

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

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Within our life times we have seen many people win, lose, succeed, and fail; and certainly behind every success we find a story of dogged determination and willingness to win. Personally, I prefer to call this freedom from fear.

The dominate theme of our modern society seems to be our unwillingness to try because of our fear of failure. Now I am contending that we should be careful, anxious, and even a little fearful, as caution is a natural thing. Have you ever seen a real mother who was not concerned for her loved ones? Being concerned about the dangers around us is healthy; but the outright fear that keeps us from even trying is a different matter, and we should never let it become a part of us.

We cannot risk being like Jerry. You see, Jerry is one of the most intelligent boys in my class; so, we all assumed he would be trying for one of the large scholarships being offered. When the list of candidates appeared and Jerry's name was not included, several of us went to Mr. Johnson, chairman of the awards committee, and asked why Jerry's name was not included on the list. I believe the reason Jerry gave for not wanting to take the exam explains better than anything about how far we have gone along this road of letting our fear of failure keep us from even trying. Jerry's excuse was...."Well I don't want to take the test.....I can't pass it. I had rather not try."

Yes, Jerry missed his chance because he let the fear of failure keep him from trying. What would he have lost if he had tried and failed? He would have still been the same good student. He would have had other chances for success! Unfortunately, Jerry just had not learned that all important lesson of life-----that you can never win if you let the fear of failure keep you from even trying.

Now I realize fear takes hold of us all at one time or another, like the athlete who develops sickness before the big game; the young girl who hides her dancing slippers before the recital; or the community leader who becomes hoarse before he speaks. Oh, we do not call it fear, do we; but we certainly can rationalize many excuses for....whatever it is. They are clever excuses, too, like the alcoholic who drank only on cold days to keep warm, on hot days to keep cool, when he is unhappy to forget, but when he is happy to celebrate.

What we must do is face the truth, and once we realize we have these fears then we should try to overcome them. We should try like Sister Kinney who had been turned away from every hospital in Melbourne and the Sidney, from the local clinics; and now she was returning to that small county hospital where she was born. If there were any hope for her, it would be here; but these men, as doctors everywhere had done, turned their backs to her. "What does she know about the disease," they said. "It; common medical knowledge that nothing can be done for the patients. They are paralyzed; it's useless. Why try to build up a person's hope if nothing can be done." But something was being done. You see, Sister Kinney took her treatment into the homes of the stricken. She showed parents whose children's limbs had been freakishly twisted that there was hope. True the door to every hospital and clinic in the world had been closed to her, but now the heart of every polio victim in the world was open to Sister Kinney and her miraculous new treatment which often replaced the wheelchair with crutches, the crutches with braces, and the braces with a small limp.

A few years ago Sister Kinney was brought before the United States Senate for a Congressional citation. When asked if she had been sure her treatment would be successful, she replied "I was scared to death I might be wrong, but I couldn't let my fears stop me. I had to prove to myself whether I was right or wrong, and that small chance that I might be right was enough to force me to go on." Yes, Sister Kinney had burning in her heart the one desire to save just one child from the life of a helpless cripple. Indeed Sister Kinney had attained freedom from fear; and recognizing that we too will always have fear, I think we should strive to be like Sister Kinney-----just do not give up.

A commencement speaker at Purdue University a few years ago was talking to one of the faculty about what he could include in his speech to make it more meaningful. The teacher replied that the one thing which seems to characterize the graduating class more than any other thing was their fear of what lay ahead

