

Understanding vs. Fear

Glenn McDaniel

My first response to the events of 9/11 ten years ago has changed over time. When I saw what was happening on television, I was in a state of shock. I felt fear. I was afraid of all the things that this could lead to. I was afraid that my world was about to fall apart.

When I respond to something out of fear, the response is usually to kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.

I am not sure how much time passed. It must have been at least five or six years before I remembered the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

I am afraid of what I don't know or understand, such as things that go bump in the night, because I don't know what it is or understand why it made that sound. When I respond to something out of fear, my response is usually to kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.

Responding to Fear

What is the main point the author makes about fear?

What are the different types of responses to the fear of the unknown he discusses?

Can you think of positive and negative examples of how people have dealt with the fear of the unknown?

Watch this excellent 7-minute video exploring how fear drives religious intolerance: <<http://prepareny.ning.com/forum/topics/we-the-people>>.

When our fear is of other people or their way of life, the best way to deal with it is to learn as much as possible about the people and their way of life. If we can understand them and they can understand us, we have a good chance to work out our problems. I know that this is not always possible but if it was our first response, maybe we could save ourselves a lot of trouble later.

When you have people who, for whatever reason, hate other people they use fear to get others to join with them. If we let ourselves be led by fear and not by knowledge, we will be led down the road to destruction. If we know and care for the well-being of other people, it is very hard for us to do harm to them.

We use this type of reasoning in other areas of our life, such as when we deal with cancer or some other disease. We spend millions of dollars to try and find out all we can about it so we will know how to control it and maybe find a cure for it. It seems to me that this would be a good way to deal with people as well. If we would take the time to learn about our enemies and teach them about us, we might just learn to be friends and not enemies.

I know that this is a lot harder than I have made it sound, but if we could love our neighbor as ourselves, maybe we could solve our problems. I wish that this could be our attitude, instead of kill it, destroy it, or in some way get rid of it.

Glenn McDaniel is a student at the Fort Smith Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR.



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