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*bring your wild idea to life.*

# on fear

a guided exercise  
to name and tame  
what scares you.

# on fear and your wild idea

Let's get down fast to the number one reason most people shy away from their big, wild, change-your-life change-the world idea. Fear.

If you're really going after what you really want, and you're really having and adventure and living your life, if you're not feeling absolute, down-to-your-toes paralyzing fear at some point in the process, I don't know if you're actually going after what you want. Things that matter are scary.

Sometimes it's practical fear. But often, it's existential fear. Sometimes it's the fear of the unknown, the fear of over-reaching, the fear of not knowing. If you're doing this right, you're sailing, swimming, canoeing into uncharted waters. You're heading into a place where you don't know you're going to land. As philosopher of the imagination, Gaston Bachelard said, imagination is the voyage into the land of the infinite. And infinity, while compelling, is a rather terrifying thing.

But there isn't any path there. You're in the thickets. You're in the dark of the forest and you're making your path as you go. And that's an inherently scary thing to do.

But here's the magic.

It's also incredibly rewarding because it also means you're actually going after the stuff you want and you're not just walking on a path that somebody else made for you, doing the things that the world told you that you should be doing.

But it's really, genuinely scary. Existentially, metaphorically, literally.

So what do you do about that? The first is that you need to recognize that fear going to be there. It's just going to be there. Know that it's going to happen.

So, by feeling it, you're not failing. By feeling it, you're not destroying anything. By feeling it, you're acknowledging the enormous risks that you're taking to make this thing happen that you want to make happen.

Let's play with your fear a little!

# where are you feeling your fear?

Take a moment, find a quiet place, and drop your breath down into your belly. Stay there for several breaths, focusing on nothing other than feeling soft, warm breath move through your body. Once you're centered, imagine your big idea. What does it look like? How are you moving through your day making it happen?

As you think about your wild idea, what do you feel in your body? What sensations do you feel, and where are you feeling them? Jot them down here:

Where do you feel the positive spikes of energy? And where do you feel the negative ones? Jot them down:

# what kind of fear are you feeling?

Now that you've landed where your fear is sitting and what it feels like, take a moment to sit with it - and even fall into it. As you're there, ask yourself what kind of fear it is. Is it about whether you can make your wild idea happen? About money? About the rest of the world getting you? Write down whatever pops into your head:

Is this a tangible fear? Is it a rational one? (Fears can be completely reasonable and rational - we are hardwired to feel them when we're really challenging the status quo and it kicks our self-preservation drives into gear.) Is it big? Small? Overwhelming? Manageable?

# what does your fear look like?

Imagine your fear as a monster. What does it look like? How big is it, does it have bad breath, where does it live? What does it eat? Write down a description of your Fear Monster...or, better yet, draw a picture:

# name your fear!

You know what it looks like, what it feeds on, and where it lives. Now, give it a name. Yup, we're naming your fear. Write its name in big letters:

You've named your fear, and now you can get to know it. It's not, in all likelihood, going to go away any time soon, so figuring out how you can be roommates is key. As our last move in this exercise, close your eyes, and imagine a conversation with your Fear Monster about the ground rules for living together. Fear Monsters actually respond quite well, like toddlers, to clear choices. Offer it some, and give it boundaries. Jot these down! And remember them the next time the Fear Monster threatens to take you down.

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is an excerpt from Leigh's upcoming book, *Just That Side of Crazy: Soul Rules to Guide Your Wild Idea to Life*.

And it's an exercise in her Wild Idea programs.

To learn more about how you can work with Leigh, please visit [leighmelander.com](http://leighmelander.com) or email [info@leighmelander.com](mailto:info@leighmelander.com). Together, we can bring your wild idea to life.

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