

TALES OF AN EVERYDAY GURU



Part one: How to avoid being eaten by the fear monster

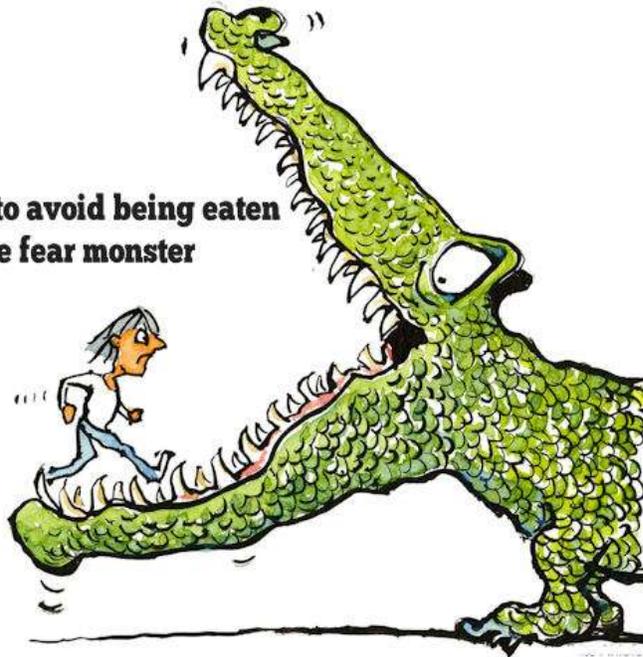
Part Two: Dear God

Part Three: The little human who could

By Robin J Roberts © 2012

Tales of an everyday Guru

**How to avoid being eaten
by the fear monster**



By Robin J Roberts

Part One.

An endless stream of advice threatened to drown her. It jumped out from news stands, spewed forth from self made gurus with book deals and well meaning friends with good intentions. What the world needed she surmised was an everyday guru, someone who didn't have the secret or know the way. Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! It was an epiphany of orgasmic proportions. Bethany donned her (\$5.99 on special) PJ's with the huge pink flowers and yellow polka dots, slipped on ugg boots, which to the untrained eye may have looked suspiciously like road kill and started to write....

"Tales of an Everyday Guru: How to avoid being eaten by the Fear Monster."

"The fear monster lurks in the shadows, feeding on insecurity and self doubt. It has big scary teeth which drip with sarcasm and can puncture even the biggest of all dream balloons."

Bethany knew all about the fear monster. It was there last Christmas when she asked her boss for a rise, it stood right behind her the day she confronted a friend about money borrowed and it tried to prevent her from stepping forward to help an old man who was being bullied by some teenagers.

"The fear monster doesn't discriminate. It will eat the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the gay and the straight, the Christians and the Atheists. And it doesn't feed at any particular time of day or night, which means you will never know when it will bite you in the butt."

This is the irony Bethany thought. No self respecting, self made guru will ever admit to being stalked by the fear monster. I mean who is going to buy a book from someone who on the odd occasion still looks under the bed for monsters! My God the drama of it all to be caught wearing our humanity, it would be almost as bad as being caught wearing underwear brought at the local thrift store.

"So how does one recognize the fear monster? Is it big or small or fat or tall? Is it blue or brown or square or round? Is it invisible to the naked eye or hairy and scary like the things our mothers told us lurked in the shadows of the night?"

Hmmm....that's a good question. Bethany shoved another mouthful of warm popcorn in her mouth, a good portion of which tumbled like snow flakes onto the floor. It went unnoticed in the moment.

“The fear monster is often revealed when we begin to stretch ourselves and shed the comfort blanket of familiarity. Women stay with alcoholic partners because they do not believe they are capable of creating a life beyond what they now live. Fear tells them stories like "better the Devil you know" or "no one would want someone like me" or "he will change one day." People stay in dead end jobs because fear tells them things like "You are too old to learn anything new" or "No one wants someone who can't do this or that". Fear is a story we tell ourselves so we never have to take a risk, take the next step or believe in ourselves. The fear monster is also a bit like God. No one knows for sure what God (substitute Buddha, Goddess whatever works for you) really looks like but everyone has a sense of what it feels like to be in his/her presence. The fear monster is no different. We all know what it feels like to have a sense of fear.”

For Bethany fear was her heart beating faster than a teenage girl texting about the cute guy she met at the mall. Fear was the thought she might fail and the thought she might actually succeed. Fear was taking the next step or waiting for the other shoe to drop. Fear was all about the unknown and having to shed the comfort blanket of familiarity she had wrapped herself in. Fear was sweaty palms and wobbly legs. It was hyperventilation and words which jumped from her mouth having no rhyme or reason. Fear was letting go and saying goodbye. Fear had more disguises than a Russian spy.

“The fear monster is not a figment of our imaginations. It is very real. Some of us are more prone to attracting it into our lives than others. But even the most positive, self aware, saintly, enlightened and educated gurus will encounter the fear monster during the course of their lifetime.”

Knowing all of humanity was being stalked by the fear monster gave Bethany hope. The knowledge you are not alone is the rope you hold onto when it feels like you are.

“When the fear monster attaches itself to you and starts to feed like a tick on a dog on your irrational thoughts then it creates what is known as a phobia. Isopterophobia is the fear of termites, Omphalophobia the fear of belly buttons, Coulrophobia the fear of clowns, Autophobia the fear of being alone or of oneself and Dendrophobia the fear of trees. The list of phobias is long....very long and while we may chuckle at anyone being scared of a bellybutton (although old men in Speedos' with beer bellies may qualify as terrifying) the truth is the fear monster comes in many shapes and forms.”

Bethany scanned the list of phobias showing up on her lap top. Achluophobia - Fear of darkness. Tick. Oh God yes how many times had she been told as a child the boogie man would get her if she went out into the dark. Catagelophobia - Fear of being ridiculed. Tick. So many dreams gathering dust because she feared being laughed at. Maniaphobia - Fear of insanity. Tick. Anyone who has ever had a relative diagnosed with dementia or any neurological disease could relate to this one. Okay so now she was beginning to develop a phobia of having phobias, definitely time to shut the lap top off.

“Fears do not have to make sense for them to be real nor do they do not have to be based in reality. This is a very important thing to remember. No one wants to be thought of as crazy. Battling the fear monster is hard enough without adding your mother’s “its all in your head” to the list or buying into your boyfriends “suck it up princess!” The fear monster is real whether anyone else sees it is irrelevant.”

Fear Bethany concluded as she sucked the life out of a Pepsi cola, is the Universes way of letting you know there is a bigger picture you are not seeing. But the loop hole was the bigger picture wasn’t always going to be the one you would have painted. Creator may have sketched out a far different fate for you.

“The fear monster isn’t one for dieting it will feed on any thoughts which cause confusion, indecision and insecurity. It will chew them up and spit them out at you. Monsters aren’t particular about manners they don’t care whether they make a mess of your life. They don’t lose sleep over your lost dreams. No fear monster I know has gone to therapy to work through feelings of remorse after stopping someone having a life of abundance. And as far as I know none subscribe to Dr Phil’s twitter updates.”

Like a two year old on a Halloween high, the Iphone on the table started vibrating. With no desire to share this night with anyone or anything Bethany switched off its life support button. She wished it was this easy to switch off the thoughts which fed the fear monster. “Of course it is” 30 day experts would claim and there would be a 100,000 Google search results which backed them up. Bethany could hear Yoda in his quiet voice stating “Have no fear have you then see not the real you think I”.

“Fear Monsters are not like the ‘just add water sea creatures’ we all ran out to purchase as children. They are born out of the circumstances and events which shape our lives. Our ego mind picks out a thought, marries it with a belief and hey presto a fear is born! A fear monster can be inherited, passed down from generation to generation, usually without anyone having noticed. They grow very quickly and have suction caps on their feet which prevent you from shaking them loose. Okay so this might be a slight exaggeration however if you have ever encountered the fear monster you would know getting rid of it is akin to convincing a store sales person you really don’t need another credit card.”

“Some fear monsters we outgrow as we begin to gain more knowledge about the world and our place in it. Some we carry with us all of our lives.”

Bethany remembered back to the birth of her first fear monster. She would have been about 4 years old. The night covered everything in a darkness only owls could see through and there she was wanting to dive headfirst into the unknown. But what she wasn't expecting was “the boogie man will get you if you go out there!” Seriously Boogie man how gullible did her mother think she was! One toe dipped into the darkness but it was too late a fear monster had been born. Three seconds later 4 yr old Bethany was under the bed covers with every light in her room burning brightly. That was then and this was now. Now she was an adult capable of rational thought....Bethany caught sight of the night light in the corridor. “Oh well” she sighed. She never claimed to be an enlightened guru but an everyday one still figuring it all out.

“So what circumstances and events bring forth the fear monster? Change would be high on the list. Change pushes us out of our comfort zone, exposes our insecurities and takes away the security blanket of familiarity we have clung to over the years. When change comes the fear monster is hitching a ride hoping to feed off those insecurities and feelings of self doubt. When people lose jobs, when their partner of 20 years walks out the door, when businesses fail, when natural disasters occur and life as we have known it ceases to exist, the Fear monster is there waiting. It's waiting for the moment when you will crawl back into your shell like a turtle wanting to protect itself from the outside world.

Everyone hopes their marriage will last forever, everyone hopes their job future will be secure, everyone hopes they will age gracefully, everybody wants the safety and security of knowing what is happening in their lives and when it is happening.”

Bethany's mother battled the fear monster when her husband of thirty years walked out the door into the arms of a woman young enough to be his daughter. Change came swiftly and without warning. Everything which had been became everything which was no longer. What happens when your once loving partner who swore to love you for better or worst has a midlife crisis and decides he/she does not love you anymore and in a blink of an eyelid up and leaves? For the women who left the workplace to raise a family this means loss of an income and financial security. For others it means loss of identity for who are you if you are not Mrs. Somebody. Some find friends stop calling and out comes the age card because now your age is a neon sign saying who will want you now. Bethany thought back to those first weeks after the door closed behind her father. Her mother was so close to being eaten by the fear monster you could see the imprint of her foot on its tongue.

“Being made redundant or being fired means in some cases losing the ability to support ourselves and those we care about. We start to fear having our homes taken from us, we begin to fear judgment from our partners and peers and the more we give into these fears the less we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. The fear monster stalks us, looks over our shoulder at every choice we make and every choice we fail to make. Change takes away our answers and pushes us to find new ones. The fear monster whispers in our ear....its all falling apart....can't teach an old dog new tricks....you can't compete with the youngsters. It breathes life into old negative beliefs and strangles hope with the ghosts of mistakes past.”

Bethany loved her job in retail. She was a people person who drew smiles and compliments from every customer conversation. Her days were organized around this adult commitment, there were daily rituals, familiar patterns which gave security and comfort. And if for some reason this large piece of her life was taken away, if things changed then she too would have to battle the fear monster. Oh she could pretend she hadn't glimpsed it in life's rear view mirror, a lot of people did but then people who bury their heads in the sand tend to get bitten in the butt by monsters. This was a well known fact!

“If you want see how quickly a fear monster can grow throw some change into the hat the Universe has left at the curb. However change also brings to the table the unknown and the unknown has a lot of fear attached to it. Most of us have a need to know everything will be okay. And when the Universe shakes it head and goes “what guarantee didn't you read the fine print?” We are left not knowing what the future holds for us. It is why we still have old school psychics throwing out one line predictions. We all want a crystal ball to squash the fear monster and make the unknown known. You may leave the child behind but once you know the boogie man may be out there you will always want someone to turn on the lights so everything can be seen.”

Bethany thought back to the day Aunt Mary dragged her off to see a psychic. The word dragged being appropriate because “Iron Chef America’ was on and one does not disappoint the chairman by missing an episode! Aunt Mary however insisted on having a witness to the things which were about to be revealed. Bethany remembered the psychic being a strange little round woman with the flowing black robes. She looked like one of those Halloween decorations you stuck on the window. Aunt Mary hung on every word this old woman said, eating up the predictions which tumbled out as if they were meth coated candy. A trip over water within 5 years, an accident in the family, money within 2 years and yes she would grow old and be happy. My goodness no wonder Aunt Mary looked thrilled her whole life laid before her and all she needed to do was sit back and wait for it all to happen. Bethany knew this was the allure of the psychic they were the ones who turned on the lights and made the unknown known. She shook her head trying to dislodge the memory then continued to write....

“The fear monster causes intelligent women to date toad after toad not because they are looking for prince charming but because they would rather hold hands with a toad then embrace their loneliness. They buy into the myth ‘you are no one unless you have a special someone’. The fear monster will slip into your life when relationships change, friendships end, marriages fail and when families burn bridges. And in moments when no one can be found and silence becomes an unwelcome companion. Loneliness feeds our fears. I am not lovable, I will never be loved or I will never find happiness.”

Bob was a toad. A big bellied hairy backed toad and her mother’s first boyfriend after her marriage ended. We are told to love our soul mates warts and all but Bethany still believed a toad was a toad and slimy was slimy. The fear monster blinded Bethany’s Mother to Bob’s habit of clipping his toe nails at the dining room table. It closed her eyes to the empty beer bottles and foul smelling burps which lingered like a skunks trail. Bob filled the house with sound and said all the things he knew her mother wanted to hear. Bethany’s mother believed Bob to be the knight who would defeat her fear monster. What she didn’t realize is fear monsters are assigned one human each and only that human has the power to starve the fear monster to death.

“The media feeds fears especially the growing old one. Advertisements for anti-aging creams remind us we are not getting any younger and while they may claim to make you look younger they cannot make you younger. As we get older what we haven’t done starts to overshadow what we have done. The fear monster reminds us of our mortality and scares us into believing our dreams with never be realized. It stands behind us when we look in the mirror and chuckles when our midlife muffin top wobbles. It points out the wrinkles which are starting to resemble a roadmap of life’s challenges. And when we start looking for the brown hairs in the gray rather than the other way around it falls to the floor laughing.”

Bethany was thirty five, childless and as her relatives pointed out every opportunity they got ‘not getting any younger’. And while she didn’t buy into the ‘women have use by dates’ myth the pressure was there. The odd thought popped up creating a little niggle of insecurity and in the corner of her eye she could see the fear monster grinning. One day after discovering a crow’s foot she went and got Botox injections. Her face became a stretched out canvas of human skin. Did it make her any younger? No. Would it stop her growing old? No. Would she ever be able to move her eyebrows again....only time would tell.

“Perhaps the most common monster foods are the fear of rejection or ridicule. It is every child’s worst nightmare to be teased, bullied, demeaned and laughed at. And none of us want the “its not you but me “conversation. When we fear rejection or ridicule we allow the fear monster to talk us out of stepping into our higher self. The fear monster gets great delight popping our dream balloons. It loves the sound of a deflating ego and wants nothing more than to push us further and further into ourselves. We cannot avoid rejection and ridicule. There will always be people who ‘just aren’t into us’. There will always be bullies who need to make others feel less in order to make themselves feel more. And those who become butterflies will always be at the mercy of the jealous grubs that never develop wings.”

Bethany touched the strands of hair neatly trimmed and layered which fell upon her face. Her last haircut cost \$70 and it was worth every penny. Her mother use to cut her hair as a child. If you can call putting a bowl on a head and cutting around it a haircut! She could still hear the taunts of the other children “who mowed over your head?” The day the bowl broke was the day Bethany started believing in God. As for rejection there was the boyfriend who dumped her via text message, the ‘your book proposal sucked’ letter, the ‘we don’t think you are suited for this job’ phone call and so on. It is hard not develop a fear of being rejected or ridiculed particularly if you experience these things constantly. Bethany brushed away the memories of the past and continued on....

“Fear Monsters like people who think trying and not succeeding is failing. They devour feelings of inadequacy. A popular bedtime story for baby monsters is “I think I can’t, I think I can’t, the story of the little human who couldn’t.” Society puts pretty ribbons on those who win and try harder badges on those who lose. No one congratulates the person who nearly made it. We do not want to let down our parents, disappoint our partners, face public humiliation or not measure up to our peers. The fear monster encourages us never to risk and reminds us daily of failed attempts and dead ends which have taken us no where. When you go to sleep it will sit beside your bed and read you the story of the little human who couldn’t. While playing videos of all the times you have tried and failed within your head.”

It was a typical summer’s day with all the cliché’s. The sun was shining, the water glistened, the sky was blue and there stood Bethany in front of her kayak waiting for her turn to become the next Columbus. The eyes of all her grade eight classmates followed her every move. Push Kayak into water. Get into said Kayak. Grab paddle. Start to paddle towards the horizon, so far so good. Start to wobble, okay don’t panic. Start to tip, okay panic! Completely tip over, water going into lungs. Any second Grandma Joan would be coming back from the grave to help her to the other side. Wait that’s not Grandma Joan but Principal Haggard! Oh gross he is kissing her, stale smoke, this mornings cake from the staff room, bad really bad, old person’s breathe. Her classmates did not care if the principal was performing life saving mouth to mouth all they knew was his lips were touching Bethany’s.

It was humiliating enough to almost drown in three feet of water but to have to endure weeks of being called 'Haggard's honey' was torture. The fear monster would remind her of her classmates' laughter every time someone suggested a water sport of any kind. Eventually she got the courage to try again but for a long time she always made sure there was a handsome, young male with nice breathe in close proximity.

"What do we fear? Almost everything! Think you are alone in your fears then think again. Somewhere in your community there is a person trying to work out how to walk on water so they do not have to get in an airplane. Somewhere there is a young man who wants to ask the cute waitress out but because he's been dumped before so all he does is sit and stare. Somewhere there is a person throwing up in the staff washroom because they have to ask their boss for a day off. Somewhere an expectant mother is reading 200 'how to be the perfect parent' books. Somewhere someone is being tapped on the shoulder by the fear monster and they like you are the doing the best they can not to be eaten."

Bethany admitted to owning quite a few self help bibles on how to overcome your fears. However they all assumed she would become an enlightened guru by the end of the book. And while she did have her Ghandi moments, she knew most things in the life of an everyday guru could only be overcome one step one day at a time over the course of a lifetime. The one thing which pissed her off more than anything else was the 'expert' who thought telling her that her fears were irrational was a good idea. Really! Had they been talking to her mother? Did her ex-boyfriend share her tweets? Did she need to rethink her Facebook privacy settings? Irrational how dare they! As if she didn't have enough to do battling the fear monster without having to add another person to the 'people who think I am insane list'. The sky may not have fallen on Chicken Little but that's not to say it couldn't have. My fears concluded Bethany aren't irrational, they're simply an outcome of having a highly creative mind.

"Anxiety is fear which is future orientated. It's when we fear not being able to control what happens next. Panic on the other hand is being reminded of something we fear and having an immediate physical response. The fear monster will play a home movie two seconds before we are about to take the great leap of faith. When we are two steps up the ladder we will see images of broken bones and remember our fear of heights. When we are about to board our plane we will see the news story which ran last week about pilots falling asleep in the cockpit and remember our fear of flying. The fear monster likes to mess with our minds simply because it can. Anxiety it will create a whole heap of it without blinking an eyelid. It will remind us of our mortality while we are waiting for the test results to come back. When we start to feel in control it will list off all the things over which we have no control. The fear monster will eat us up and spit us out because it knows all humans have the capacity to fear and most of us at some stage have been taught there are things we should fear."

Bethany thought reality television was something everyone should be very scared about. But she wouldn't go there. As for anxiety and panic they were the twin sisters who came through the door shortly before her mother arrived for a visit. If the capacity to fear is human nature and fear is learnt, then everyone should stop beating themselves up every time they felt anxious or panicky. Bethany concluded we all needed to cut ourselves some slack sometimes. If we are in a plane and the engines suddenly fail but we land safely who is going to go 'oh well' and leave it at that. Most mere mortals the next time they step onto a plane will have a fear monster on their shoulder waiting to remind them of the time they almost didn't make it. And yes it would be nice if we were all fearless but the world wasn't perfect and neither was she. Better to own her humanity and grow into awareness and understanding with each step than to play pretend guru.

"To recap the fear monster is scary, possibly with big white teeth and a gooey sticky fear stained tongue. It is not particular who it hangs around with and it will eat you up if given the chance. It doesn't discriminate, so it will stalk the young the old, the females the males, the straight the gay, the black the white, the healthy the challenged, the blue collar the white collar, the brave and the cowardly. It will feed on our fears and encourage them. It will tell us fear monster stories....remember the time you did....and this happened. We battle the fear monster when we are lonely, when we are afraid of failing or being ridiculed or losing something we value. We battle the fear monster on the day we send our children off on their first day of school or college. Women face off with the fear monster when they discover their first gray hair or wrinkle. Men when they see younger versions of themselves surrounding them in the workplace. Old people see the fear monster in nursing homes and young people see it exam rooms. So really it doesn't matter who you are, how old you are or where you are on this planet. The one thing you can count on is we are all going to come face to face with the fear monster at some stage in our lives. We are all humans having a very human experience you are not alone and you don't have to pretend to be an enlightened being because we are all simply everyday guru's doing the best we can with what we have in any given moment."

Bethany yawned was it midnight already? She should be tucked in bed dreaming of lotto wins and swimming naked in the sun. And yes she knew winning lotto was not a good retirement plan but it kept the bed bugs away. She threw her pen down and padded like a contented kitten to the bedroom. Tomorrow the everyday guru would return ready to take on the fear monsters of the world!

Part Two.

Bethany awoke to a Saturday morning full of promise. Rain melted down the windows providing a comforting buffer to the world outside. The coffee was made unlike her bed. After a hearty breakfast of toast and peanut butter she retired to the living room sofa and picked up where she had left off last night.

“We now know all about the fear monster but what effect does it have on us? In what way does it change how we look at the world and our actions? Firstly the fear monster can cause us to rush into things we later regret. It is the hand in our back which pushes us into action before we have thought things through. We can also get caught up in the fear monsters stories and wrapped in elaborate ‘what if’ scenarios. The fear monster distorts the way we look at the world and our place in it. It causes us to hide rather than seek, shrink rather than grow but more importantly it stops us being the person we were born to be.”

Bethany pondered her words. She remembered turning 30 to the sound her biological clock ticking and rushing into one unhealthy relationship after another simply because she feared never being able to have children. As for what if’s they were scattered all through out her life. What if I don’t graduate, what if my mother marries Bob, what if my boss fires me because I asked for a raise and so on. If I do this thing then this other horrible thing may happen. Better to stay where I am than risk taking the next step. Fear Bethany concluded is a cage of words and thoughts which keeps us from stepping into the world Creator built for us.

“So how does one stop oneself from being eaten by the fear monster? Surely there must be some 30 day miracle cure out there. A new age pill to be swallowed three times a day to keep the fear monster at bay. It’s true you can Google up a cure in 10 seconds however chances are good it will be a temporary fix at best. Everyday gurus understand it’s a one step one day at a time process. It is not fancy it is not complicated but it is highly effective. They also know they have to find the tools which work for them and this may involved a lot of trial and error. So as you read on remember to take what fits for you and throw away the rest. Knowledge is something gained through experience and while the words of others guide you they were only words until you give them power and meaning.”

Bethany learnt many years ago to look at the words of others (no matter which form they came in) as being just that the words or perceptions of someone else. Workshops, courses, books, magazines, blogs, television specials it doesn't matter they are all based on someone else's experiences. We can borrow the tools of the neighbour but this doesn't mean we will be able to build the dream he did. Maybe we will need some different tools in addition to those ones. Or maybe we will need to mix and match until we find the right combination for us. Yep that is the message of an everyday guru Bethany decided. Let us share the tools we have amongst ourselves but let us not consider ourselves to have failed if the tool we pick up today does not work for us. We will always have the opportunity to pick up another one tomorrow.

"To battle the fear monster you have to start by accepting your present circumstances and reality. You cannot change what you do not acknowledge the pink elephant in the living room which everyone seems to want to ignore is going to squish you sooner or later. Standing in your truth is not about judgment or shame or guilt it is about creating an authentic life of depth verses a shallow life based on illusions and deception of self. 'Sometimes you have to admit you do not shave your legs in winter, have a tendency to pout when you do not get your own way and always do the opposite of what your Mother tells you to do. Sometimes you have to admit the nightlight you have in the corridor is not so your cat won't be scared. Sometimes you have to admit the reason you don't go in elevators is not because you are on a fitness kick. Sometimes you have to accept you are afraid of the dark, you are scared of small spaces and clowns remind you of serial killers. You cannot change what you do not acknowledge. If you see the fear monster out the corner of your eye then you need to own up to it.'

Fears aren't easy to fess up too, especially when you are meant to be a grown up. In the spare room where Bethany slept when she visited her mother, hung a picture of a clown. For years the spooky painted eyes stared at down at her while the creepy unturned mouth whispered her name. Clowns were actually chucky dolls in disguise true fact! Then there was the small fear of spiders she developed after her best friend's brother dropped his pet tarantula inside her shirt. And she couldn't leave out the fear of losing her job and having to move back in with her mother or maybe she should classify this as a nightmare!

"This too shall pass....time does not stand still. If you look back upon your life you will find many instances where life has thrown you up a challenge and guess what you managed to make it to where you are now. This will not be the first time you and the fear monster have done battle. Think back and remember an event where you drew on all your skills and courage and overcame what seemed then insurmountable odds! We tend to forget how resilient we are. The fear monster is nothing new it has been with us since the day we first learnt there were things and people to fear. Yet despite this, here we are all grown up. So somewhere along the line we must have won a battle or two."

It is easy to forget Bethany thought. Every new fear we give birth too feels like an only child. Yet she knew there were many battles which had been fought and won over the years. She was not a novice knight but a battle weary one who learnt and grew with each new experience. In moments of self doubt she took a breath and said out loud "I have been here before and survived and I can do this again." Had she not gotten through her parents bitter and messy divorce? Did she not overcome being teased at school and dumped by the guy who promised forever after's? And when her co-worker was promoted ahead of her did she not go back to study and get a better paying job at a new company? This too shall pass simple but true words.

"Fear monsters don't like to share their feelings it's considered a sign of weakness. Their favorite party trick is to keep everything inside until they burst. Some humans like to compete with the fear monster to see who can last the longest without coming apart at the seams. Of course the fear monster always wins. The irony for women is we are stereotyped as emotional beings, yet we are taught to suck it up and keep going because we have to be there for everyone else. This strength we have this ability to keep going even when we are falling apart is also our greatest weakness. What we keep inside will manifest as physical ailments eventually, stress, anxiety and emotional turmoil increase the body's workload and eventually something will give. It doesn't pay to avoid or neglect your fears, emotions and feelings. You must acknowledge them, feel them, and then resolve them before letting them go. To avoid overload here's a little tip, find a friend you trust, make a date for coffee and cake. Say up front I need to vent, I don't need you to fix anything, rescue me or give advice I just need somebody to listen. Then talk about everything and anything which is bothering you, upsetting you, get the flem off the chest and you will feel so much better. You don't have to act upon these emotions and fears but you should acknowledge them before they grow bigger and start to create unbalance in your life."

Bethany knew first hand about the human Angels, known as best friends, Creator placed on this earth. She use to be someone who kept all her feelings inside because she didn't want anyone to see she was less than perfect. She never talked about her fears to anyone, preferring to not risk being laughed at or made to feel stupid. Which it turned out was a stupid thing to do! She remembered telling Jane about her fear of clowns and to her surprise Jane's response had been "me too!" We forget our friends are human and many are going through the same things we are. Bethany knew how very unpleasant bursting at the seams was. It left you with a bigger mess than what you started with. So once a week she got together with Jane to vent, talk and divulge. They didn't try and fix, solve or rescue each other. They simply brought whatever was worrying them into the open.

“Fear monsters like people who try and overcome all their fears in a day. They sit and cheer them on. It is unrealistic to think a fear you have held onto for a lifetime you can let go of in an instance. The truth is baby steps are highly under rated. Nothing builds confidence more than a step then pat on the back and then a well done me. It doesn’t have to be an all or nothing scenario. If you are afraid of elevators start with going in and out, without going up, then the next time you might go up one floor. Then two then three, little baby steps. Reward yourself if you succeed. Well done me I think I deserve a new book! If you are afraid of being alone start by taking yourself on a date to the movies then maybe next time you can join a community group.”

Fear as Bethany knew first hand, could cause even the most sane, rational, person to leap across the ravine despite the fact there were stairs. And yes jumping might seem like a quicker way to get to the other side but there is nothing wrong with taking the stairs. Bethany remembered the time she decided bunji jumping would be a good way of overcoming her fear of heights. It never occurred to her to start with a step ladder and go up one step a day. No, far better to attach oneself to a giant elastic band and jump a thousand feet into the raging river below. She did it, but it didn’t cure her fear of heights. True she was not concerned about being thousand feet up as she plummeted. Instead she was worried about having a heart attack or having the cord wrap around her neck and strangle her and/or wetting her pants. Baby steps Bethany concluded will get you where you want to be. You do not need to put yourself in all or nothing scenarios.

“Fear Monsters like to keep you in the dark, because they know nothing feeds fear more than the unknown. Knowing makes us feel safe. So it follows gathering knowledge would be a powerful weapon against the fear monster. As a child there were lots of things which were scary to us but the more we experienced and the more knowledge we gained the less scary our world became.”

Mentors were a good source of knowledge. Bethany had sought out the advice of older, wiser friends on many occasions, people who had been there and done that. And there was nothing wrong with a ‘Google’ every now and then either. Therapists were good for bouncing thoughts and feelings off and giving us the knowledge we need to move forward. But the best source of knowledge is experience, once you have done something and discovered it wasn’t as bad as you thought it would be then it’s easier to avoid the fear monster.

“Fear monsters want you to believe it is in your best interest to crawl back into the darkness where you can be safe from the world. They are big believers in comfort zones. They want you to believe there is everything to be gained by staying where you are. So what if you don’t get to do new things they aren’t all they are cracked up to be. The fear monster wraps their arm around you and tells you things like “You wouldn’t like it anyway” or “its better this way”.

There was an occasion last year when Bethany was invited to a friend's wedding only problem was it involved sitting on a plane for 14 hours. Being in the air over the ocean without a parachute wasn't her idea of fun times. To overcome her fear she started writing down all the things she would gain by going and all things she would lose by not going. This was her best friend's wedding it would not come again, if she went she got to have a break from work, all her other friends were going so she would feel left out staying behind, if she went she could catch up with people she hadn't seen for a while. In the end she wasn't prepared to lose out because of her fears so she grabbed as much courage she could (and valium) and boarded the flight.

"Fear monsters are not adverse to dragging you into the past or pulling you into the future. "Oh I did that before and look how well it turned out" or "If I do this then I just know these 1000 horrible things will happen."

Bottom line is the future doesn't even exist yet and you have no way of knowing how things will turn out. With careful planning and the gaining of knowledge things can change for the better. As for the past when we know better we do better. Its like when you take the trainer wheels of a child's bike yes they may fall a couple of times but they soon learn to put their feet down and balance and create new experiences.

Bethany's ego mind had a tendency to pull her into the future. Creating all sorts of what if's....but she simply talked back to it with "but what if that didn't happen and what if I actually did enjoy myself and everything was okay?" To keep herself in the present she developed a Mantra which went "just for today I will...." Past experiences were thought of as lessons to be learned not anchors to keep her where she was.

"The fear monster is always hungry and on the look out for insecure humans to feed on. It can creep up even the most positive of people and be incredible hard to shake off once it has hold of you. But there is hope and there is always a way to win the battle. Do not think for a moment you are alone or that having fears makes you inadequate or less. Millions of people all over the world battle the fear monster each day some win, some are warriors in training and some simply need a few more weapons in their belt. The fear monster is not a figment of your imagination and you do not have to pretend that it does not exist. In fact bringing your fears into the open and talking them over with someone is a very good way to keep the fear monster at bay. You are an everyday guru, a divine child of the Universe and you can overcome any challenge life throws at you....even a fear monster!"

The End

Bethany looked at the window at the sun setting. Another day in the life of an Everyday Guru was about to come to an end. What adventure would there be tomorrow? Only time would tell..



Bethany sipped slowly on her Starbuck's Latte because one does not too guzzle something which costs you more than you can earn in an hour. It was a lazy Saturday afternoon and she was inspired, on a high, mainly caffeine induced but what the heck. She began tossing around ideas. What if there was an Angelic Newspaper called 'The Daily Halo' and what if instead of a Dear Abbey column there was a Dear God one. Because who hasn't on some occasion gone "Oh my God!" or "Dear God what now" or "God help me." What if there was a mailbox where humans wanting answers could drop a note to God and read the response in the following weeks 'Daily Halo'. Bethany thought back to all the times she had looked to the sky for answers.

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