

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

By Pierre Zimmerman

We all experience fear of the unknown when applying for a new job, going on a blind date, buying a new house, venturing on a new spiritual path - or right now, living during a pandemic. Fear is a universal experience, how we relate to it is very personal.

There is a certain belief that when we experience fear, we need to get rid of it as soon as possible. Most of our fears are not about survival, but about the “not knowing” what is going to happen next or what might be in store for us. The link between fear and the unknown is common and profound, because we have no fixed idea or firm footing. ***Fear doesn't always mean there is actual danger.*** We are conditioned to think that what we know will keep us safe and what we don't know will present a potential threat, therefore making us afraid.

Really, what we know is often more worthy of fear than what we do not know. Becoming attached to an idea or opinion and imagining it to be true does not necessarily mean that it is the case. Often, a projection is the monster! The best way to deal with fear or any unknown terrain is to face it, so that fear has nothing to sustain it. Once we experience it, it doesn't have anything with which to move you. Imagined scenarios are where fear thrives, and anything can be frightening when you imagine what might happen and you run from it.

When we stand firmly in the unknown parts of our lives and face them, we realize there is nothing to oppose or resist, and quite often there is no threat. When we sit down to meditate and are still, we are dwelling in the unknown, the ground of being and the mystery of life. Cultivating “don't know mind” and being still and quiet with any raw experience, we find out that there may be some discomfort, but it cannot hurt us. It is in the unknown that we find our potential for awakening and whole new states of consciousness. As spiritual seekers, what we want is to have a direct experience of the unknown in order to see our true nature and rest in the boundless space of awareness.

PZ-8/16/20 & 8/19/20