



## Huna Article

### We Don't Need Fear

By Graeme Kaponu Urlich

There is an anthropological theory that we need fear in order to survive. My view is that the ability to sense danger is quite different from fear. Sensing danger and knowing what to do to avoid it is one thing. Sensing danger and then having a fear reaction, an uncertainty about how to react to the danger effectively, and an expectation that something bad is about to happen if you can't, is very different in my opinion.

There is a basic psychological premise that whenever we do something, even something generally perceived to be positive, that is motivated by fear, we reinforce the fear. It is wise then to identify when we are acting out of fear or confidence and choose which patterns we would prefer to reinforce and which ones we might like to replace.

When we encounter a situation where we don't have a rehearsed memory of how to react to it, we experience confusion. *Ku*, the body mind, is likely to freeze, to call on a very basic response, or to adopt a pattern from someone or something, effective or not, from the nearest available or strongest source it is aware of.

Where *Ku* might mimic a pattern from depends very much on the things we tend to pay most attention to and the expectations we have about what happens in life. This is why some people who experience a seriously stressful event may develop trauma, protective behaviours, rather than learn from the experience and develop more confident ways of dealing with such events.

In this day and age we tend to have less in the way of dangerous animals we need to hunt in order to live but that doesn't mean those skills of sensing danger have been lost. We use them every day in different ways. Some people, depending on their profession, have very specifically trained awareness, some call it intuition. Because they know a lot about their field, they perceive dangers where others would not.

There was a fire chief leading his team at a difficult fire one evening. It was going well but he began to feel uneasy and, on the spur of the moment, called his team out of the building. Moments later there was a flashback and at least some of his crew would have been injured or killed if they had still been inside.

People were proclaiming the chief a hero and claiming he had a sixth sense etc. What was really happening is *Ku* was taking in information and comparing it to information gathered from hundreds of fires and putting it all together below conscious awareness. Things like the sound of the fire changing and smoke being sucked back into the building etc. gave the chief a myriad of clues and as *Ku* put it together the chief began to feel tension build up, uneasy. He acted on that feeling and called his team to safety.

This is an extreme example but we all experience this day-to-day at some level, and just as the fire chief did, we take in information from around us and react on the feelings we get about it, mostly at subconscious level. I talk about this a bit in my article [Reading Signs](#).

In my shaman training I was taught many different techniques and encouraged to practice them a lot. This is because we tend to forget under stress, a lot of tension builds up in the body, and the more techniques we know, the more likely we are to remember something that will help us start to release tension. People sometimes experience amnesia after a traumatic event but almost never forget language. This is because memory is stored in the whole body and we use language a lot.

The more background tension we are carrying the more likely an unexpected event is to push us over our limits so a regular practice of working on the things that cause us tension is always useful. Paying attention to how we are feeling and developing the habit of taking action to relieve stress is also valuable. I talk about this a bit in my article [Life Is Just Too Hard](#).

If there are situations that we find causes a fear response, a build-up of tension and thoughts of avoidance, we can use memories of such situations and use fantasy to experiment with ways to resolve such situations more effectively. This helps to build confidence and a repertoire of possible responses to use. The majority of the disabling effect of fear comes from not knowing what to do so building such a library is very beneficial.

I recall when I first started to train in martial arts, and particularly sparring, I got hit a lot because I hadn't learned enough likely attacks and responses to them at first. If I had let the fear of getting hit stop me I would most likely have quit the training quite early. Instead, with encouragement from my sensei, I practiced what I already knew, watched others to learn more moves and practiced as much as I could so the moves became automatic. If we stop to analyse what the other person is doing and think about how to respond we get hit every time. There just isn't time to think.

Many people have learned that the best way to respond in life is live with fear and avoid engaging in life as much as possible. Even beginning to change this will result in a build-up in tension that tells them the change "should" be avoided. Sometimes, as with my martial arts training, we need to accept help and encouragement from others to sustain the growth. Even fear of accepting help from the "wrong" person can get in the way of starting.

On the journey we will be more aware of people around us who have the kinds of behaviours we are seeking to change in ourselves and this can be daunting. Each time we fall down, take a breath, shake off some tension and get back up again. Each time I got hit in martial arts, I replayed the movements in my mind and worked out various ways to react to it. We can apply this approach to life as well.

The journey from a fear based life to a love and confidence based life is worth the effort. It's not that we will get to a place where there will never be fear, growth involves change and change means new experiences we haven't encountered before. We can however, train our intuition and build enough skill and confidence that we will always have some constructive way to deal with it. "Bless the present, trust yourself and expect the best".

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