

PSYCHOLOGY



Dr Suzana Guedes

LIVING WITHOUT FEAR!

FEAR is an emotion that arises as a response to a perceived dangerous situation. Whenever something occurs that is perceived as potentially threatening to one's safety or even to one's life, the brain reacts involuntarily by releasing a set of chemical compounds to which the human body responds with physical reactions such as increased blood pressure, increased heartbeat, faster breathing or even muscle weakness or stiffness.

Most of the time, feeling fear is not negative. Fear is extremely important for our survival. If we did not feel fear, we would often find ourselves in dangerous situations, which could have serious consequences for us and those around us.

When we perceive a situation as being dangerous, our body quickly and very naturally prepares for confrontation, either to escape or by freezing, which are the body's possible reactions to a dangerous situation. Most of the time, these reactions cannot be controlled as they are no more than survival instincts and are sometimes acquired at a very early age.

In children, fears are very common and may be related to situations experienced and felt as strange and threatening in a given context.

It is common, for example, for a child to be afraid of Santa Claus. If the child has not been previously prepared for the fact that Santa will burst into the room

– moreover he is life-size and not the size the child is used to seeing on television or in storybooks – it may be a terrifying experience. A child may also feel threatened by Halloween disguises.

Fears in children tend to disappear, but when they do not disappear, they will accompany the child throughout their life including adulthood.

We often fear concrete situations which are known to us, for example fear of dogs, going to the dentist or drawing blood, fear of flying, etc. These are often linked to past experiences or to stories related by others. Sometimes we have sudden and irrational fears, which we cannot control or even understand their origin.

Fear can range from a slight response (discomfort or mild anxiety) to feelings of total discomfort and uncontrollability. In this case, fear begins to have serious repercussions in the person's daily life, becoming pathological and profoundly affecting the individual, both physically (feeling ill and alert), emotionally and socially. This type of fear may then be diagnosed as phobia.

Of course, there are fears that may not have implications on our daily lives. For example, if one works and lives on a ground floor, a fear of elevators may not have major implications on one's daily routine. But, if one needs to use a motor vehicle daily and one is afraid to drive,



each day can be truly distressing. A conflict will then exist between the rational, which is saying "there is no reason to be afraid", and the emotional, where fear which is experienced through various sensations (heartbeat, tremor, paralysis, dry mouth, among others) is continuing to feel as a real threat.

This feeling may occur due to varied fears, but the most common are the fear of animals (dogs, spiders, cats, snakes, etc.), situations (flying, driving, drawing blood, going to the dentist, doing a medical examination, closed or open spaces, fear of the dark) or others, such as fear of having or contracting a disease, dying, fear of a catastrophe, etc.

Psychology has evolved tremendously in recent

years and, with the latest approaches, it is possible, after an evaluation, for one to lose one's fear in just one session.

Yes! It is true. New neurobiological approaches use one's memory and the natural processes of reprocessing memories to enable the brain to realise that there is no reason for alarm.

Simultaneously and through the brain's indication, the body also understands that there is no longer a need to react to danger by fighting, fleeing or collapsing in the face of a disproportionate and irrationally threatening situation.

After the session, one will notice that the irrational fear is losing its intensity. A follow up session will be provided to finalise the

process and to say goodbye to one's fear.

Confirm an appointment now and start living without fear!

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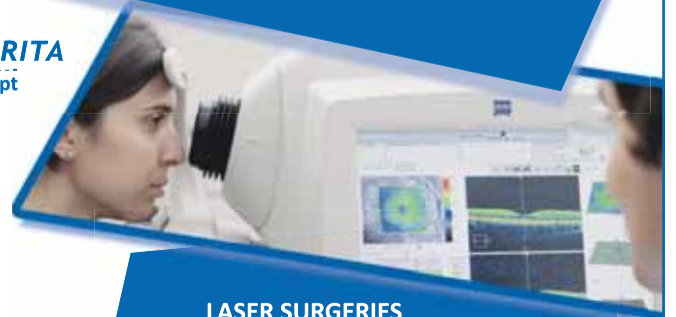
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