***Life Lessons about Safety and Security:***

***Flipping your Script from Fear over to Faith***

No matter who you are or what you believe, you can find **freedom from fear**. It is all about learning to use your greatest power, *choosing what to pay attention to*. Others can control what happens around your body and to your body, but you can go inside where it is safe. Just as touching a hot stove gives you pain that tells you to pull back, you can see your fear as a gift, telling you to *pull your awareness* ***up****, to a higher plane of existence*.

First, **get your anxiety level down** to moderate. *Close your eyes, take slow deep breaths, and* in your mind’s eye, *take your body where it would rather be*, to your safe, calm, and happy place, where you can be your best self, and access the highest spirit you have ever known (your grandmother, your hero, ideally, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God). Listen to *words of affirmation and comfort* that you have saved and practiced for this time. *Pray as you breathe out*, out loud if you can, and *meditate as you breathe in* (prayer is speaking to your higher power, and meditation is listening for a response, from within, without, wherever).

As you practice reframing your scene like this, do it when you are calm, like a **fire drill** in school. You can do it with smoke and screaming, once you’ve practiced it in safety and silence. *Remember who you are* and will always be, a good and strong person empowered to take care of this body while you are passing through this earth. Once you have successfully calmed down and refocused from outside to in, realize how *your soul can travel* now, not just to other places, but to other *times*, past or future.

You can reframe any situation you are in, and this way you can **flip your fear *into faith***. Instead of thinking your external protection has **forsaken** you, you can ***find*** new shelter inside. Though your fear might make you want to **freeze**, you can ***flow***, by letting your higher power express itself through you. Instead of **fleeing** the external threat, you can ***face*** it, and choose how you see it. Instead of dwelling in hate where you are **fighting** your foe, you can abide in forgiveness, not trusting bad people around you, but ***forgiving*** them. And so the keys of flipping fear into faith are *forsaking* into *finding, freezing* into *flowing, fleeing* into *facing*, and *fighting* into *forgiving*.

You can keep a list of your favorite ways to **reframe the situation**. Until it is in your mind, keep all this in your phone, and practice using it in a pinch. One simple way to *remember resources you can access* in a crisis has been called the **Shield of SAFEty: S**upport and **S**oothe yourself in time-out, **A**ffirm your **A**ssets and **A**lliances, **F**ocus on the **F**uture when this problem will be solved, and **E**ngage your **E**ncouragers as soon as you can.

To bring all this back to mind, you can repeat words like this to yourself, out loud if you can:

*My faith will flip the script of my fear. I am seeing myself now as not losing to anyone, but winning and giving to them. Anyone who threatens me here will not win but lose, because they aren’t taking from me what they want to get, but receiving from me what I want to give. I choose what I give them. I know the more I give away things like love and joy and peace, the more I have to give. Though it seemed at first like I would lose here no matter what, I have flipped the script to see that no matter what happens around me, I will end up better and stronger then I was before. Rather than letting the situation transform me into its likeness, I choose to be transformed from within. Because of this, more and more each day, in the spirit of* Romans 12: 1-2*, the world I am living in will keep becoming transformed, to become more like me.*

***Soul Foods of Power and Security:***

***Safety, Shelter, Sanctuary, Strength***

**Fear:** preoccupationandparalysis, from **Faith:** trusting ina benevolent source of worry and anxiety about the future strength and security, even in a crisis

**Fear brings**  • Insecurity • Worry • Anxiety **Faith brings** • Calm • Hope • Confidence • Panic • Doubt • Insomnia • Distraction • Peace • Courage • Selective attention

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**Receiving Junk Foods of Fear Receiving­ Whole Foods of Faith**

­­• Focusing on threats and problems grows them 🡪 • Focusing on safety and solutions grows them

• Identifying with my body that’s in danger 🡪 • Identifying with my soul now being empowered

• Seeing fear as a curse to pull me down into harm 🡪 • Seeing fear as a gift to push me up into hope

• Seeing a threat able to drive my anxiety up 🡪 • Seeing protection that’s able to calm my fears

• Seeing I’m bound to and belong to my enemy 🡪 • Seeing I’m connected and belonging to friends

• I believe I’m forsaken by all my protectors 🡪 • I believe I’m found & joined by my protectors

• I can’t distract myself from my body’s pain 🡪 • Focusing on causes beyond me I won’t forsake

• Seeing my enemy can ruin or steal best of me 🡪 • Seeing I can give my best away and not run out

• Seeing my enemy transforming me into itself 🡪 • Seeing my enemy become like me, or leave me

• Hearing words cursing, criticizing, weakening • Hearing words blessing, affirming, strengthening, limiting, degrading many people as losers 🡪 freeing, honoring many people as winners

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**Sharing Sickening Fruits of Fear Sharing Healthy Fruits of Faith**

• My body *freezes* and can’t get anything done 🡪 • My body *flows* smoothly into helpful action

• I ask people to help me *flee* from my enemy 🡪 • I carefully *face* my enemy to understand better

• I ask people to help me *fight* & kill my enemy 🡪 • I teach people to *forgive* and bless my enemy

• I tell others what my enemy is making me into 🡪 • I tell others who I am, always was, and will be

• I ask others to deliver me from defeat 🡪 • I share with others the opportunity of victory

• I feel discouraged, my misery seeks company 🡪 • I grow my encouragement by sharing it

• I appeal to people, groups, institutions I idolize 🡪 • I appeal to invisible, higher power inside and out

• My words long for the past and dread the future 🡪 • I confess my hopes for the here and now • I tell others I feel sorry for myself and them 🡪 • I tell others what I’m thankful for, even now

• I rail against my present circumstances 🡪 • I teach people to mentally travel in time & space

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Do I draw **more fear or faith** from my family and friends **at home**? What fear or faith do I share with them?

**Can I find** **healthier rules and role models** for me to follow, ones that grow my faith and not my fear?

Considering my employer, coworkers, job requirements, **does my work** **give me faith** and strength, or drain it?

At work, how could I reset my boundaries for my words and deeds, to regain strength over worry?

Do I **worry about how *the outside world*** will affect my family and work, or **do I find hope and courage there?**

What changes can I make in how I relate to others (**intake/output of traditional and social media)?**

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**RAISING COURAGEOUS CHILDREN**

**WHO CARRY PEACE OF MIND**

We can’t expect our children to find courage and peace of mind in fearful situations any more than we have found them ourselves. The two biggest powers we have against fear are choosing what to believe in ahead of time, and on the spot, what to pay attention to. Our beliefs serve as an *inoculation of peace* to prevent infection by those who would enslave us to fear. In the moment, our beliefs enable us to pay attention to sources of strength and hope that work like *inhalers of courage*, to give us confidence when we need it most.

We need to find healthy role models to follow, ones that grow not fear but faith. *We will know them by their fruits –* the lifestyles and attitudes of wellbeing. We lose our freedom when we trust and pay attention to anyone who puts out words and deeds that bring insecurity, worry, panic, doubt, confusion, and mistrust. By contrast, we gain freedom when we rely on people who trust in some higher power that brings peace, hope, confidence, courage, and calm.

**Share your Past Anxieties**

When news comes into your family of bullies in school and adult life, or of terrifying episodes of traumatic abuse, talk about how the victims could have inhaled courage. *Tell children about your past and present troubles* with these things. Share what happened when you relied too much on yourself, and on other self-centered people. Ask yourself where you go in a crisis to find security. (To learn more, ask your loved ones where *they* see you going for these things.) Children need to see you trusting in a higher source of protection than yourself, one that not only protects you, but indwells you, where it blesses you to bless others.

**Teach them a Fire Drill**

In elementary school, we learned to imagine and rehearse fires and practice getting to safety. Likewise you can teach children to imagine a fearful situation, take a couple of deep breaths, and access the strongest, sweetest spirit they have ever known (their grandmother, maybe you, ideally God’s indwelling spirit of love). Next they can listen to words of affirmation and comfort coming from that sweet strength. They can practice saying these words to themselves, maybe saving them into their journals or phones.

Fire drills can include scriptures like the 23rd psalm, or prayers. One formula some people use is a series of rehearsed behaviors recalled with the letters **S-A-F-E: S**upport and **S**oothe yourself, **A**ffirm your **A**ssets and **A**lliances, **F**ocus on the **F**uture, and **E**ngage your **E**ncouragers. However they do it, practicing their fire drill will help children in the situations below.

**Bullying at School**

When someone tries to bully our children or their friends, they need the inoculating belief that they aren’t alone. Their bodies may be in danger, but *their souls can travel,* to another time and place. They can learn to imagine protective authority coming to their aid. They can soon ask parents, grandparents, school officials, and other effective friends to discipline the bully. More importantly, they can teach children effective responses to make when bullied. For inhaling, pressure-relief responses they can use on the spot, here are ten practical tips:

1. *Never think or talk like a bigot*.
2. *Make your peace with any visible flaws you can’t hide.*
3. *Be kind to your enemies now and then.*
4. *Play it cool—don’t run or walk away.*
5. *Never let bullies see you sweat.*
6. *Don’t surrender territory, money, or possessions to bullies.*
7. *Break the tension with a smile and even a little laugh.*
8. *Don’t let your parents overprotect you.*
9. *Do use the protection and support of your peers.*
10. *Choose friends who try to follow 1 through 9 above.*

**Traumatic Abuse**

All children need to be prepared to deal with being mistreated. For children **not to be** **victimized** by such incidents, they can learn to talk their feelings out with safe people, so they won’t take their anger at the abuser out on themselves and others. The inoculation of peace is to believe that victims of traumatic abuse can learn to *take responsibility for their own healing*.

The central lesson here is this: we can ***feel our feelings*** of fear and talk them out, so we can ***believe our beliefs*** that we are always safe and sound inside our bodies where our higher power lives.

**Sheltering in Ultimate Power & Security: Fear vs. Faith**

Our SECURITY is where we go for strength, where we find our security, confidence, and safety. But whatever power we trust to take care of us, it *takes over us.* So we need to make sure our protector wants us to surrender not to his *control,* but to his *care*. Good security protects our freedom, not our walls. The fruits of FAITH include peace, confidence, courage, calm, focus, and hope. A bad protector keeps us in the spirit of FEAR, making us and others bear the fruits of insecurity, worry, anxiety, doubt, panic, and nervousness.

**HARMFUL ways to take security, strength, and safety, and what harm they cause**

Idolizing a person (see Samson in **Judges 13**) or an institution (Israel and its kings, **1&2 Samuel**) Don’t fear and fall for popular conspiracy theories: You’ll stumble into a trap **Isa 8: 12-15** Dealing with the devil to make your world safe: Disaster for Judas, **Luke 22: 3-53, Acts 1:16-25**

**NATURAL, NEUTRAL ways to take security and safety, and what results from these**

Worrying about tomorrow, your body, your death weighs you down **Pr 12:25, 29:25; Matt 6: 25-34** Trusting in your own heart (deceitful **Jer. 17:9**) or judgment (**Pr 14:12**): self-help will exhaust you.

**HELPFUL, HEALTHY ways to take security and safety, and what good comes from these**

Make the Lord your refuge: no evil will conquer you, God will rescue and honor you **Psalm 91: 9-16** When in court facing prison and torture, trust God to put words into your mouth **Matt 10: 16-18** Your awareness can dwell on/live in your body, heart, mind, or soul. Focus on/Live in your soul, as no one can touch you there, because that’s where God is in complete control **Matt 10: 28-31** Trust that the presence of God calms storms, including our storms of fear and doubt **Matt 14: 22-34** Ask God for more faith: worked well for father of demoniac son **Mark 9** and Thomas **John 20: 24-28** Trust God as sheep trust a shepherd **(Ps 23)**; listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd **John 10: 10-16** Reframe suffering to see the full part of glass; find fellowship with Christ’s suffering **2 Cor 4:8-12** Believe the faith God gives is the first sign of other supernatural things God will also do **Heb 11:1**

**Memorize, remember, and trust in the promises of God:**

“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” **Psalm 23,** **Mt 10:28,** **Heb 13:6** “Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. And don’t worry about tomorrow, for it will bring its own worries.” **Matt 6: 33-34 NLT** “We know that God causes everything to work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.... Nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. **Rom 8: 28, 38** **NLT** God doesn’t take all our fears and doubts away. Our thorns in the flesh are left to keep us humbly aware of our need for God, for the strength that’s made perfect in weakness. **2 Cor 12: 7b-10** “Don’t be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus…. Whatever is true…noble…right… pure…lovely…admirable, think about such things.” **Phil 4: 6-8 NIV**  “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” **2 Tim 1:7** “Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. And after you have suffered for a little while, God will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.” **1 Pet 5: 7,10-11 NRSV**