

Changing Fear Bonds to Love Bonds

How to change fear bonds into love bonds:

1. It all starts with our identity in Christ. Our confidence is in who we are in Him. Christ alone meets our needs for love, acceptance, security and significance. We need to stay in relationship with Him and understand who we are in Him to be able to respond to others in a life-giving way. When others around us are anxious and fearful, we must learn to be calm and supportive. We need to focus only on our own fears and our part in causing or resolving problems. We must learn to take responsibility for our own stuff, not the other person's stuff.

How to Help Yourself...

- Recognize the fear. What are you really afraid of? (unmet need)
- Know whom you want with you when you are afraid (Jesus, loved one). If you are alone in your fear you will be controlled by it very easily.
- Discover what you really desire (safety, love, security, etc.)
- Talk about your fear. Express it to the person you desire to be with you.

How to Help the Other Person...

- Stay in the relationship while letting others have their fears.
- Encourage and understand them, but let them handle it by looking to the Lord for themselves.
- Be yourself, living and responding out of your new heart in Christ.
- Remember and remind others of mutual goals and desires.

2. Know and define your biblical responsibilities. Go through the demands you feel you must meet, and understand which ones are yours and which ones are unreasonable (expectation vs. Biblical responsibilities). Find someone qualified to double-check your judgment. You should be able to speak clearly about what is yours and what is someone else's part of the problem and solution.

How to Help Yourself...

- Recognize your responsibility in the fearful situation.
- Recognize the other person's part in the situation.
- Check your reality with someone.
- Take responsibility for your own fears, and do not project them onto others.
- Learn to be yourself rather than controlling others.

How to Help the Other Person...

- Be of help to others when they are fearful.
- Share some responsibility when you can to help them with their fears.
- Help them identify their fears.
- Encourage their heart.
- Be glad to be with them in their fears and help them return to joy.

3. If you or someone else is trying to control the other by being upset, trying to hurt them, or threatening them, return to steps 1 and 2 until you can speak calmly and clearly to each other.
4. If you focus on what your responsibilities are before God and address your own fears and anxiety, you should be able to respond in faith and love in the way God would desire. Your desires will match God's and will be validated through the scriptures. Wisdom and maturity will be gained.
5. In relationships it is always important to communicate our love to each other. Perfect love casts out fear. Just as light will always expose darkness, love overcomes fear. Our love should be bigger than the problem.

These principles can be applied when we are struggling with other negative emotions as well. The six big negative emotions we need to self-regulate are shame, fear, disgust, anger, sadness, and hopeless despair. When we stay relational with God and others, the problem that is causing us distressing emotions gets much smaller, and God who is already bigger than any problem becomes more real to us.