

READING
COMPANION &
SMALL GROUP
DISCUSSION
GUIDE



WEEK 2

Sept 27 - Oct 3

PART 1

The Energy of Fear

PART 1: THE ENERGY OF FEAR



Have you ever heard this acronym for fear: “Forget Everything And Run”? In denial, thinking we can outrun it, we head to the medicine cabinet, liquor cabinet, refrigerator, shopping mall, or some other form of behavior that offers a temporary escape.

We can run, but we can't hide from Fear, nor should we try because it's not real. It's amazing how much power we give to something that doesn't really exist until we breathe the breath of life into it.

Every fear originates from the same place within where an attachment to a concern of death or loss dominates our attention and reigns supreme.

When Fear Speaks, Listen by Dennis Merritt Jones

PART 1: THE ENERGY OF FEAR

Reading Companion

Think about these questions as you read. Journal the questions and “aha” moments that come up for you



Can you identify with the “denial/outrun” behaviors when Fear pops up? Where in your life have you been reacting to Fear’s presence by attempting to ban, avoid, or anesthetize a messenger? What other options might you try?



Fear often begins with a picture of what might happen and grows as our thoughts and emotions run with it. What do you notice when you step back and observe that process?



How does it feel when you consider that every Fear stems from a concern of death or loss of something, and yet, Fear actually leads to more loss?



Do you think that by recognizing that loss is the underlying driver of fear, you can be more compassionate towards yourself and others? How might this show up?



Does redefining the acronym for Fear as **Face Everything And Rethink** empower you, or intimidate you?

WEEK 2 - SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Small Group Circle Agreements

Confidentiality - I help create a safe environment by maintaining confidentiality.

Right to pass - It is okay not to share.

"I" Statements - I speak for myself and remember that I can never know someone else's experience.

Change your mind as often as you like - Stay open to new ideas and new revelations from our shared wisdom.

Be present - I listen to others compassionately, respectfully, and appreciatively.

Notice our own reactivity and assume good intentions - We take responsibility for our own reactions and meet each other with love.

Advice-free zone - practice sacred listening & refrain from giving advice.

Opening Affirmation: With mindfulness, courage, and intention, I am ready to explore the energy of Fear and the messengers of Fear.

- Check-in:**
- When did you notice Fear gaining energy this week?
 - Were you able to identify any messengers?
 - When did you find yourself reacting vs. responding?

- Discussion:**
- For this chapter, what stood out for you?
 - Pick a question from the reading companion and share your answer
 - What in the book/Sunday talk inspired you, frustrated or confused you, or clarified something for you?

Closing: Each person shares one positive takeaway from the group meeting today.

***Closing Affirmation:** As I venture forward, I am ready, willing, and able to listen to my messengers of Fear, knowing that I receive exactly what I need to know when I need to know it. My mind and heart are open wide as new wisdom floods in, and I am free.*



Week 2 Practices



Become aware of and notice your denial/outrun patterns. Identify something you can do instead.



When Fear appears, pause and identify what you are concerned about losing.



Pay attention to what messengers are showing up and how you are reacting or responding.



Name your "escape routes." Give your most common denial/outrun pattern a name that helps you recognize it quickly, such as The Scroll Hole, The Busywork Detour, Retail Rescue, Comfort Crunch. When you catch yourself taking that route, pause and notice what you may be trying to avoid.



Continue your Messenger Jar - Drop in which messenger is appearing and what you are afraid of losing. Look back at your notes at the end of the week and journal about what you have learned about yourself.

For next week, read the chapters on Anger and Worry

The 7 Messengers of Fear

and Their Descendants

1. ANGER

- Rage & Resentment

2. WORRY

- Anxiety & Regret

3. JUDGEMENT

- Superiority, Inferiority, & Hate

4. SELFISHNESS

- Greed, Jealousy, & Envy

5. SHAME

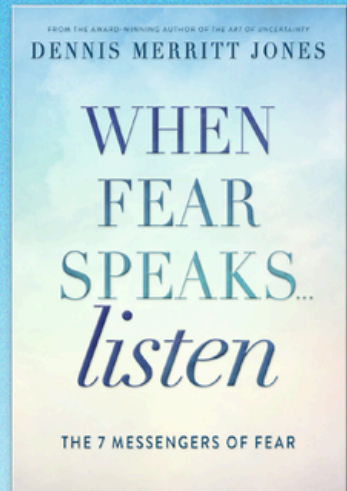
- Guilt, Embarrassment, & Perfectionism

6. LONELINESS

- Vulnerability & Pride

7. UNCERTAINTY

- Change, Doubt, & Procrastination



FALL PROGRAM RESOURCES



<https://www.unitypaloalto.org/when-fear-speaks-listen>

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