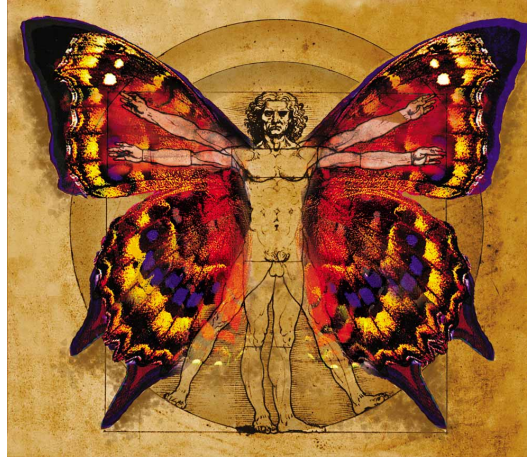


# **Freeing Yourself From Fear**

## **BY EMMETT MILLER, MD**



### **A self-applied experiential program for ridding yourself of fears, anxieties, and phobias**

#### **Introduction**

This program is designed to give you tools to eliminate unreasonable or irrational fears from your life. The instructions are very flexible so that you can progress at your own speed. In a step-by-step process, you will learn skills that you can then apply to your life. Some of the techniques will be easy for you to learn, whereas others may take more time to absorb. Similarly, you may be able to eliminate some of your fears or anxieties in a matter of days while others may diminish over a period of weeks or months.

#### **Program Design:**

Freeing Yourself From Fear is divided into seven sections or phases. Although we provide an approximate time frame for each phase, you will be responsible for choosing how long you spend on each phase. Some people may spend only one half the suggested time on a specific phase, while others may need much more than the suggested time. The seven sections, or phases, are:

**Phase 1: Deep Relaxation** – You will learn to enter a deeply relaxed state through progressive relaxation.

**Phase 2: Rapid Relaxation** – You will learn to enter this state in only two or three minutes.

**Phase 3: Instant Relaxation** – You will learn to relax in a matter of seconds, a useful technique to use when feeling of fear or anxiety occur.

**Phase 4: Desensitization** – You will gradually desensitize yourself to anxiety-producing situations which have occurred in the past. This will be done by first relaxing deeply and then mentally picturing the scene while remaining relaxed.

**Phase 5: Future Image Rehearsal** – You will begin to rehearse appropriate reactions for future situations by mentally visualizing yourself confronting challenging situations without fear.

**Phase 6: Successfully Confronting Challenges** – You will learn a technique to use just before entering a challenging situation, and will begin to use it to deal with day-to-day events.

**Phase 7: Self-Reinforcement** – You will learn to positively reinforce successful confrontations and to make these changes permanent.

- Freeing Yourself From Fear will provide you with some additional benefits:
- Listening to the program will provide you with learning experiences that are enjoyable, relaxing, and stress-reducing.
- You will become a more relaxed person as a result of the techniques you will be learning.
- The skills you will learn can be applied to any tension or anxiety-producing situations that may come up in the future.

### **Psychotherapy and Freeing Yourself From Fear:**

This program is compatible with any form of therapy you may be undergoing. In fact, the most effective way to use the series is with a therapist who understands the use of relaxation techniques.

If you are working alone and find that your progress is extremely slow, that you are unable to relax, or that anxieties or fears are not gradually brought under control even after carefully following the instructions, consider a few visits to a therapist in conjunction with this program.

Many people will find it advantageous to pursue this program with a partner or in a small group.

A small number of people may find that this program will not work for them. No one approach to therapy will work with everyone. If you are not responding to this program, we suggest that you find a therapist or instructor skilled in working with fears or phobic disorders.

### **A Word of Caution:**

It is normal to occasionally fall asleep when you are listening to one of the sessions or when you are doing the relaxation yourself. If this happens often, sit in a more upright position. Setting a timer or watch will help to prevent your falling asleep and not waking up. It is also common to drift off while listening to the session; several minutes may pass and you won't remember hearing what was on it. Sitting upright will also help to keep you more attentive.

Because the sessions are designed to produce deep relaxation, they should not be used while you are doing anything that requires a high degree of alertness such as driving or operating machinery. If you begin such activities soon after using a recording, give yourself sufficient time to return to a state in which you can respond appropriately to the external world.

### **How Freeing Yourself From Fear works:**

The following story, based on an actual case history, will give you a clear idea of the approaches used in Freeing Yourself From Fear.

When Joanne was two and a half, she was taken from her stroller by a kidnapper who then jumped into a car with her and drove off. A police officer witnessed the event and pursued them. Realizing he would likely not escape, the kidnapper stopped the car on a bridge, threw Joanne into a shallow river, and raced off to freedom as the police officer stopped to rescue Joanne from the water.

Following this incident, Joanne was extremely frightened of water. She would not go into a bathroom if there was water in the bathtub, and no amount of coaxing or scolding would change her mind. A very gentle and effective therapy was then developed to help her.

Because it was summertime, it was suggested to the mother that she take Joanne on picnics. The mother took Joanne to a park not far from their home, where they sat on a grassy knoll located about a quarter of a mile from a lake. Although the lake was visible from the knoll, Joanne was more interested in her immediate surrounding and the games her mother had brought her, and paid no attention to the water.

After several days of picnics, her mother moved to a spot roughly an eighth of a mile from the lake; this new location was very similar to the first and Joanne played with the same games. Although she noticed the lake a couple of times, she quickly returned to her playing and forgot about it.

Several days later her mother moved the picnic spot to the grass right next to the sand at the lakeshore. Again, during the first hour, Joanne noticed the lake several times but soon became more interested in playing with her mother, her toys, and exploring the area where the sand and grass bordered each other. After a few days, they moved a few feet over into the dry sand, and began to play the following game: Joanne's mother first scooped up wet sand in a pail and together they made sandcastles. Soon Joanne was willing to go to the wet sand to make things. Next they dug holes in the sand, watched them fill with water, then bathed her dolls in them. Then Joanne began to stand in the holes of water and splash about. Soon Joanne was willing to sit in the shallow water and sail boats, then to stand in the water up to her knees, and later to her waist. Eventually she learned to float and to swim.

The approaches used to help Joanne overcome her fear demonstrate some of the principle features of Freeing Yourself from Fear:

- Joanne's therapy was based on relaxation and comfort. She was never scolded, punished, begged, threatened or teased. Her mother made certain that she felt relaxed at each spot before moving on.
- The approach was gradual. Beginning with a very secure location, she slowly moved to slightly more challenging situations. The movement was so gradual that except for a few nervous glances, Joanne remained relaxed throughout the whole process.
- There was no strict time limit; each phase of Joanne's therapy was based on her comfort.
- At every interval during Joanne's therapy, there was positive reinforcement (playing games).

In a similar way, you will begin with small challenges and build to bigger ones as you feel more comfortable. The recordings will even help you provide yourself with positive reinforcement.

The techniques you will be learning will be very simple and repetitious so that they will be easy to learn and to use. Although the sessions may sometimes be somewhat boring, remember: you are not listening to entertainment, but to train yourself to respond differently to the world.

You may also be tempted to try and confront challenging situations using the techniques learned in the first few phases. Although the final decision is up to you, we suggest that you not do this until Phase 6. You are developing skills in methods of relaxation; once you have learned these skills, there is a specific way in which you will be able to use them. Therefore, it is wise to wait.

It would be helpful to use a notebook as you work with these recordings. Keep notes about memories, ideas or strategies that might help you in your work. You can also use a notebook to chart your progress, a helpful technique for seeing changes as they occur.

As you listen to the sessions, you will repeat statements to yourself such as, "I am completely relaxed from head to toe." At first, however, you may not actually feel relaxed. This is normal. During this part of the process you will be building expectancy in the deeper levels of your mind. Do not evaluate whether or not these statements are true; simply say them to yourself as though they are true.

### **Phase 1: Deep Relaxation**

1: Listen to Chapter 1. You will first learn to look within to measure your tension level. As you learn to recognize that there is a continuum of tension in your body, you will learn to grade your tension on a level from one to ten.

2: You will then learn to relax all of your muscles and internal organs through an extremely effective technique, developed by Dr. Jacobsen in the 1930s, involving first tensing, then relaxing, the various parts of your body. Because most of us have learned to be tense, the technique takes advantage of our prior learning and teaches the body and the deeper levels of the mind how to turn the tension into relaxation.

3: Once you are familiar with Deep Relaxation technique, begin repeating this process from memory once or twice a day. To help you remember the basic steps, the following outline will give you the essential information.

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
- Measure your level of tension on a scale from zero to ten.
- Choose a spot you can focus your attention on, and repeat silently, "I am going to let go of tension, and relax."

- Breathe unnecessary thoughts out of your mind.
- Allow your eyelids to close, and picture your symbol of relaxation on the back of your forehead.
- Relax your body from head to toe beginning with your eyelids.
- Silently repeat the words, “I am Relaxing.”
- Tense your body from toe to head as you count silently from one to ten.
- Increase the tension of your entire body a little bit.
- Send a wave of relaxation from the top of your head down to your toes as you silently count from ten to zero.
- Repeat with each breath out, “Completely relaxed from head to toe.”
- Go through the relaxation process again. Give yourself your thumb signal. Repeat the words, “I can reduce tension and fear and relax by counting from ten to zero.”
- Bring yourself back to alertness by repeating the phrases:
  1. “Awake and alert.”
  2. “Becoming more aware of my physical surroundings.”
  3. “Calm and relaxed.”
- Measure your level of tension on a scale of zero to ten and note your increased relaxation.

4: A Schedule for Phase 1: Most people will find that listening to the sessions two or three times a day for a period of a week will give them a basic understanding of relaxation skills. If you listen less frequently – only once or twice a day for instance – then you may find it will take two weeks to feel confident to relax yourself.

After listening to Chapter 1 10-12 times, begin to relax by repeating the process from memory. At first you may find that it is easier to relax with the recording, but as you continue to practice, you will become more adept at relaxing on your own. When you are relaxing without the recordings, you may find it most efficient to do so for a period of about ten minutes. By the end of the first week, you should be listening to Chapter 1 once or twice a day and repeating the process from memory once or twice a day.

You are ready to move to the next phase when you can relax deeply while listening to the session and can relax fairly well even without the recording.

## **Phase 2: Rapid Relaxation**

- 1: Continue to use Chapter 1 once a day followed immediately by the first section of Chapter 2 (Rapid Relaxation)
- 2: In addition, listen to the Rapid Relaxation exercise (Ch 2) twice a day by itself.
- 3: By the end of the phase, which will take an average of one week, you should be able to relax fully just using the Rapid Relaxation part of the recording and should be comfortable relaxing yourself rapidly without the audiobook. The following outline will help you remember the basic steps:

### **Basic Steps for Rapid Relaxation:**

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
- Focus on a spot in front of you and say to yourself, “I am going to let go of tension and relax.
- Relax your body from head to toe. Begin by repeating silently, “I am relaxing.”
- Tense your body from head to toe to the count of 1-10.
- Now let go of all tension in your body to the count of 10 to 1, then repeat to yourself, “Completely relaxed from head to toe.”
- Bring yourself back to alertness by saying:
  1. “Awake and alert.”
  2. “Becoming more aware of my physical surroundings.”
  3. “Calm and relaxed.”

4: A schedule for Phase 2: An excellent plan for this phase is to start the day by listening to Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 first thing in the morning. Listen to just the Rapid Relaxation again at lunch-time, and once again at the end of the day. Then, before going to bed, repeat the Deep Relaxation process from memory. In addition, later in the week, take two or three breaks of three minutes each to practice the Rapid Relaxation technique. This phase will probably take about a week.

### **Phase 3: Instant Relaxation**

- 1: Continue your deep relaxation at least once a day, using the technique you've learned. In addition, you may continue to listen to Chapter 1 occasionally as a refresher.
- 2: Listen to Chapter 2 (Both the Rapid and Instant techniques) twice a day.
- 3: Begin practicing the Instant technique from memory several times a day.

#### **Basic Step for Instant Relaxation**

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position.
  - Choose a point to focus on, giving yourself permission to relax, letting your eyelids close.
  - Feel yourself grow smaller as you are drawn through the hole and as you count from ten down to zero.
  - Take a deep breath in and open your eyes as you pass through the hole, emerging into a relaxed, calm universe.
- 4: By now you will probably notice that you are becoming a more relaxed person and that everyday things that ordinarily would have annoyed you, don't seem to bother you anymore. This is an excellent time to begin to use Chapter 6 (Self-Reinforcement). Just before going to bed is an excellent time to listen to this experience.
- 5: A typical schedule during this phase 3 could be to listen to both experiences on Chapter 2 (about eight minutes) first thing in the morning and sometime in the middle of the day. Later in the afternoon or in the evening before bed, use Chapter 6 to reinforce the changes you are noticing. (If you have trouble remembering your positive changes, record your successes in your book.)

### **Phase 4: Desensitization**

- 1: Now that you are aware of how Chapters 1 and 2 can help you, continue to use them as needed. During a stressful period in your life, you may want to listen to Chapter 1 every day or perhaps several times a day. During less stressful periods, continue to practice the three techniques from memory.
- 2: Using Chapter 6 from time to time will continue to strengthen your confidence.
- 3: For the Systematic Desensitization Process you will need about 20 or 30 3x5 cards. On each card, write down a few words that describe a specific situation that would have caused fear, anxiety or tension in the past (driving on a city street, driving on a freeway, taking a freeway off-ramp). Notice that you would expect more tension in some situations than others. If you wish, you may do this on a word processor document on your computer.

Rate the level of tension of each event using a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning no tension and ten, extreme fear. Mark the appropriate level on each card. It might be helpful to carry the 3x5 cards with you and write down tension-producing situations as they occur during the day. Try to have at least one card for each level of 0-10 if possible.

- 4: Arrange the cards in order, beginning with number zero.

As you begin working with Chapter 3 (Desensitizing Past Events), you will teach your mind new ways of handling the situations on the cards. You will begin with the cards with a tension or challenge level of one, and will progress from level to level as you can comfortably visualize yourself successfully handling each situation.

Each time you use this section of the recording, you will choose three situations, one which you can visualize yourself handling following a deep Relaxation procedure, one which you could imagine handling following a Rapid Relaxation, and one in which you feel that the Instant Relaxation would be effective.

As you listen, you will first relax, then imagine that you are going down to a room that we call your screening room. Here you will be able to look at positive and relaxing images and feel good feelings from them. You will also be able to look at past scenes which made you feel uncomfortable, but because you are merely observing these on your memory screen, you will be able to be relaxed and objective as you observe them.

As you listen to the session, you will start with the first memory and review it on your memory screen just as it happened, but feeling completely calm as you realize that you are merely looking at a memory. Now, in imagery, write yourself a new script. Imagine you are dealing with the situation in a more relaxed way. If you find that any tension or anxiety arises while looking at this, use your thumb signal to relax yourself.

If using your thumb signal for two seconds does not eliminate this tension or anxiety, squeeze your thumb for five or ten seconds and it will erase this scene and return your relaxing image. This will be a signal to you that the scene you have chosen has too high an anxiety level, and you should be looking a scene with a lower number.

5: Begin listening to Chapter 3.

6: As each day goes by, you will be able to choose events of a higher challenge level. By the end of several days, you may be able to comfortably picture yourself, in fantasy, handling a level four challenge following a Deep Relaxation. You might be able to handle a level three challenge following a Rapid Relaxation, and a level two challenge using an Instant Relaxation technique.

Remember, going through these situations in imagery does not mean that you will go out into the world yet and actually deal with a real situation. At this point, you are practicing in imagery only.

7: You may find that in a week of two you will be able to handle situations that are level eight or nine challenges. This is still not the time to confront these situations in reality – you are developing the skill to be able to handle these situations with ease, a skill which will take time and practice.

At this time you may feel that you would like to confront a first or second level challenge using the techniques you have learned. You may do this if you wish; but remember: start with a level one challenge, and do not progress to level two until you are comfortable with level one. If you find that you are unable to handle level one challenges comfortably, stop. There will be more specific instruction on how to do this in Phase 6.

8: A Schedule for Phase 4: You should listen to Chapter 3 once or twice a day. Be certain to reinforce all positive changes as they occur by using Chapter 6. Continue to listen to Chapters 1 and 2 as needed. The estimated time period for this section is one to two weeks. This is a very important phase. Take your time and thoroughly “deprogram” your past reactions.

### **Phase 5: Future Image Rehearsal**

1: Listen to Chapter 4 (Future Image Rehearsal) twice a day for four to seven days. This experience will guide you to view future events in a relaxed manner, much in the way that Chapter 3 helped you view past events. Just as you used your cards to select scenes in Chapter 3 to desensitize, you will be selecting future scenes to rehearse. You can use these same cards, or you can make a new set.

As with Chapter 3, it's a good idea to use as many different scenes as you can. In projecting, there may be a specific scene that you want to concentrate on. Rehearse this scene several times as you listen to Chapter 4.

On the other hand, you may wish to image several different scenes each time you listen to the recording. Because you are rehearsing future situations, you will undoubtedly feel very confident and eager to use your relaxation techniques. You may do this, but stick to situations of low tension (challenge) level, and if any difficulty arises, stop. Phase 6 will teach you a more specific approach.

2: In addition to using Chapter 4 twice daily during this phase, you should use Chapter 6 every other day, to continue giving yourself positive feedback for your ongoing accomplishments. By this time, you will find yourself feeling much more calm and relaxed in situations that ordinarily would be upsetting to you.

Feel free to use Chapters 1, 2, 3 from time to time as needed to maintain your ability to relax deeply, rapidly, and instantly. Continue to use Chapter 3 if there are still tension-producing situations from the past. Also, from time to time throughout the day, use your Rapid and Instant relaxation techniques from memory.

### **Phase 6: Successfully Confronting Challenges**

1: During this phase you will practice dealing with challenging experiences in reality as well as in imagination. Listen to Chapter 5 (Preparing Yourself for a Challenge) once or twice a day. Chapter 6 will teach you a technique that you can use before confronting a challenging event.

2: After a few days, choose a situation which in the past you would have rated as a level one challenge. You will now actually confront this situation in reality, using the techniques you've learned from Chapter 5. If possible, listen to the session just before the event.

3: After you have successfully dealt with the challenge, listen to Chapter 6, or go through the Self Reinforcement procedure from memory immediately if possible.

4: When you have successfully encountered and dealt in a relaxed and comfortable manner with a number of level one challenges, move to level two challenges and repeat the process, each time using Chapter 5, or going through it from memory beforehand. As your skills increase, move on to higher and higher levels, always making sure you feel secure and confident at the previous level. You will find that you will develop a reliable sense of when to use the techniques of Deep, Rapid and Instant Relaxation.

5: A Schedule for Phase 6: You should continue with this phase until you feel comfortable about your ability to deal with situations that were normally tension-producing. For many people this will mean that they can deal with a challenge level of eight or nine while feeling a sense of calm, or at most, a manageable level of tension. Others may choose to continue to work at it until they are able to deal with level ten challenges in this manner. You may continue in the phase for one to four weeks or more. The choice is up to you.

During Phase 6 you may continue to use Chapters 1, 2, and 3 to reinforce your relaxation and your ability to let go of fear and tension as needed.

### **Phase 7: Self-Reinforcement**

1: By now you should be handling nearly all challenging situations successfully. This success will serve as a reinforcement, strengthening you with each successful experience. Chapter 6 (Reinforcing Success) will help you give yourself this “positive feedback.”: use Chapter 6 once or twice a day to reflect on the positive handling of situations as they occur. As you feel comfortable with your success level, you may choose to listen to the recording once every other day.

2: If you should encounter situations that are difficult to handle, or if you feel tension developing before a challenge, return to Phase 6 for a few days.

3: During particularly stressful periods of your life, return to the techniques from Chapters 1 and 2.

4: We recommend you familiarize yourself with other products created by Dr. Miller to best counteract ongoing stress. Such programs would include Letting Go Of Stress, Healing Journey, and Rainbow Butterfly, Abolish Anxiety, Escape from Depression, The Serenity Prayer, Relaxation and Inspiration, I AM and I CAN.