

*An Experiential  
Four-Week Study Guide for  
Small Groups and Classes  
Based On the Book...*

It is as old as  
time itself.

"It" is Fear, and  
most of us try to  
avoid it like the  
plague.

Perhaps there's  
a better way to  
deal with our  
Fear by mindfully  
listening to what  
it has to say...

FROM THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF *THE ART OF UNCERTAINTY*  
DENNIS MERRITT JONES

WHEN  
FEAR  
SPEAKS...  
*listen*

THE 7 MESSENGERS OF FEAR

Created by  
Dennis Merritt Jones, DD

A four week Discussion Study Group Guide based on

# **When Fear Speaks...*listen***

## *The 7 Messengers of Fear*

DeVorss  Publications

By Dennis Merritt Jones, DD

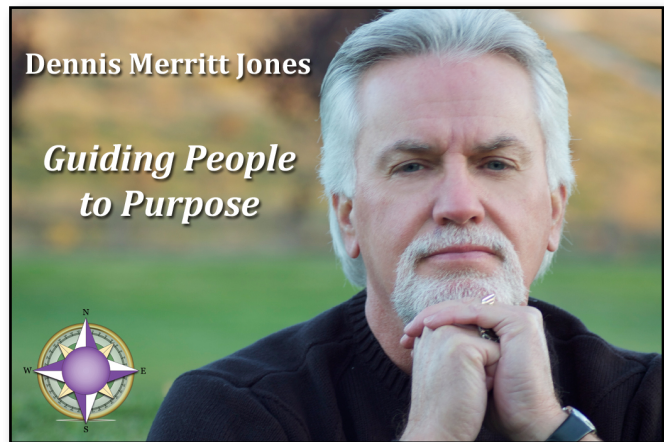
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*When Fear Speaks...Listen* is available through most major book  
retailers and wholesalers. Published by DeVorss Publishing - 2024  
ISBN # 978-0875169514

## A Note to the Group Facilitator

**F**irst, allow me to thank you for your interest in facilitating a Discussion Group based on *When Fear Speaks...Listen*. I will assume that you have



chosen to lead this Discussion Group because you have already read the book and found that the concepts resonate with you. As the group leader, you open that same portal of awareness for those in your group. In the process, you will discover yourself deepening your own understanding of the role that Fear and its seven Messengers can play in helping us create a life worth living. Powerful things happen for everyone in the dynamics of a shared group experience—including the facilitator! The theme of the book and, therefore, the theme that will be consistent throughout this Discussion Guide is that Fear doesn't have to be viewed as our enemy; that by listening to the wisdom the seven Messengers of Fear share—and applying that wisdom—we will see them as allies who are there to help us alter the trajectory of our future lives. The Seven Messengers serve as guides that, when listened to, will lead the dedicated student straight to this conclusion.

Because of the manner in which *When Fear Speaks...Listen* is formatted, you will discover that the book actually does much of the teaching for you. As the facilitator, your job is to create a safe space for the sharing that evolves from each week's reading assignments. I honor and support you in your willingness to provide a safe and

open environment wherein each participant will discover the value and meaning of living a life in which Fear is, well, not to be feared.

## **Think of Yourself As a Guide**

As the Discussion Group Leader, I encourage you to see yourself as a “guide” rather than as a teacher or an authority on the subject. Be mindful to create openings for each person to take part in the dialogue and self-discovery. Let it be your job to guide or facilitate the conversations, keeping them on point and moving forward, but never dominating the conversation. Be mindful to give each participant the space to have their own opinions and experience of the journey you travel together.

## **How it Works**

This course of study is spread over four weeks for roughly two hours per session. Each of the four sessions will offer a guideline for discussion based on specific sections and chapters of *When Fear Speaks...Listen*. NOTE: It is recommended that each participant be advised to come to the first week’s study group having ALREADY READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PART ONE because that will be the basis of the discussion for the first session.

A book, once written in, becomes a very personal record. It is recommended that each person have their own copy of *When Fear Speaks...Listen*, so they can write in it and/or underline or highlight certain passages that are meaningful to them. Encourage them to

read and consider the concepts that hook their attention, as it will enhance your discussion time together.

At the end of each week's Guide you will find suggested homework will be included as part of the discussion during your next meeting. A list of the chapters to be read during the following week, as well as some additional recommended work, will be included. It is important the participants be encouraged to give extra attention to the Mindfulness Practices and Affirmations found at the end of each of the chapters in PART TWO featuring the different Messengers of Fear. It's only through the application of the concepts that ideas become reality. Both the Mindfulness Practices and the Affirmations help summarize the salient points in a manner that allows the reader to personalize them, helping to energetically activate specific ideas, taking them from the intellect to the heart.

This Guide provides structure and discussion questions for each group meeting. However, don't feel you have to adhere strictly to the Guide. You will discover there is far more material offered than your group will find time to use every week, or that only one or two questions dominate the discussion during a particular week. Try to be sensitive to the rhythm of the group and let the process flow organically. As is sometimes the case, it may be that your group will want to extend their time together beyond the four weeks to cover some material in more depth.

I have provided a series of quotes from *When Fear Speaks...Listen* (with the page numbers for easy reference) followed by specific questions you can ask to kick-start the conversations. Feel free to

use as written or reframe the questions in language that is more your style. I hope that the discussion will also prime the pump for the experiential Optional Group Process I have inserted in the Guide. Once again, you may not have enough time for all the processes, so select the ones that are most suitable for your group.

Keep in mind that the reason for the group is to create a space where common experiences can be shared. I hope each person hears something that deepens their own experience of the general reading, Mindfulness Practices, Affirmations, and the ensuing discussion.

Thank you for joining me on this journey exploring *When Fear Speaks...Listen*. If you have questions about this Discussion Guide, my other books, study guides, workshops, mentoring services, or keynote speaking, please contact me through my website: [www.DennisMerrittJones.com](http://www.DennisMerrittJones.com)

Peace, Dennis Merritt Jones, DD

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## Session 1

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome all participants and begin with a quick ice-breaker by asking them to introduce themselves and briefly share what it was that caused them to join the *When Fear Speaks Listen...* Discussion Group.

## Discussion Points for The Introduction

### “Balancing Your Doing with Being”

1) QUOTE: *It’s how we merge and balance our being nature with our doing nature that matters.* (Pg. viii)

To “Do, Be, Do, Be, Do” requires an exquisite balance between head and heart. Is Fear more likely to pull you off balance by paying you a visit when you are in your head space (doing) or heart space (being)?

Regardless of when or where it appears, are you willing to establish a new balanced relationship with Fear—deepening your understanding of its purpose in your life?

2) QUOTE: *Anytime we step up and out of the trenches and make a move toward a better life, Fear and its messengers will all do their best to ambush us and slow us down.* (Pg. viii)



- As you attempt to move forward in creating a more fulfilling life, in what area of your life do you most experience Fear making an unwelcome appearance in your daily life?

3) QUOTE: *Perhaps Fear has ulterior motives for being in our lives that we have yet to discover.* (Pg. viii)

- Until now, have you ever given much thought to the idea that Fear may not be your enemy but rather a dedicated messenger bearing information that, ultimately, will enhance your life?
- When you consider that possibility how does that feel. Do you welcome it or resist it?

## Discussion Points for Part One

*"The Energy of Fear"*

1) QUOTE: *The primal energy of Fear has been the root cause of every war ever fought and every act of violence, selfishness, and greed visited upon humankind.* (Pg. 4)

- Can you see how the energy of Fear has generated so much consternation and conflict on the world stage for countless millennia?
- Are you able to identify the energy of Fear in one of its many disguises lingering behind some of the world's greatest problems? If so, name a few.

2) QUOTE: *Have you ever heard this acronym for fear: “**F**orget **E**verything **A**nd **R**un”? 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. (Pg. 4)*

- Can you identify with any of the aforementioned behaviors when Fear pops up? If so, share which ones are your go-to behaviors; how do you try to mitigate Fear—and how is that going for you?

3) QUOTE: *Perhaps it’s time to give Fear a new identity, to break it down piece by piece and examine it...Perhaps we need to assign a new meaning to the acronym F.E.A.R. (Pg. 5 - 7)*

- Does redefining the acronym for Fear as **F**ace **E**verything **A**nd **R**ethink empower you, or intimidate you?

- Understanding that getting out of denial is the first step toward transcending your fears, are you willing to stand toe-to-toe with them when the time comes? Remember, this is not an invitation to fight or argue with Fear but to listen to what it is trying to say.

4) QUOTE: *While the faces of Fear are legion, in the context of this book the seven most prevalent disguises that Fear hides behind are: Anger, Worry, Judgement, Selfishness, Shame, Loneliness, and Uncertainty. (Pg. 6)*

- Understanding that Fear has many disguises, which of the Seven Messengers of Fear listed above are you most familiar with?

5) QUOTE: *Fear is not our enemy. It is a messenger sent to get our attention and then guide and guard us to keep us alive and safe. (Pg. 9)*

- Can you embrace the perspective that when the messengers of Fear appear, they come as friends bearing a message and not as enemies?

6) QUOTE: *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. (Pg. 9)*

- Fear is an idea *about* something that begins as an image in our mind of something that may happen in the future. As we witness the role our imagination plays, we give birth to the specter of Fear with our run-away thoughts and emotions. Are you ready and willing to become the conscious observer of your thoughts and emotions?

7) QUOTE: *Every fear originates from the same place within where an attachment to a concern of death or loss dominates our attention and reigns supreme. (Pg. 10)*

- How does it *feel* when you consider that every Fear you have is attached to a concern of death or loss of something? Are you ready to have a dialogue with that Fear and listen to its wisdom concerning loss?

- The next time Fear arises, consider mindfully hitting the pause-button, taking a deep breath, and asking your Fear to dance. Whisper in its ear, “What is it I am attached to losing at this moment that I need to know so I may transcend you?” How does that action make you feel?
  
- Are you willing and able to listen carefully to your messenger and then make space for that “Something” which you are one with that is larger than your Fear (your Higher Power and the Source of all that is) to reveal Itself?

8) QUOTE: *That with which we are one is known by many different names: Life, Infinite Intelligence, One Power, Universe, Creator, God, It, Omniscience, the Self, Divine Presence, the Beloved, or as some put it, the Source of All That Is. (Pg. 11-12)*

- Do you embrace a belief that you are one with “Something” larger than yourself—a Higher Power that can help you mitigate and transcend the impactful effects of Fear? If so, by what name do you refer to It?
  
- Do you see your Higher Power as a “fixer” to be called upon only when needed, or is it a constant presence always available 24/7?

9) QUOTE: *Too often when Fear overwhelms us, we react by attempting to ban the messenger, or at least by avoiding, denying, anesthetizing, invalidating, or pretending we don't hear or see it. (Pg 14)*

- Where in your life have you been reacting to Fear's presence by attempting to ban, avoid, or anesthetize the messenger? Until now, what has been your typical response and behavior?

10) QUOTE: *In some Eastern teachings, they say that we must learn to dance with our demons if we are to understand why they are present in our lives. Getting comfortable with that which we fear requires being teachable by coming closer to it and listening to what it has to say. (Pg. 14)*

- Are you willing to formally introduce yourself to all Seven Messengers of Fear and their many descendants, placing them in the role of teacher?

11) QUOTE: *Included at the end of each chapter will be a Mindfulness Practice designed to "put wheels" on each messenger's message through an experiential process that enhances your ability to embody and apply the lesson in real-time. (Pg. 15)*

- Does the statement "Realization without application is hallucination" resonate with you? It's another way of saying that if you are not able to embrace the wisdom being offered in the present moment by the Seven Messengers of Fear AND apply it in real time, it's all for naught. Mindfulness is the practice that makes it possible.

- ☑ Mindfulness tethers you so fully to the present moment that you can't help but notice when Fear, in its many disguises, awaits you on the metaphorical dance floor for your first lesson. The question is, are you ready to dance?

## Optional Group Process

There is great power in hearing ourselves declare to another person our intentions to explore and apply the core concepts found in *When Fear Speaks Listen...* in our daily life. As an experiential process divide the group into dyads (groups of two)—preferably a spouse should work with someone other than their life partner—and facilitate the following dialogue within the dyads (allowing about 10 minutes for this process). Be sure to invite the participants to respect the confidentiality of the group. This process is not to be construed as therapy. Encourage each participant to listen when being spoken to with no cross talk or advice giving. The dyad should allow the person speaking to hear out loud that which has been lying in their mind and heart. This process is about developing the skillfulness to identify and listen to our Fears and what message they each bear.

### **Discuss the following with your partner:**

1. How often each day does the messengers of Fear pay you a visit and can you name them?
2. Share with your partner three actions you will take this coming week to identify and enter into discussion with the messengers of Fear. One example is by

practicing mindfulness and emotional awareness throughout the day, with a willingness to challenge thoughts and feelings which may arise when Fear comes knocking. Awareness is the first step to moving forward.

3. Make a commitment with your partner to hold them in prayer this week. Visualize them surrounded with peace, faith, comfort, and love. Remember, there is great power in shared agreement: "Where two or more are gathered..."

**After the breakout, regroup for discussion of lessons learned, next week's homework, and closure.**

## Homework for Next Week's Group Meeting

Read the following chapters and be prepared to discuss:

### Part Two

#### The Messengers of Fear and Their Descendants

- Anger - Page 21
- Worry - Page 37
- Judgement - Page 55
- Selfishness- Page 71

**1. As you read, be sure to highlight in your book, underline, or otherwise note passages that grab your attention.**

- This is your heart telling your mind that these concepts need to be examined and embraced, or challenged and perhaps changed.

**2. As you go through the week, attempt to be mindful *and* aware of those moments during the week when the energy of Fear arises.**

- Make note of these observations for discussion next week. You can also create a journal and log the actual conversations you have with the various Fears. Talk with them and take notes—ask them what they want you to know about a concern of loss somewhere in your life.

**3. Pay particular attention to the *Mindfulness Practices and Affirmations at the end of each chapter.***

- These practices will help “seal the deal” in your mind, allowing you to retain the consolidated essence of the chapters.

Have a Blessed Week!



## Session 2

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

- The 7 Messengers of Fear -

*"The Energy of Fear"*

### The Messengers of Fear and Their Descendants

- Anger - Page 21
- Worry - Page 37
- Judgement - Page 55
- Selfishness- Page 71

Welcome all participants and invite them to share how reading "*When Fear Speaks Listen*" may have affected their lives in the past week. The question Were you able to consciously witness any of the Seven Messengers of Fear visit you this week? creates an effective opening that allows participants to connect, share, and learn from one another. Was there any growing awareness of the impact that unmanaged Fear has on their daily lives? This time spent before you jump into the discussion, questions can be very helpful in creating the social bond and learning environment necessary for the group dynamic.

## ANGER

- 1) QUOTE: *The story [of the samurai and the monk] is a classic Zen teaching parable that has been embellished to serve as an illustration of how, when identified and understood, the unmitigated energy of Anger can be instantly transformed into the peace that passes all understanding.* (Pg. 22)

- When any story hooks our attention, we might be able to see certain aspects of ourselves in the story. Which character more predominately lingers within your consciousness—the angry samurai or the wise and meek, spiritually grounded monk? The answer will rely on the depth of your compassion and understanding, and your willingness to extend it to others, especially when, by first impression, their actions or appearance may not warrant it.

2) QUOTE: *Transcending our Fears of every nature begins with three necessary requirements: Curiosity, Inquisitiveness, and Being Teachable.*  
(Pg. 23)

- Do you consider yourself to be as curious and teachable as the samurai warrior in our story was?
- Are you inquisitive enough to be willing to consciously engage with your Fears, and even when they frighten you, initiate a dialogue with them?
- Are you willing to transcend your Fears when they reveal themselves, or do you tend to retreat and run from them?
- The answer to the three aforementioned questions will be found in the fourth: Are you

open-minded enough to listen to what Anger, Rage and Resentment have to reveal?

3) QUOTE: *The danger of unacknowledged, unmanaged, or suppressed Anger is doubly dangerous when we consider that its direct descendants, Rage and Resentment, are eager and ready to join the party. Interestingly, they do so by moving in diametrically opposed directions.* (Pg. 23)

- Which of Anger's descendants are you more susceptible to—the outward surge of Rage, or the more subtle, slow burn, inner surge of Resentment?
- Can you see that they are equally Fear-driven and just as damaging as Anger?

4) QUOTE: *As we grow older, our Anger morphs into different types of rants and errant behavior, and while the things that trigger our Anger may appear to change, it is stimulated by the same Fear, the Fear of loss of something.* (Pg. 31 -32)

- When Anger arises from within, are you able to identify it as a concern of loss of something or of losing power and ability to control someone or something?
- What do you most fear losing in this moment? Is it a rational or irrational fear? Asking yourself that question will help clarify your perspective and perception of the concern.

## WORRY

1) QUOTE: *When was the last time you had a repetitive negative thought?*  
(Pg. 37)

- If you are like most people, many negative thoughts fly under the radar of your conscious mind. How often have you been able to observe repetitive unwanted thoughts that cast you into the future, and how many of them are energized by the messenger of Worry?

2) QUOTE: *Instead of paying attention to the present moment, we're usually anxious about the future or regretful over the past.* (Pg. 39)

- Besides the messenger of Worry, how often do its Descendants, Anxiety and Regret, pull you out of the present moment, and cast your mind into the future or the past?

3) QUOTE: *It's the mark of great wisdom not to take today or tomorrow for granted, or to squander it on something over which we have little or no control.*  
(Pg. 51)

- Do you ever find yourself "future-izing," i.e., borrowing trouble from the future "what if's" usually founded in worry and anxiety?
- Until now, what behavior have you engaged in to manage your worries and anxieties?

- What about past regrets? Do you ever find yourself stuck in the “would have, could have, should have, but didn’t” mindset?
- To mitigate worry, regret and anxiety, does the idea of living in “day-tight compartments” make sense to you?

## JUDGMENT

1) QUOTE: *Just as no one is born angry, it's a fact that no one is born judgmental, hateful, or feeling superior or inferior to anyone else. These are all learned behaviors that come to us at an early age, almost as easily as breathing.* (Pg. 56)

- Do you think you can relate to the idea that judgment, hate, and a sense of superiority and inferiority are all learned behavior based on Fear?
- Do you believe that “what you learn” you can unlearn, or at least challenge and change if necessary?
- Understanding the power of your mind, does the acronym for Fear, **F**ace **E**verything **A**nd **R**ethink, strengthen your consciousness and your ability to stop, turn and face your Fear?*

2) QUOTE: *Many destructive beliefs are never challenged because of a “that’s the way it’s always been” mindset. (Pg. 57)*

- Are you willing to challenge and change any “that’s the way it’s always been” beliefs lingering in your own mind?
- If Judgement, Hate, and a sense of Superiority are all “learned behaviors,” who do you believe teaches them to future generations?
- Some say that Unconditional Love is the antithesis of Judgement and its Descendants. Do you resonate with this sentiment? What does Unconditional Love mean to you?

3) QUOTE: *There’s a considerable difference between Judgement and Discernment. (Pg. 63)*

- The primary difference between judgement and discernment is found in the role our emotions play. Are you aware enough to know when you are being judgmental rather than discerning?
- To “spiritualize” discernment is to infuse an awareness of God’s presence in that which we perceive with Unconditional Love. Do you find this easy or difficult to do?

## SELFISHNESS

1) QUOTE: *Acts of Selfishness send a message to an unbiased Universe, which operates solely on the law of cause and effect, that we believe in not-enough.* (Pg. 72)

- When you are tempted with selfishness, are you aware you are sending a message that you lack to a Universe that can only reflect to us a demonstration of our predominate beliefs?

2) QUOTE: *It's easy to understand why Greed, Envy, and Jealousy are close descendants of Selfishness. They all come from the generational Fear-based belief that someone else holds the good they desire.* (Pg. 73)

- Do you think you can see the common thread linking Greed, Envy, and Jealousy to Selfishness?
- Which of these Descendants of Selfishness are you most familiar with: Greed, Envy, or Jealousy—and why?

3) QUOTE: *There's no place or time that the Principle of Abundance can be better used than when we are entangled in the illusion of scarcity, the roots from which the weeds of Selfishness, Greed, Envy, and Jealousy spring.* (Pg. 79)

- Do you understand the Principle of Abundance and how it works to ensure we have more than enough of whatever we

believe we are worthy of, including the illusion of more “not enough”? (NOTE: For more information on this concept please see my book, *The Art of Abundance - 10 Rules for a Prosperous Life.*)

4) QUOTE: *With the awareness of our oneness with Something larger than our Fear, that which is the Source of our supply, comes the ability to see life through new eyes. Everywhere we look we'll find the Principle of Abundance flowing freely, operating without refute or restriction. (Pg. 80)*

- Are you aware of your oneness with Something larger than you, and do you consider It to be the Source of your abundance?
- By what name do you identify your Higher Power?

5) QUOTE: *Throughout the world, there are basically two types of people: Givers and Takers. This dynamic could be referred to as the WIIFM principle, which is an acronym meaning one of two things: “What’s In It For Me” or “What’s In It From Me.” (Pg. 84)*

- Until now, have you been more of a giver or a taker?
- In order to transcend Selfishness, are you willing to embrace the “WIIFM” principle affirmatively—discovering new ways to become an intentional giver and a grateful receiver?



## Optional Group Process

**D**ivide the group into dyads for an experiential process, working with a different partner than in the previous session, and facilitate the dialogue as indicated below. (NOTE: Again, invite the participants to respect the confidentiality of the group, reminding them that this process is not to be construed as therapy). Encourage each participant to be a silent witness and listen when being spoken to with no crosstalk or advice giving. The dyad should allow the person speaking to hear out loud that which has been lying in his or her mind and heart. This process is about developing the skillfulness to identify and listen to our Fears and what message they each bear.

### **Discuss the following with your partner:**

- Which messenger of Fear captured your attention the most this week and what message did it try to convey?
- How did it feel to proactively stand toe-to-toe with your Fear. Were you tempted to turn and run or stay engaged in the conversation?
- Make a commitment with your partner to hold him or her in prayer this week. Visualize that person surrounded with peace, faith, comfort, and love. Remember, there's great power in shared agreement: "Where two or more are gathered..."

- If appropriate, exchange contact information with your partner as it will be part of your homework this week to check in with them.

**After the breakout, regroup for discussion of lessons learned, next week's homework, and closure.**

## Homework for Next Week's Group Meeting

Read the following chapters and be prepared to discuss:

### The Messengers of Fear and Their Descendants

- *Shame - Page 87*
- *Loneliness - Page 103*
- *Uncertainty - Page 119*

**1. Again, as you read, highlight in your book, underline, or otherwise, note passages that grab your attention.**

- Remember, this is your heart is telling your mind that these concepts need to be examined and embraced, or challenged and perhaps changed.

**2. As you go through the week, attempt to be mindful *and* aware of those moments when the energy of Fear arises.**

- Which Messengers of Fear appear most often and when? Make note of these observations for discussion next week.
- Did you find yourself mindfully “responding” or mindlessly “reacting” to their appearance?
- Continue to journal and log the conversations you have with the Fears that appear in your life this week.

- As you talk with your Messengers, ask them what they want you to know about a concern of loss somewhere in your life.
- Try to embrace the idea that your Messengers are there to guide and protect you—not frighten you.

**3. If appropriate, contact the person you worked with in the group break-out in session two and check in with them mid-week.**

- Discuss which Messengers of Fear that most frequently appeared.
- Share how your interactions with your Messengers have helped you transcend Fear.
- By being teachable and listening to your Messenger today, what lesson did you learn that will change the arc of your life in the future?

**HAVE A BLESSED WEEK!**

## Session 3

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

### The Messengers of Fear and Their Descendants

- Shame - Page 87
- Loneliness - Page 103
- Uncertainty - Page 119

**W**elcome all participants and invite them to share how reading *When Fear Speaks...Listen* may have affected their lives the past week. The question “Did you consciously witness any of the Seven Messengers of Fear visit you this week?” creates an effective opening that allows participants to connect, share, and learn from one another. This time spent before you jump into the discussion questions can be very helpful in creating the social bond and learning environment necessary for the group dynamic.

## SHAME

1) QUOTE: *One of the deceiving things about Shame is that it hides in the darkness between the Fear of “making” a mistake and “being” a mistake. Guilt, Embarrassment, and Perfectionism linger in the shadow of Shame. (Pg. 88)*

- Do you think you can identify the belief in “I’m not enough” embedded in Shame and its Descendants Guilt, Embarrassment, and Perfectionism?

- Which of Shame's Descendants are you most familiar with?

2) QUOTE: *Fear becomes the driver when we go on a Guilt trip, using it as a metaphorical hammer to beat up ourselves (or others) for past mistakes, especially when we erroneously believe that somehow we deserve it or that it pleases God. (Pg. 90)*

- What kind of relationship do you have with Guilt? Do you self-impose it to punish yourself, or do you use it to manipulate and shame others—or both?
- In either case, remembering that Guilt can drive an invisible wedge between ourselves and our Higher Power (and, therefore, each other) is a daily practice.

3) QUOTE: *Embarrassment is one of Shame's go-to emotions because it shape-shifts into whatever is most "inappropriate" in the moment for us and then hangs our Fear right out there, flapping in the breeze for the entire world to see. (Pg. 90)*

- The Descendant, Embarrassment, can bring the Fear of "I'm not-enough" to the moment for everyone to see. When was the last time you felt embarrassed and what effect did it have on you?
- A remembrance of our oneness with our Higher Power is the best way to mitigate

Embarrassment when it shows up. In those times, a great affirmation is, “God is, I am... and therefore I am bigger than this embarrassment.”

4) QUOTE: *Perfectionism is the pretty cloak we wear to conceal our Shame. It's one of the primary purveyors of the not-enough syndrome: “I'm not enough, so I need to conceal who I believe myself to be.”* (Pg. 92)

- Can you identify any perfectionistic behavior in yourself? If so, share how it is expressed.
- Is there a perfectionist lingering in your mind? The litmus test to know lies in your awareness of any obsessive need for love, approval, validation, or acceptance from the world.

5) QUOTE: *How can there ever be enough of anything good in our life when we believe we are not enough and allow Shame to have a seat at the table for more than a casual conversation before we hit the dance floor?* (Pg. 99)

- Do you see how a shame-based belief system can spill over into every area of your life, manifesting as not-enough?
- Remembering your oneness with the Source of all that is will help you transcend the Messenger of Shame—including all its Descendants.

## LONELINESS

1) QUOTE: *...Loneliness is a five-sensory human condition, not a spiritual one. The soul only knows its oneness with the Wholeness from which it came. Aloneness is its natural state.* (Pg. 104)

Do you think you can relate with the idea that Aloneness can help open a portal to an awareness of your oneness with Wholeness, the sacred Presence of God—while Loneliness enhances a sense of separation from that same Presence?

With which do you most easily identify, Aloneness or Loneliness?

2) QUOTE: *Many of us learn to abhor Aloneness because, at some level, we misconstrue it for Loneliness, and it frightens us.* (Pg. 111)

Are you now able to discern the emotional difference between Loneliness and Aloneness?

It's important to understand that, while we may feel lonely, if we are able to mindfully remember the Source with which we are one, it's quite impossible to be alone. Knowing the importance of emotional awareness as you process this idea, how does it feel to you?



3) QUOTE: *Learning to embrace the sanctity of Aloneness is akin to taking the first step out of that tunnel of darkness and into the Light of a new day...and perhaps a new life. If we mindfully allow the messenger of Loneliness to be our guide we can follow the tunnel it bores into that place within us that allows our soul room to grow outward.* (Pg. 114)

- Are you willing to “be” with the experience of Loneliness—to dance with it, knowing that if you are mindful and willing to listen, it will guide you to a new Light—a new life established in your oneness with your Source?

4) QUOTE: *There’s absolutely no shame in asking for guidance when we know we are lost in the fog and Fear of Loneliness.* (Pg. 115)

- Can you see the connection between Shame and being stuck in the vortex of Loneliness? When caught in that vortex, it is a wise practice to ask for support from a qualified therapist, psychologist, or minister. Often, we must transcend the invisible bonds of Shame to do so.

5) QUOTE: *Because we know we are one with Something larger than the Fear that Loneliness represents...we can welcome the pristine experience of Aloneness that awaits us on the other side of Loneliness.* (Pg. 116)

- With courage and clarity, we can transcend Loneliness. Are you ready to extend yourself to Life?

## UNCERTAINTY

1) QUOTE: *Do you enjoy NOT knowing where you are going? Most of us don't unless we are eight-years old. That's because the older we get, the more Fear controls our perception of the Unknown.* (Pg. 119)

- Remembering the difference between perspective and perception matters. Looking at life, and interpreting it, are two different things.
- Has your attachment to the known increased as you've grown older? If so, could it be related to the belief that you have more to lose? From a place of oneness with your Source, do you really have more to lose, or is it a matter of your perspective and perception?

2) QUOTE: *Our attachment to the need to know and control the Unknowable is generally accompanied by a considerable amount of anxiety and emotional suffering.* (Pg. 120)

- As you stand on the precipice of uncertainty, are you able to embrace the wisdom of knowing what you have control over and what you don't?
- Does being aware of what you have control over, and letting go of that which you have no control, help you mitigate the Fear of Uncertainty?

3) QUOTE: *Resistance to Change is fathered by Doubt while Procrastination applies the glue that keeps us stuck. When combined, they enhance and glorify the Fear of Uncertainty.* (Pg. 122)

- Which of Uncertainty's Descendants of Fear seem to live closer to the hub of your life: Change, Doubt, or Procrastination—and can you share any real-time examples?
- Does the awareness that these Descendants occupy space, free-rent, in your mind encourage you to have a conversation with them and then evict them?
- Remembering to ask the Messenger of Uncertainty to disclose what you are attached to losing is the mark of wisdom. Listening to what it has to say is the sign of an open mind and a willing heart.

4) QUOTE: *We were born to be creators. To accomplish this Divine assignment, we have to be willing and able to come to the edge and step out of the box of certainty and into the open fertile Field of Uncertainty where all possibilities await our discovery.* (Pg. 129)

- Does the awareness that you can't create anything new from within the field of what you already know encourage you to come to the edge of your certainties and lean over, or does it intimidate you?
- You are always creating something with your mind and heart. The only question is,

what are you creating? Is it something new; something that expands your experience of joy, harmony, equanimity, abundance, and peace? Or, is it just another version of the same ol' same ol'?

5) QUOTE: *The biggest obstacle between ourselves and the greatness we have come here to demonstrate lies in our own belief system...Because we are always becoming cause to our own effect, if we become bogged down in the muck, yuck, and mire, the only thing we will create is more of the same. It's time to break free.* (Pg. 131-132)

- If we wish to create something new in our lives, we must introduce a new cause. This requires us to invite our Fear of Uncertainty to join us on the metaphorical dance floor and whisper in its ear, "Oh master teacher of the moment, what must I know, and what must I do to transcend you?" If we listen intently and heed the guidance, it will change our lives.
  
- Becoming cause to a new effect is a matter of creating a shift in our consciousness by introducing a new cause. When we can remember the acronym, A.B.C. — **A**wareness **B**uilds **C**onsciousness—everything changes, and Fear finally becomes our ally as we enter the gates of Uncertainty.

## Optional Group Process

**A**s an experiential process, divide the participants into groups of four—and appoint one person in each group to facilitate the dialogue as indicated below. (NOTE: Again, invite the participants to respect the confidentiality of the group, reminding them that this process is not to be construed as therapy). As always encourage each participant to be a silent witness and listen when being spoken to with no crosstalk or advice-giving. The 20 minute group experience is intended to allow each person speaking to externalize and hear out loud that which has been lying in his or her mind and heart. This process is about developing the skillfulness to identify and listen to our Messengers of Fear and what message they each bear.

### **Discuss the following with your three partners:**

*Remembering “A. B. C.” (Awareness Builds Consciousness), share with your partners your growing awareness of which Messenger of Fear dominated your attention this week.*

- Among the Messengers of Shame, Loneliness, and Uncertainty (and their Descendants), which one knocked most frequently and what message did it attempt to convey?
- Did you receive and comprehend the message? Remember: “Realization, without application, is hallucination.”

- Being mindfully aware of when your Messengers of Fear visit and what they have to share is crucial to transcending them. As an example, do they show up at the same time daily, or are their visits more random? Is there some specific thing or activity you're doing that beckons them? Remember A.B.C.! You can't challenge and change something if it comes and goes unnoticed.
- Share any take-aways, insights, ah-ha's (or oh-no's) you had this week with your partners. What was unique to you alone and what was a common experience for your group?
- Make a commitment to hold your three partners in prayer this week, knowing that where two or more are gathered in common agreement, powerful things happen.

**After the breakout, regroup for discussion of lessons learned, next week's homework, and closure.**

## **Homework for Next Week's Group Meeting**

Read the following chapter and be prepared to discuss:

### **Part Three: Listening To Fear - Pg 135 - 151**

*"Facing Everything And Rethinking"*

1. Again, as you read, **highlight in your book**, underline, or otherwise, note passages that grab your attention.

2. As you go through the week, attempt to be mindful *and* aware of those moments when the energy of Fear arises.

- Which Messengers of Fear continue to appear most often and when?
- Has your perspective of Fear changed in the past four weeks?
- Continue to journal and log the conversations you have with the Fears that appear in your life this week.
- Remember, your Messengers are there to guide and protect you—not frighten you.

**HAVE A BLESSED WEEK!**

## Session 4

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

### “Listening to Fear “

- Facing Everything and Rethinking - Pg. 137
- Closing Circle

**A**s you begin the final session, welcome all participants and invite them to share what has shifted in their relationship with Fear since the first study group session. At this point the practice of consciously witnessing when and where the Seven Messengers of Fear appear should be a common theme for conversation. Invite the participants to openly share their experiences. Do they see any obvious patterns? Have they remained curious, inquisitive, and teachable? What have they learned from their conversations with their Messengers of Fear? Remind them that the A.B.C. principle (**A**wareness **B**uilds **C**onsciousness) is where all permeant change begins and that their Messengers serve as a point of entry for that shift in consciousness. We have to be aware that our Messengers approach us because they are our guides to a better and more fulfilling life if we are but willing to listen and learn.

1) QUOTE: *The ability to think a thought or have a feeling, step outside of our mind and body, and impartially observe (or analyze) what thought or feeling lays the groundwork for a new life.* (Pg. 138)

- Have you become “more aware” that you have been given the amazing gift of self-awareness?



- ☑ The practice is to remember that only through the process of self-awareness and discernment can we identify errant thinking, challenge it, and then, if necessary, change it.

2) QUOTE: *Mindfully observe your thoughts and especially your emotions as they arise. They will point out exactly which messengers of Fear are trying to communicate with you now.* (Pg. 138)

- ☑ Remember the crucial role emotional awareness plays. If we are paying attention to our emotions, they can point to what goes on in the mind that needs to be addressed—especially when the Messengers of Fear are running amuck.

3) QUOTE: *... our Fears are nothing more (or less) than emotionally-driven thought impulses coursing through our mind and body that have absolutely no power other than the power we give them.* (Pg. 139)

- ☑ Are you ready to “take back your power” from Fear? The first step is to respond mindfully—rather than react mindlessly—to its presence and the message it bears. Thus the term, **Face Everything And Rethink**.

4) QUOTE: *Fear thrives in the shadows where it tries to loom larger and scarier than it actually is. The moment we drag our Fears into the Light, they begin to wither up because we can see them for the powerless specters they are.* (Pg. 144)

- Finding the time and creating a space in your mind and heart to have a conversation with your Messengers of Fear requires intention and sometimes courage. Does remembering that your Fears have no power of their own (other than the power you give them) make the process easier for you?
  
- Meditation, prayer, and long walks alone are just a few places where you can step onto the metaphorical dance floor for your conversation with your Messengers of Fear. Often a trusted therapist, minister, or practitioner can help you facilitate that conversation.
  
- Knowing that the letter L in word Light is capitalized because Light is another proper noun for the name of God, what process do you employ to shed Light on your Fears?

5) QUOTE: *Regardless of the disguise it wears, the one thing every Fear has in common is that they're all attached to a concern of death or loss of something or someone.* (Pg. 147)

- In what area of your life do you most experience the Fear of death or loss? Remembering you are one with the Source of all life and all material things is vital.

6) QUOTE: *Let us involve ourselves with participating in Life at a level that transcends Fear, and places our focus on that which is within the sphere of our influence rather than what isn't.* (Pg. 150)

Do you fearfully focus on the issues and things over which you have no control? If so, remember you are squandering your precious time and resources.

Are you willing to practice self-awareness to discern that which is within the sphere of your influence, rather than what isn't?

7) QUOTE: *We are meant to meet, not defeat, our Fears. We are meant to dance with our Fears and allow them to educate us, not frighten us.* (Pg. 151)

Are you becoming comfortable with the idea that your Fears are not the enemy, but instead that they are to be embraced, *listened to* and thought of as teachers sent to guard and guide you, rather than frighten you?

8) QUOTE: *We shall forever be changed as we redefine our relationship with the Seven Messengers of Fear and their many descendants. It's time to decide: "Will Fear be a friend or foe?"* (Pg 153)

Have you decided if, in the future, Fear will be a friend or foe?

Do you think you can embrace the idea that **Facing Everything And Rethinking** it opens the portal to the adventure of a lifetime—and, are you ready for the adventure?

## Group Closing Process

**A**s this is the final gathering of the *When Fear Speaks...Listen* Study Group, it is important to create a space for closure, leaving time enough for all participants to “share and declare.”

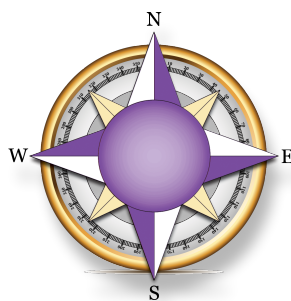
1. Invite all participants to close their eyes if they are comfortable in doing so. Begin with a brief period of silence, invoking the awareness of the presence of God, Infinite Intelligence, Love, Light, or whatever name each individual is comfortable referring to as their Higher Power.
2. Allow the group to sit in silence with eyes closed as they witness the miracle of their own breath, which tethers them to the precious present moment where all transformation begins.
3. Then invoke an awareness of the gifts the Seven Messengers of Fear brought to the group over the past four weeks. Invite each participant to silently express gratitude for the wisdom their Messengers imparted.
4. With eyes now open, invite the participants to “share” which one of the Seven Messengers of Fear (and/or its Descendants) made the greatest impact on them: What was the lesson that particular Messenger brought to bear? Remind the group that because “there is only one of us here,” what applies to one, at some level, applies to all present.

5. Finally, remembering there's great power in being witnessed by others, invite each participant to "declare" out loud the action they plan to take based on the information they received from their Messenger. Invite them to share how their lives will be enhanced and made different in the future because they had the willingness and courage to dance with their Messenger of Fear—and to listen to its guidance today.

Please thank everyone for participating in the group, on my behalf. It has been an honor to share this four-week journey with you! If you have questions or comments about this discussion guide, any of my other books, or my availability for seminars, mentoring, or keynote presentations, please feel free to contact me through my website: [www.DennisMerrittJones.com](http://www.DennisMerrittJones.com)

Peace & Abundant Blessings to you!

Dennis Merritt Jones, DD



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