
UCF Forum

2-3-2021

Overcoming Fear

Matthew Scott

University of Central Florida, Matthew.Scott@ucf.edu

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/ucf-forum>

Information presented on this website is considered public information (unless otherwise noted) and may be distributed or copied. Use of appropriate byline/photo/image credit is requested. We recommend that UCF data be acquired directly from a UCF server and not through other sources that may change the data in some way. While UCF makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information, various data such as names, telephone numbers, etc. may change prior to updating.

STARS Citation

Scott, Matthew, "Overcoming Fear" (2021). *UCF Forum*. 445.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/ucf-forum/445>

This Opinion column is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in UCF Forum by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.



Overcoming Fear

By Matthew Scott
UCF Forum columnist
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

You can do the things that you want to do with persistence, courage and tenacity.



Fear locks you up at a time when you need to move the most, writes Matthew Scott.

I remember my first week in Central Florida's Police Academy like it was yesterday, even though it feels like a lifetime ago. It was the summer of 2007 and I was in my early 20s, 160ish pounds and over 6 feet tall. The physical training for police academies are structured like the U.S. Military Academy's boot camp, but to a lesser degree. I had people tell me what to expect, but nothing prepared me for that first week.

The academy instructors were our drill instructors and they made their presence very well known. They pushed people to their limits in those first, sweltering days and confronted them with something I wasn't expecting to see: fear.

Having worked many years in law enforcement, fear and I now are old acquaintances. I know its tricks and its whisperings. Fear tells you all the things you can't do and what you're not meant to be. Fear locks you up at a time when you need to move the most. Fear makes you doubt your purpose and who you really are. So, when I tell you I was afraid law enforcement may not be for me...my fear spoke coyly to me as I desperately ran the track in that blazing summer heat.

"You can't do this," fear said to me. "You're not good enough."

How many of us hear those words in our lives as we try to do things differently? Maybe there is a new job opportunity that has opened up and you're wondering if you should take it. "You can't do this." Maybe you want to be an entrepreneur and start your own business. "You're not good enough." Maybe there is a new restaurant you want to try and you've never been there before. "You won't like it."

At some point in our lives, we all have heard the creeping voice of fear and self-doubt. And there have been times when I have listened to my fears. How many missed opportunities have I allowed to languish because of that? How many times could I have grown as a person if I stood bravely against the storm of my indecisions?

Countless endeavors and new directions have left the harbor of change without me. I know I'm not alone.

So how can we overcome fear? How can we move forward in 2021 with all the different challenges happening around our nation? You want to know my secret?

One step at a time.

Tried and true, I promise you.

Let me take you back to 2007, when fear was telling me I wasn't good enough to be a police officer. As the instructors made me feel an inch tall and my body hurt all over, my fear was telling me to quit.

If I quit, the pain would stop. If I quit, I could go back to when things were easy and I didn't have to challenge myself.

What did I do to start overcoming my fear? I told it just one more step. Just one. I put one foot down and raised the other. I kept going.

Sure, my fear still gnawed at me and it didn't totally go away. We don't defeat our fears overnight. They'll still be there and truth be told, some measure of fear is a good thing.

However, I moved forward. I didn't stop, even when my fears told me to.

I could do this and I was good enough.

My experience in the police academy was memorable and I made many friends because of it. Many have gone on to lead successful careers and have helped people in our community. If I had listened to my fears, I would never have been in a position to help an 8-month pregnant woman running from her abusive boyfriend. I would never have been able to pull a young woman out of her destroyed vehicle after she was involved in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. I would never have had the honor and privilege of protecting my community from those who would seek to do harm.

Fear can be overcome and you can do it! You can do the things that you want to do with persistence, courage and tenacity.

There is nothing you can't do or put your mind to. It is up to you to tell your fear what I do...just one more step. Just one more hour. Just one more day.

Move your fear out of the way people.

You've got new places to go and things to do.

Matthew Scott '07 '11MS is a sergeant with the UCF Police Department. He can be reached at Matthew.Scott@ucf.edu.