

It is, however, something that very much needs to be dealt with.

## The Road Trip

Here's how I've learned to deal with my fear: I made a decision a long time ago that if I want creativity in my life—and I do—then I will have to make space for fear, too.

Plenty of space.

I decided that I would need to build an expansive enough interior life that my fear and my creativity could peacefully coexist, since it appeared that they would always be together. In fact, it seems to me that my fear and my creativity are basically conjoined twins—as evidenced by the fact that creativity cannot take a single step forward without fear marching right alongside it. Fear and creativity shared a womb, they were born at the same time, and they still share some vital organs. This is why we have to be careful of how we handle our fear—because I've noticed that when people try to kill off their fear, they often end up inadvertently murdering their creativity in the process.

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So I don't try to kill off my fear. I don't go to war against it. Instead, I make all that space for it. Heaps of space. Every single day. I'm making space for fear right this moment. I allow my fear to live and breathe and stretch out its legs comfortably. It seems to me that the less I fight my fear, the less it fights back. If I can relax, fear relaxes, too. In fact, I cordially invite fear to come along with me everywhere I go. I even have a welcoming speech prepared for fear, which I deliver right before embarking upon any new project or big adventure.

It goes something like this:

"Dearest Fear: Creativity and I are about to go on a road trip together. I understand you'll be joining us, because you always do. I acknowledge that you believe you have an important job to do in my life, and that you take your job seriously. Apparently your job is to induce complete panic whenever I'm about to do anything interesting—and, may I say, you are *superb* at your job. So by all means, keep doing your job, if you feel you must. But I will also be doing my job on this road trip, which is to work hard and stay focused. And Creativity will be doing its job, which is to remain stimulating and inspiring. There's plenty of room in this vehicle for all of us, so make yourself at home, but understand this: *Creativity and I are the only ones who will be*

*making any decisions along the way.* I recognize and respect that you are part of this family, and so I will never exclude you from our activities, but still—your suggestions will never be followed. You're allowed to have a seat, and you're allowed to have a voice, but you are not allowed to have a vote. You're not allowed to touch the road maps; you're not allowed to suggest detours; you're not allowed to fiddle with the temperature. Dude, you're not even allowed to touch the *radio*. But above all else, my dear old familiar friend, you are absolutely forbidden to drive."

Then we head off together—me and creativity and fear—side by side by side forever, advancing once more into the terrifying but marvelous terrain of unknown outcome.

## Why It's Worth It

It isn't always comfortable or easy—carrying your fear around with you on your great and ambitious road trip, I mean—but it's always worth it, because if you can't learn to travel comfortably alongside your fear, then you'll never be able to go anywhere interesting or do anything interesting.

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And that would be a pity, because your life is short and rare and amazing and miraculous, and you want to do really interesting things and make really interesting things while you're still here. I know that's what you want for yourself, because that's what I want for myself, too.

It's what we all want.

And you have treasures hidden within you—extraordinary treasures—and so do I, and so does everyone around us. And bringing those treasures to light takes work and faith and focus and courage and hours of devotion, and the clock is ticking, and the world is spinning, and we simply do not have time anymore to think so small.