

Overcoming FEAR

THE SUPERNATURAL STRATEGY TO LIVE IN FREEDOM

DAWNA DE SILVA



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The stories in this book, while faithfully representing each account of a person’s freedom, have been modified to protect the person’s identity. Otherwise, they represent real people in real situations.

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This book is dedicated
to my heroes—
all who have won their battles
against fear.

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Foreword

Love and fear are mortal enemies. They displace one another, similar to the dynamic of light and darkness. These foes cannot occupy the same space. When we allow fear to become our counselor, we invite the destructive enemy of love. The Bible says:

There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love's complete perfection].

1 John 4:18 AMPC, emphasis added

Simply put, we must learn to use the voice of love as our counselor in relationships and other daily situations.

The keys to freedom are simple, but it takes training and courage to hold onto the breakthroughs that they bring. Only the bravest people can lead us into new places of freedom. Dawna De Silva is one of these people.

In these pages, Dawna will show you how to use biblical keys to break free from the strains of fear. In *Overcoming Fear: The*

Supernatural Strategy to Live in Freedom, Dawna’s practical style shines forth. As we all know, truth is what ultimately sets us free, and Dawna takes plenty of time to pack truth into her book.

In all my years of pastoring, I have never met a single person who is totally free. I have, however, seen many people who are less afraid than I. These people shrug off fear of failure, disregard anxieties based in rejection and charge forward in the face of uncertainty. Their “fear-less” levels are connected to their experiences with God that bring unlimited freedom.

Over the years, I have seen hundreds of people delivered from fear after spending time with Dawna and her team. It has become a launching point for many around the world. “Have you received a Sozo yet?” is a question I hear posed almost daily.

The everyday practice of knowing God, hearing Him and living in His Word is what chases fear away. I hope that you will increase in these tactics as you work through Dawna’s book—and experience the same level of freedom people are having all across the globe.

These words are my hearty *amen* to Dawna’s message. I have no doubt that you will find an effective recipe for fearless living in these pages. Congratulations. You have started a wonderful journey into an adventure with a loving God. I know how this story will end. You will become contagious with this freedom and will give it away to those around you. Your home, church and workplace will be filled with God’s love as fear and darkness are displaced. Peace to your heart.

Blessings,

Danny Silk, president, Loving on Purpose Life Academy;
author, *Keep Your Love On* and *Powerful and Free*

Preface

Why the Recipe Metaphor?

I have always enjoyed metaphors. This is probably because my dad writes poetry and can paint pictures in my mind with his words. He has not yet made it big with his writing, but I have always marveled at his skill in turning unrelated images into works of art. I hope this book achieves even a small measure of his gift.

Maybe because of my dad's writings, the Lord speaks to me by planting pictures in my mind. In the midst of a tough session, God will often give me pictures that I can use to open a dialogue with my client. This process of discovery often leads to prayers of freedom.

The recipe metaphor came from a picture given to me during a session with a client named Helen. I was leading her through a prayer when I noticed an image pop above her head. In the picture, I saw a kitchen shelf with three ingredients: flour, sugar and oil. What these pictures came to mean ended up being the center of my fear-free teaching and the core message of this book.

The Lord shared with me the verse 2 Timothy 1:7, which includes some of the most popular words in the Bible: “For God has not given us a spirit of fear . . . but of power, love, and self-discipline” (NLT). The Lord told me the ingredients—flour, sugar and oil—were metaphors for power, love and self-discipline. He then informed me that my client had removed power (flour) from her kitchen shelf in order to appear loving to her husband. It was an amazing revelation that changed my perspective on inner healing and the life of my client.

Part of my job, as the founder and overseer of Bethel Sozo, is to help people break free from bonds that hold them back. Fear is one of the most common tactics of the enemy. The recipe metaphor works because it is simple. If we keep power, love and self-discipline stocked in our hearts, then a spirit of fear will not be able to hold onto our lives.

I developed this idea and it became one of my most popular sermons. The first time I shared it at Bethel, I brought up an armful of kitchen ingredients (flour, sugar and oil, among others) and demonstrated how balancing each ingredient within the recipe creates a pure and fragrant offering to the Lord. Years later, “Recipe for a Fear-Free Life” remains one of my most popular teachings.

There are, of course, other tools you can use to dismantle the enemy’s hold. I celebrate any healthy Christian ministry you find that can help you break free from torment. This message, based on Scripture, is structured to present a simple path toward fear-free living. It uses examples I have seen throughout my career as an inner healing and deliverance minister, and will, I hope, bring you ideas and revelations for breakthrough.

Acknowledgments

As with any book, *Overcoming Fear* involved a handful of helpers. These include: Stephen De Silva, my husband and champion of 38 years whose shared revelations continue to shore up my messages; my son Cory, who served as my writing partner and project manager; Susan Anderson, my friend and traveling partner who encouraged me to keep typing on our travels; Dawn and Debbie, my interns, for reading my manuscript over and over; Dale, for her editing skills; and many others who are not mentioned here. Without all of your help, this book would never have happened.

Introduction

It was the fall of 1984. My husband and I were young believers attending a small church in Sacramento, California. We were finishing up our bachelor's degrees at a university and had connected well with some of our Christian neighbors. After a while, they began to invite us over to pray and spend evenings in worship. We were excited when the family asked us to join them at church where their fifteen-year-old rebellious daughter would receive a much-needed time of deliverance.

Full of faith, Stephen and I filled our car with her extended family and headed out for the Sunday morning service. During the sermon, elders agreed to pray deliverance over the teenager while we and the family got to enjoy the service. To this day, I am not sure what took place in the back room where they ministered to the daughter. I do know that throughout the service we kept hearing growls, shouts and demonic taunts like, "I hate God" and "You can't stop me!"

Embarrassed, I melted into my pew, telling God, "I will do anything for you *but* deliverance." Interestingly, only fourteen years later my friend Teresa Liebscher and I began the International Bethel Sozo Ministry—a deliverance and inner healing

ministry birthed out of Bethel Church in Redding, California. I have loved being part of deliverance ministry for more than twenty years. In just a few decades, I went from hating the idea of performing deliverances to running them. God really has a sense of humor.



Sozo comes from a Greek word that means “saved, healed and delivered.” In Sozo, we help people strengthen connections with each member of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Using proven tools, we help people identify which lies they believe about themselves and/or God, then invite them to replace any lies with truth. Replacing lies with truth allows our clients to move past deceptions so they can break free from sinful patterns developed over years of practice.¹

Jesus’ mission was to bring abundant life. We attain this gift by opening our hearts to the Lord’s immeasurable love. There may be hurts or wounds in our lives, but none of these comes from the Lord. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

Abundantly means “present in great quantity, more than adequate, over sufficient, [and] richly supplied, as with resources.”² If any of these “richly supplied” experiences are absent in your life, you may want to spend time with God and allow Him to remove any lies or obstacles blocking His abundant life being manifested through you.

Overcoming Fear: The Supernatural Strategy to Live in Freedom came from my desire to help God’s people reach their promised land. Too many Christians allow obstacles like fear to rule their lives when God’s desire is for them to live courageously. My hope is that this book will help Christians stand victoriously over the devil’s schemes.

My goal is to help you identify fears, patterns and lies that harm your connection with God and others. I will give you

proven biblical tactics so you can stand above demonic attacks and break free from oppression. The focus of this book is fear, but other issues (like bitterness, lies, lack of boundaries and addictions) will also be discussed. By the end of this book, you should be able to recognize self-protective patterns in your life and learn how you can surrender them to God and live powerfully.

If this book does nothing more than introduce you to a more personal relationship with Jesus, I will consider it a success. He is the only true solution for anyone who wants to walk in freedom. I pray these pages provide a fun, insightful read, and above all, that you will learn how to replace fear with God's truth. Let the road to fearless living begin.



PART 1

Fear

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a
good word makes him glad.

Proverbs 12:25

The Problem with Fear

A shrill scream shot from the living room. “Mom!” I stumbled out of bed and into the hallway. My two-year-old son was chasing after his older brother with a knife in his hands. Registering the danger, I leapt forward, yelling, “Put that knife down!”

To this day, I have no idea why my son was chasing his brother or what even happened after he dropped the knife. I am sure it involved my giving some strong explanations like, “You can’t just pick up a knife and start chasing people,” but it imprinted on me a near-traumatic experience. What if my son had actually stabbed him?

Every parent has shouted at a child racing toward a busy street or heading straight for danger. Throughout my parental career, a raised voice seemed like a successful parenting tool. At times, shouting became a technique I could use to protect and train my children.

An office center where I once worked was not well lit at night. Everyone left early, so it often fell to me to lock up and make the long trek through the parking lot.

One night I had a sense someone was watching me, so I switched off the lights in my office and peeked out. I waited a few minutes and saw nothing. I turned the lights back on and resumed my work but could not shake this feeling of being watched. Two hours later, I finally called it a night, locked up the main doors and headed outside.

Crossing the lot, I felt a sudden urge to raise my shirt collar to protect my throat. I thought, *I hope there aren't any vampires out tonight.*

Thinking about this, I stopped several feet from my car and laughed.

What am I doing? I thought. *Vampires? This is so irrational!*

The next day, I attended a meeting with the building's security advisor. When he asked me how I was doing, I recounted laughingly the previous night's occurrence.

The security advisor asked, "Dawna, what time was that?"

"9:40 p.m.," I said, intrigued.

"Last night," he said, "I had my first-ever panic attack, and it started right at 9:40. My wife had to coax me out of a fetal position so I could get off the floor. I kept trying to tell myself, 'This is so irrational.'"

We discussed this and sank back in silence. Though it manifested differently for each of us, we had both partnered with the enemy's broadcast of irrational fear.

About six years ago, my family went on a hike through Palos Verdes in Southern California. It led us to a high cliff beside the sea that dropped about five hundred feet. Though it was steep, I was able to hold onto branches, rocks and roots to get down until we made it to a path that wandered along the coastal wall. With the tide coming in and fearing we would not have time to retrace our steps, we decided to head back up a different path.

Halfway up, I made the unfortunate mistake of looking down. The sea roared below, and a sense of dread shook my body. Until that moment, I had no idea how steep this cliff was.

What are you doing? my mind shouted. *One slip and you're gone!*

My heart screamed. Using a helpful Sozo tool (*Presenting Jesus*), I asked, "Jesus, where are You right now?"

I felt His peace come over me, and I finally resumed my climb. I rounded a jagged boulder and found my seventeen-year-old son, Tim, huddled against the rocks. Reaching out, he said, "Mom, be careful. It's steep. Take my hand and I can help you reach the top."

Instantly, an image came to mind—*I took my son's hand and we slipped. Both of us tumbled to the waves below.*

I did not reach for his hand. I froze.

"Mom?"

Tim knelt beside me as I hugged the rocks. A smile creased his face, but I felt safety slipping further and further away.

"I'm just kidding, Mom. It's not that steep."

"Just go," I said, shaking. "I'll meet you there."

Tim stood, easily climbing the rest of the way. I gathered the last of my strength and pushed myself up the path. When I finally reached the summit, I latched onto the nearest fence, shook uncontrollably and wept.

After experiencing this event, I can understand how people encounter such overwhelming fear that it paralyzes their bodies and erases all common sense. Thankfully, this was only a one-time occurrence for me.

No Fear

We serve a triune God and are made in His image (see Genesis 1:27). It should not surprise us, then, to find an interesting

likeness: He is three Persons (see Luke 3:22); and we, too, are of tripartite design (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Each of the previous examples shows how fear affects the human soul (mind, will and emotions), body (physical sensations) and spirit (picking up fear from the spiritual realm).

Studies show that anxiety has negative consequences on the human body. Not only does it weaken our immune systems, accelerate aging and muddy our senses, in some cases, it can even cause death.¹ This is not to say that all physical or emotional torment is linked to fear, but it does show how the condition of the soul and spirit affects our bodies.

Paul told the Philippians, “Do not be anxious about anything” (Philippians 4:6). Jesus commanded His disciples not to worry (see Matthew 6:34). God commanded Joshua and the Israelites to be strong and very courageous (see Joshua 1:7). The Bible’s repeated commands to “fear not” reinforce our calling as powerful champions in God’s Kingdom. Our Lord is the good and perfect Father. As His children, we must follow His example and live a life free from fear. “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love” (1 John 4:18).

Situations may arise where not experiencing fear seems impossible, but we must remember that living with fear is a choice—not a consequence of human life. “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

Faith in God should be our spiritual default. Successful fear-free living comes when we partner with God’s goodness and reject the enemy’s influence of fear.

In Joshua, twelve spies saw the Promised Land, yet only two brought back a hopeful report. The spies who brought back a fearful report convinced the Israelites to delay going into the Promised Land. Like the ten spies, many of us focus on what

is lacking rather than searching for the promises of God. This poor focus leads to stress, anxiety and, in some cases, physical consequences.

God desires to see us grow, so He allows us to encounter situations where we may feel less than comfortable. These are not meant to be seasons of defeat. They are meant to inspire and encourage us to get past the obstacles that have been holding us back. When we find ourselves in periods of growth, fear can be a constant voice hounding us. Those who master fear-free living have the strength to reject the enemy's voice.

God's command to "fear not" appears constantly throughout Scripture. Pastor Rick Warren, among others, states that this is intentional, and that fear-free living is simply a heavenly concept that all believers should follow.

Why did God stress the importance of avoiding fear? Because our hurts and hang-ups can often cause us to think that God is out to get us, that all He wants to do is condemn us and punish us. But that simply isn't true. Jesus is proof of that. When Christians form a healthy relationship with God and understand His eternal grace and mercy, they will realize that there is no real need for fear.²

Fear is not God's way of punishing us. It is simply the enemy's attempt to persuade us to focus on what is lacking rather than the Lord's abundance.

Years ago my friend Pat, a retired police officer, was enlisted to help train other police officers in Iraq. Even though the war was winding down, there were still daily bouts of violence throughout the country. Pat told me that every morning at daybreak he would go up to the roof of his apartment building and worship God.

When he told me this, I said, "Pat, weren't you scared?"

"No," he said. "I knew I was where God wanted me to be, so I decided to look for His presence wherever I was to release

Him into my circumstances. I realized that fear was a belief that at any time something bad could happen. I decided to worship God with the expectation that something good would happen instead.”

Pat’s response was poignant. It revealed how the devil often exploits our fears so that we focus on expected harm rather than God’s protection. The success of our ability to thrive in fearful situations is in resisting the devil’s taunts so we can embrace faith instead of fear. If the devil can keep us in a constant state of questioning the Lord’s commands or goodness, our white flags of surrender will easily and quickly unfurl.

This is how it was with the Israelites when the twelve spies returned from the Promised Land to give their reports. Only two saw God’s provision, while ten focused on the giants. The fearful report swayed God’s people not to enter their Promised Land, causing a forty-year wilderness journey. So it can be with believers who stop short of abundant life because of fear, discouragement or hopelessness.

Scripture As a Weapon

Achieving a fear-free lifestyle takes work. Meditating on God’s truth is a helpful way to focus on God’s promises rather than the enemy’s attacks. I encourage you to find Scriptures that will strengthen your resolve to stand against the enemy. Memorize verses and speak them out loud throughout your day. God’s Word is mighty for the tearing down of strongholds. Here are some powerful examples to help you get started.

Against Discouragement and Hopelessness

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon

you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Isaiah 60:1–3

For Provisional Needs

“The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them.”

Deuteronomy 28:12–13

“And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Matthew 6:28–29

When Facing a Possible Life Change

“Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:6–7

If Feeling Life Is Out of Control

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”

Matthew 6:27

Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

Mark 4:38–39 NASB

After reading through these verses, allow the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth about your current situation. If you are battling other issues that are not listed above, ask God to show you some verses that correspond to your season. God’s Word is the foundation for combating fear. Choose a verse and ponder it today.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you identify with any of the examples of fear listed in this chapter?
2. If so, which story caught your attention and why?
3. Do you find yourself focusing more on what you already have or what you currently lack?
4. Do you constantly battle being afraid or would you consider yourself to be generally fear-free?

ACTIVATION PRAYERS

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any fear you are currently dealing with.
2. Ask Him if there is a lie you are believing that is empowering this fear.
3. Ask Him where you learned this lie. (Was it during childhood? Who taught it to you?)

4. Forgive anyone who taught you that this lie was truth.
5. Hand the lie to Jesus and ask Him what truth He wants to give you in its place.
6. Ask Him to give you a practical tool, step or plan for combating the fear.

DECLARATIONS

1. I am a child of the King of kings (see Romans 8:15).
2. I am seen and protected by my Father in heaven (see Psalm 91).
3. God is my light and my salvation; I will not be afraid (see Psalm 27:1).