, fear that you will expose your ignorance or fear of inadequacy.

Some of you may know Mel Tillis, who is a well-loved country western singer here in America. Yet, did you know that he stutters? Mel comes on stage and begins talking with the audience before his songs. 'I-I-I...k-know you know I-I-I stutter--b-but I'm still g-going to sing for you t-tonight.' Mel doesn't let his handicap paralyze his performances. His audiences love his singing. He openly faces his difficulty.

In the same way, face whatever fears or shortcomings you may have. Don't let them hold you back from participating in Club. It will enrich your life.

4. REMEMBER THAT YOU DETERMINE YOUR GROWTH

Did you realize that each of us determines the degree of success we achieve? However, to reach higher levels of accomplishment requires effort. The Bible sums it up this way: 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.' (II Cor. 9:6)

Similarly, the greater the effort on your part, the more will be accomplished.

5. TAKE THE INITIATIVE

Learn to be outgoing. Smile and greet people. This helps you break down fear barriers in yourself — and it encourages other people to be outgoing themselves! It generates feelings of self-worth and acceptance, both in you and others.

Take advantage of smaller group discussions outside the Club, such as in your dorms or at the Student Center when eating. This will give you confidence for larger groups. Progress step-by-step.

6. DON'T BE CONCERNED ABOUT 'FAILURE'

Any so-called 'failure' is really a stepping stone to ultimate success. We learn by our mistakes. The very fact that you may have 'failed' in some small way shows that you have TRIED — you put forth effort toward reaching your goal! So what if you don't measure up with your first attempts? You are learning lessons. Remember that you can fail many times, but you are not a failure until you give up.

So, keep trying and putting forth effort — and you will literally 'fail' your way to success! Again, think long range. Envision the poised and confident person you want to be and you will eventually become that person. Ask God to give you courage and motivation to that end. You'll need His strength and help.

7. FORGET YOURSELF!

Many fears come from being self-centered, being worried of how you come across, and whether others will like you. Begin thinking in terms of others, helping them, serving them, encouraging them to achieve their best — and you'll find that this effort will help erase self-consciousness from your life. Forget self, and give to others.

The key to overcoming fears, then, is to think in terms of truly helping others. Ask yourself: How can I help and edify them? That is what LOVE is — active, genuine service.

Using these principles will change your outlook, your thought processes — your very life!

They will help you 'perfect' your love and erase fear. You will learn to admire others for their qualities and accomplishments. Your mind will not be constantly on your-self.

As you participate in Club and put these principles to work in your life, you can actually infuse confidence and courage in others.

Your efforts — and even your 'failures' — can help 'turn on' others, and make your Club better!

So, don't let fears hold you back. They only stifle your growth and accomplishment. You can overcome them. The way is before you. This Club will help. Use it to the utmost as an opportunity to do your 'exercises in confidence.' Use it to perfect the LOVE which casts out fear!

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