

Misunderstood...criticized...ridiculed? Do you have a persistent, irrational fear that just won't go away? It's excessive, out of proportion to the actual degree of threat, and it's affecting every area of your life—curtailing activities and suffocating joy. People in this ditch are deathly afraid, huddled in a corner, fearful that no matter how high the ditch walls, they won't escape the threat. Whether it's a formidable fear of elevators, spiders, or something else, one thing is certain: God wants to empower you to move from the pandemonium of panic to peace.

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” -Isa 41:10

What Are Key Contributors to Irrational Fear?

Phobias do not appear in a vacuum. Something set you up to be controlled by fear, and something serves to trigger that fear. The setup occurred in the past...while the trigger occurs in the present. Here are the Key Contributors to F-E-A-R:

- **(F)ormer Experiences Are Typically Traumatic Experiences:**
 - **Analyze the Reason for Your Fear...Then Tell Yourself the Truth about the Past/ Present.**
“Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place” -Psa 51:6
- **(E)motional Overload**
 - **Denying Feelings:** *“I must **not** show my pain.” “I must **not** have any anger.”*
 - **People-Pleaser Mentality:** *“I must **keep** everyone happy/ **prevent** anger”*
 - **Internalizing Stress:** *“I have a lot of **hidden** anxiety/ no **outlet** for venting emotions”*
 - **Strict or Perfectionist Authority Figures:** *“I **never** pleased my parents.” “It seemed I was **always** receiving harsh punishments.”*
 - **Analyze the Reason for Your Fear- Let the Lord Help You Heal from Your Hurts.**
*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in **due time**. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” -1 Pet 5:6-7*
- **(A)voidance of Threatening Situations**
 - **Refusing to Face Fears:** *“I think it will go away in time- I can avoid fearful situations.”*
 - **Giving No Opportunity for Change:** *“I don't seek help or talk to anyone or ask why fearful.”*
 - **Continuing to Reinforce Fears:** *“Everything I do is contingent on my fearfulness.”*
 - **Reinforcing Negative Thought Patterns:** *“Fear dominates all my decisions- filter of fear.”*

Analyze the Reason for Your Fear/ Let the Lord Help You Face Your Fears. *“I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” -Isa 41:13*

- **(R)unaway Imagination**
 - **Expecting Life to be Threatening:** *“I always expect resistance and roadblocks, disaster.”*
 - **Anticipating the Worst Will Happen:** *“I expect rejection / ridicule, hurt/ heartache.”*
 - **Believing You Can Never Change:** *“I think I will always be controlled by fear forever.”*
 - **Thinking You Have No Control Over the Situation:** *“I feel overwhelmed/ powerless ”*

Analyze the Reason for Your Fear/ Change Your Thought Life. *“Whatever is true ...noble ...right ...pure...lovely... admirable... excellent...praiseworthy—think about such things” - Phil 4:8*

Memorize Isaiah 41:10: *“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

HOW CAN YOU DECREASE PHOBIC FEAR WITH “DESENSITIZATION”?³ If you are overly sensitive to an object or situation, “desensitization” can be the key that opens the door to freedom. Systematically repeat each of the following steps one at a time. Repeat the same step day after day for a week or two, or until you no longer have a strong emotional reaction, then move on to the next step. Anxiety should be expected when moving to the next step, but it will dissipate as the step is done with increased repetition.