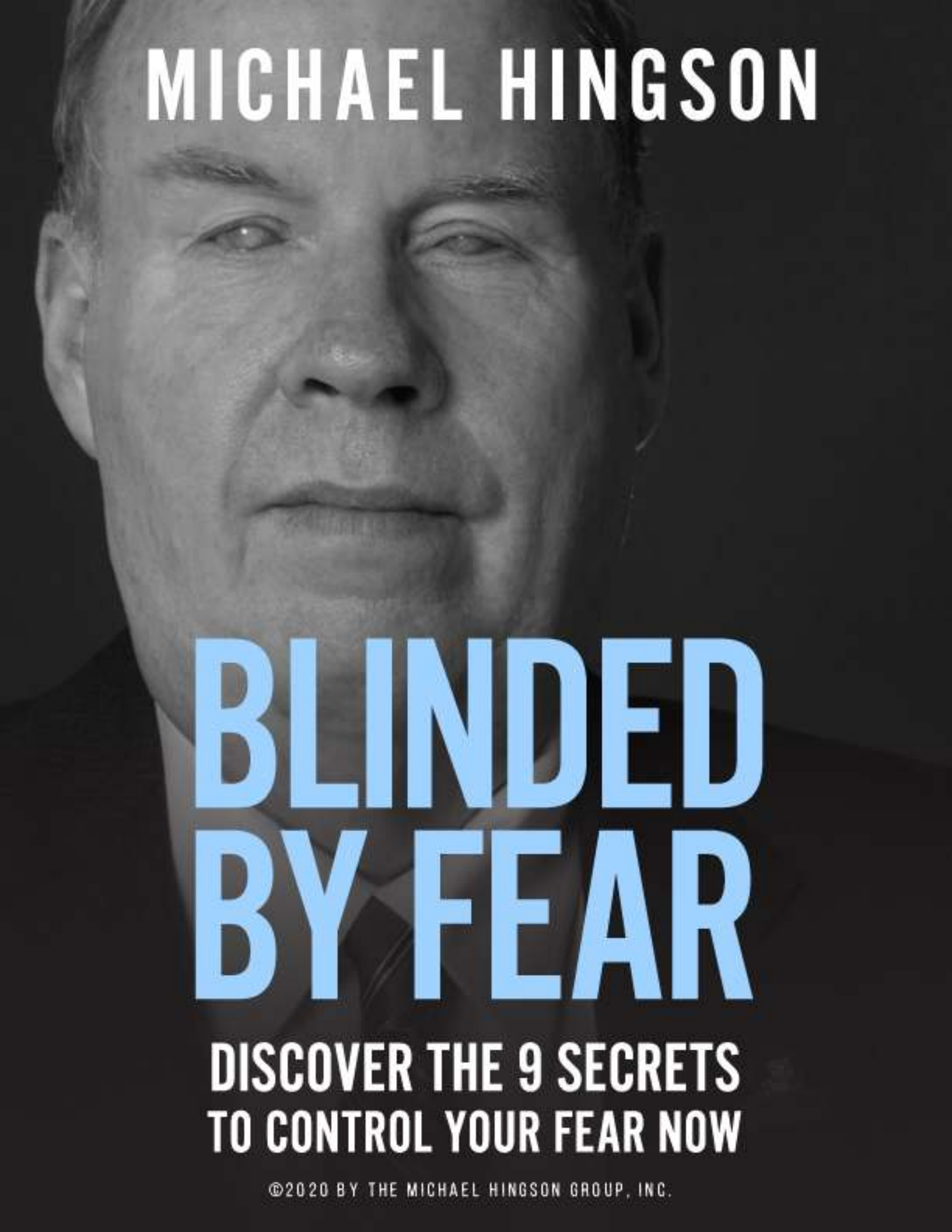




MICHAEL HINGSON

**BLINDED
BY FEAR**

**DISCOVER THE 9 SECRETS
TO CONTROL YOUR FEAR NOW**

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Table Of Contents

Table Of Contents	2
What is fear?	5
Some causes of being blinded by fear.	9
Lack of trust	10
Fear of the unknown	15
Lack of teamwork experience	17
Lack of self-control.	19
Creating a Mindset to control your fear.	22
How can we overcome fear?	25
Trust	29
When is a level of fear important?	32
Where do you go from here?	35

On September 11, 2001 what is constantly described as “one of the most horrific events in history” occurred when terrorists attacked the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and an additional aircraft was thwarted before it could further terrorize Washington DC. I know about this event firsthand because I was in the World Trade Center working in my office on that day. Anyone who was there and many other people around the world were terrorized by the events of September 11 and began to exhibit unexpected and horrible fear. Even today, some people still are deeply affected by the events surrounding the terrorist attacks.

For 19 years I have been speaking about September 11, telling my story and discussing lessons that we should learn or should have learned from that day. What I have not talked about a lot was the whole issue concerning fear and the horrific fear that is associated with unexpected major life changing events in our lives.

Now all of us are facing new unexpected changes and horrible events all related to the pandemic associated with the covert 19 virus. At this writing, over a million people have died throughout the world, over 215,000 of whom died here in the United States. We have not had leader role models here in the US full helped to assuage our fears. In fact, many of our so-called “leaders” have caused fear to increase. I have realized because of my experiences on September 11 that I did not exhibit then or even now the overwhelming blinding fear caused by events. I know of many others who did exhibit such fears in 2001 and I know people who are experiencing such fears today. I have decided to write this e-book as an introduction to a course and coaching program I am creating to help people learn about fear and how to control their blinding fears. I know from first-hand experience that we can control our fears and we can use them to empower us to live even better more focused lives. I hope that this material will help you better control your own fears if fears you have. If, after completing this e-book, you want to learn more please reach out through the email address at the end of this book. I want to help you become stronger and less fearful.

What is fear?

When beginning to understand fear it never hurts to start with a definition of the word. Wiktionary defines fear as “A strong, uncontrollable, unpleasant emotion or feeling caused by actual or perceived danger or threat”. I like this definition because it includes words that directly go to the root of what this program is about. To illustrate, our definition says that fear is a “A strong, uncontrollable, unpleasant emotion”. Strong? Absolutely. The kind of fear issues we want to address are strong or no one would be worried about them. Fear is quite unpleasant for many in part because they have not learned how to control fear, or they have not learned how to use their fear to properly motivate and empower their actions. The most interesting descriptor of fear in the definition is the word “uncontrollable” and here is where we really begin to discuss “blinded by fear”.

I submit that most of us grow up not learning nearly enough about how to examine our emotions and reactions to what happens to us or what occurs around us. We teach our children that “it is ok to be afraid”. Often, however, we do not take the next step and say, “but you can learn how to control your fear”. You can learn that the natural reaction of fear can be focused and that you do not need to be blinded or paralyzed by it. You can learn to overcome, focus, and control your fear reaction.

As we proceed, I will show you that the natural reaction we call fear can be empowering and can be used to help you make good choices when unexpected life changes occur. Our definition of fear says that fear is an “emotion or feeling caused by actual or perceived danger or threat”. Because we don’t learn to control fear when something unexpected happens to us we do not necessarily analyze whether the fear was caused by something perceived or is there an actual danger or threat. Let me give you an example.

On September 11, 2001 I had to escape from Tower One of the World Trade Center after hearing a muffled explosion, feeling the building tilt some twenty feet and come back again and then feel the building drop straight down about six feet. All these building movements sounds took place within a short time of around 30 seconds to one minute, (I wasn’t checking my watch at the time). After the building stopped moving my colleague, David Frank, looked out our glass-fronted office and saw, as he described it, “millions of pieces of burning papers falling outside our windows and fire above us”. Instantly David began shouting that we had to get out of the building immediately. He went into full panic and fear mode and naturally so. However, his fear was so blinding that he could not or did not analyze what else was going on around him.

Because my life had caused me to take a somewhat different path of addressing fear, my reactions were different. Yes, some have told me that I didn't panic because I could not see what was going on outside. Really? I heard the explosion. I felt the building move and went to stand in a doorway. I felt the building drop. Also, I had David's undoubtedly accurate description of what he saw outside. So, what else was there to "see"? For my part, having learned to not so quickly panic and jump to conclusions, I looked at what else was occurring in my office. What did I "see"? I saw next to me my 42-month old guide dog sitting, wagging her tail, and yawning as if to say, "what the heck woke me up and what is all the fuss about"?

I knew a lot about dogs and especially guide dogs as I had been using them since June 1964. If there is one thing I know, it's that if there is something instigating a fear reaction in a dog, it will not sit, wag its tail and just yawn. I suspect many of you have read about animals that saved their humans from fire by detecting it first and getting their humans to react. My dog, Roselle, was doing none of that.

So, I had more information than David because I had learned to look for it. The result was that I was able to get David to focus. He got our office guests out into a stairway. Then David, Roselle, and I began our descent and escape.

I intend no offense here, but if you only use one sense for information, (for most of you it is your eyesight), then you are not using all your God given senses to help you go through life. Were the events of September 11th a real or perceived threat to me? Absolutely what we experienced was not just something perceived, it was the representation of actual danger. Actual or perceived, dangers seem real to us at the time. We must use all our senses and knowledge to decide what to do when an unexpected life change befalls us. If we permit the emotion of fear to overwhelm and blind us, then we are lost and cannot take action to help our situations. If I did not know this before, I certainly learned the truth of it on September 11, 2001.

Some causes of being blinded by fear.

I did not choose the title “Blinded by Fear” for this program as a pun since I happen to be blind in the eyesight sense of the word. Rather I selected this title because it accurately represents what happens to most of us when unexpected life changes and situations hit us head on. We truly become blind. Our senses lock down and we simply often run from the situation if we can or we become paralyzed and do nothing. Freeze or flight, both reactions symbolize our sensory blindness and thus we no longer have the option to analyze our situation.

To begin to understand how to control our fears and regain, let's take a look at some contributors to what causes our fears to be so great. Here are some contributing factors I believe to be relevant: lack of trust, fear of the unknown, lack of teamwork experience, and lack of self-control.

Lack of trust

During the past nineteen years, I have often been asked to deliver speeches and consult on the concepts of Trust and Teamwork in our lives and businesses. I know a lot about applying these concepts as I have spent much time forming and enhancing teams and their work. As a sales executive and then a sales leader, manager and senior manager, I learned early the value of forming strong cohesive teams. We recognize the need to form strong teams in our work, at home and in our communities. The strongest pillar of a good team is trust, which is the natural first step. Yet as I have learned first-hand, and discuss during my presentations, humans have a difficult time trusting.

What I have discovered is that trust is very much under attack in our society. No matter what, as a people we mostly discourage trust. Let's explore the reasons for this.

In addition to lessons I've learned about creating teams from the sales and business world, some of the most extraordinary lessons I've learned about trust and teamwork have come from developing close bonds and good, trusting relationships with eight guide dogs. If developing partnerships with these guide dog colleagues sounds easy, think again. While dogs really do generally offer unconditional love, as many have said, they do not offer unconditional trust. The difference between humans and dogs, however, is that dogs are usually open to creating trusting bonds with humans. Dogs do not have hidden agendas. The challenge of creating a trusting bond with a dog is that we and dogs do not speak the same language. For a dog, actions absolutely speak louder than words. The right tones and words on our part help, but it's all about how we behave and how consistently we support and choose to understand our furry friends and colleagues.

Make no mistake. Creating a trusting team relationship with a dog, especially in a work situation, is just like developing a trusting team relationship with a human except with a human, we have to get past the barrier humanity has put in our way that questions our motives for wanting to relate with someone else. Even this, in some ways, can occur with a dog that has been abused and has subsequently learned not to trust us. I have seen this first-hand when my wife and I were asked to provide foster care for a senior retired guide dog, named Panama. Panama never actually graduated as a guide, but was, as Guide Dogs for the Blind calls it, “career changed” and went to live with the family that raised her. She lived with that family for several years until they needed to move to a place where they could not keep their well-trained Panama. Panama was relocated to another family and eventually back to Guide Dogs. At the advanced age of twelve, Panama was invited to foster care with my wife Karen and me for her remaining days, versus keeping her locked in a kennel.

The GDB staff were glad to have Panama in a good home after so many relocations. That being said, when she came to us, the dog came back dirty, unresponsive to commands, a bit arthritic, with a huge lump on her back and was even diagnosed with a slow-moving cancer. By any standard, this dog was in terrible shape. Karen and I were warned that Panama was deaf as she was totally unresponsive to any sounds and actions at the school. It was determined that the lump was probably an infected cyst. Stick with me and you will see why I present you this example.

When we got Panama home she was everything the school described. Within a few weeks of her arrival at our home the cyst was drained by the school veterinarian and the lump was gone. After several baths Panama was clean and looked like the cute golden retriever we knew she could be.

Because I worked all day, Karen was Panama's major caregiver, although both of us spent lots of time with her at night. After two months and a lot of coaxing, Karen was able to get Panama to begin taking walks with her outside. My wife uses a wheelchair as she has been paralyzed since birth. Panama learned to walk next to the wheelchair and seemed, after a while, to love the walks.

In the process of working together, we discovered that Panama was not totally deaf and, in fact, she would respond to our voices and commands. She was hard of hearing, but she eventually began recognizing our commands and earned to comply with them. We could not, however, get Panama to go into our garage, much less into our wheelchair accessible van for any trip.

The final step in building trust with Panama, and the reason I tell this story, came one day when we began packing for a trip to the Oregon campus of Guide Dogs for the blind. When it came time for me to put luggage in our van I opened the door, but before I could do anything else, Panama shot past me into the garage and into our van. We had never been able to get her to do this before in the six months she had been a part of our lives. Obviously, we finally gained her trust in a huge way. She was a bit nervous while riding in the van, but even that fear mostly disappeared over time. After that first time Panama was a regular willing passenger with us.

Yes, this is a long story, but I think it is a powerful example of how a creature who clearly had become closed to any kind of trust learned that having a close relationship was possible again. Panama lived with us, by the way, for three years until she passed and crossed the “Rainbow Bridge.”

Humans, as I stated above, often become closed to exploring trust, as was Panama. The difference with humans is that at least we can talk about our feelings directly to the other party. However, actions still speak louder than words alone. When we can form trusting relationships and openly trust people and situations that we encounter in our lives, we become more comfortable and open to learn and explore the world around us. Conversely, a lack of openness to trust closes us off from curiosity and learning about our world.

We see various examples of people being closed off from the possibility of trust reflected in the way they respond to the pandemic. There are some people who simply do not believe it even exists. Others feel that Covid-19 is overrated by scientists and politicians. Some acknowledge that the virus exists but refuse to accept the urgings of scientists due to a lack of trust in science or veracity of the data, which points to nearly 200,000 U.S. deaths at the writing of this document. Some within these subgroups may think they have nothing to fear and therefore do not react to much. But I suspect that if and when the virus hits close enough to home for them they will be surprised and disoriented for a time. Their lack of trust and openness creates a type of blindness that prevents them from analyzing and assessing the actual circumstances around them.

Fear of the unknown

While studying for my master's degree in Physics at the University of California at Irvine I once had the opportunity to meet Dr. Richard Feynman, probably the greatest physicist of the latter part of the 20th century. Like any good Physics student, I knew who Dr. Feynman was and always enjoyed reading his lectures. Even more, when they were available I enjoyed listening to his lectures and actual teachings.

Much later as more books became accessible to blind people I discovered a book of Dr. Feynman's memoirs entitled "Surely you're joking Mr. Feynman, adventures of a curious fellow". As I read this volume, I was inspired that Dr. Feynman always approached everything from a standpoint of curiosity. I will not say that Dr. Feynman was fearless. Instead, I believe that Dr. Feynman approached life and the many unknown things he encountered by being curious. Even his work on the atomic bomb project and the many other unknown and unexplored things he faced were approached as curious endeavors to be explored. He worked to prepare his explorations and efforts perhaps with caution, but definitely with a curious mindset.

We are, I think, usually taught that the unknown is something to be feared, which keeps us from learning how to handle surprises, especially when the "surprise" is something that affects us negatively. We go into reaction mode. We want to put our heads down, possibly hide from the surprise, rather than letting a mindset of analysis or strategic thinking overtake our thoughts.

For me personally, when confronted with the “surprise” of the events of September 11, my natural mindset was “I have thought about this situation as much as I can, and I now must decide how to react and survive.” Sure, something occurred that I could never have dreamed would happen. The buildings collapsed. However, even then, the mindset with which I was operating dictated my behavior instead of being blinded by fear. Although it would be impossible to predict and strategize about everything we could potentially encounter in our lives, we can teach ourselves to have a mindset that overcomes fear instead of being blinded by it.

Emotion is important to our psyches, but learning to keep emotions from overwhelming us, especially fear, will improve our lives, attitudes, relationships and environment.

Lack of teamwork experience

We’ve set the stage to go deeper into the topic of teamwork, and the devastating result of lack of trust on our experience of teamwork. Teamwork, by definition, requires reciprocal trust of all team members by all team members. Successful military teams such as Seal Team Six have developed an extremely close-knit relationship based on trust. The team has learned and understands the skills, abilities and mindsets of the individual members. As a result, the team often will accomplish tasks that no one member would ever think of doing on their own.

This sort of team has learned to expect that it will face unknown challenges from time to time. While the team has practiced many scenarios, but even so, the unit knows how to go above and beyond. There is strength in numbers to be sure, but team spirit and understanding make the whole much greater than the sum of the parts.

The above is just as true for any good team. Company team organizations that truly bond accomplish tasks the individual members never thought they could do. A good example of company or organizational teamwork can be found in the team created and nourished by Walt Disney. Creating countless innovative movies and cartoons, Disney set his organization on a path that has made it a dominating force in the movie and amusement industry today. While Walt was the visionary who gathered people and ideas together, over time, the teams and the related organizations grew way beyond what Walt could have ever envisioned.

While successful team members experience fear, they also know how to draw strength and courage from the rest of their colleagues. Trust is always at the core, as we discussed earlier. When such teams face the unknown, whether in the form of a threat or new opportunity, they react with the mindset of “how can we accomplish this seemingly impossible task?” responding with strategic curiosity to determine “what do we do now?”

Anyone who has experienced good team relationships and who appreciates learning like I do can help others experience and appreciate the benefits of teaming as well. While we may not always be able to accomplish all tasks on our own, our memories of team accomplishments give us strength and encouragement. People who either refuse to explore teaming, or have not had or recognized teaming opportunities, simply do not have the positive experiences and memories they need in order to help keep blinding fear at bay.

Teams may be as simple as forming good close working relationships in church or with staff and faculty at school. We should encourage our children to explore various ways to be part of teams, helping them develop the confidence to interact with others. We must set good teaming examples for children, and those around us. The more we learn to work and team, the more we discover about ourselves. These experiences will lead to the ability within us to better control fear relating to the unexpected life challenges we encounter.

Lack of self-control.

We live in a society that is predominantly built upon processes that lead to immediate gratification. When we see something we want, often we will try to find a way to get it immediately. Advertisers, marketers, and salespeople create messages designed to generate a sense of urgency, while friends, family, and social media influencers provide peer pressure around instant gratification. The result is that rather than exercising self-restraint, we are encouraged into the habit and mindset of immediate gratification, versus developing the self-control of delayed gratification. When we do not learn how to focus our minds and exercise self-control, we do away with the thought processes we need to overcome fear, fear, especially blinding fear can easily overwhelm us.

There are two tools I've personally discovered which can help us learn how to take more control of our emotions: self-examinations of our actions and learning about the practice of meditation. Learning to use both of these tools can help us make wiser and more controlled choices, including how to keep fear in check.

I have been a speaker for a long time, and I would hope I improve with every talk I give. I make it a practice to record my talks and then force myself to listen to the recordings. This is tough, but I learn from each recording I hear. This practice has put me into a frame of mind that causes me to look at choices I make daily in order to ask myself, “what could I have done differently?” Sometimes I conclude I did the right thing. Sometimes I decide I might have proceeded in a different way. I nearly always find room for continuous improvement.

Diligent and ongoing self-examination keeps me in practice for when something unexpected happens. Of course, unexpected things do not rise to the magnitude of a terrorist attack, but the smaller, less significant surprises provide the opportunity to learn how to remain focussed, and better examine my actions when bigger things come along.

I also listen to the news and current events stories in part so I can try to put myself in the positions of affected people, to ask myself what I would do in their situation. Sometimes I do not know enough, but the more I try this exercise the more I learn. Again, everything including action and questions, helps me learn and better develop my mindset to improve self-control.

I want to make it clear that I am not advocating for no emotion, nor am I saying that when something serious happens that we should try to focus on and analyze the event. Instead, the more we practice daily self-examination and self-control on the little things, the more observant we become so that if something truly unexpected and serious comes along we are more likely to be able to make a “split second decision” that could potentially help us all.

Creating a Mindset to control your fear.

I have mentioned the term “mindset” often here. A mindset is exactly what you need to create to deal with fear or anything else in your life that you to overcome or actualize. So, what is a mindset? Wiktionary defines mindset this way: “A way of thinking; an attitude or opinion, especially a habitual one.” In case you are wondering if a mindset is just a habit you develop, the answer is yes and no. One definition from Wiktionary defines habit like this: “An action performed repeatedly and automatically, usually without awareness.”

The difference between a mindset and a habit is that a mindset is established as a “a way of thinking” and a habit is “an action performed repeatedly.” Mindsets and habits are related. I think the best mindsets come from habits you form. Let me show you what I mean through a personal example.

Earlier I described some of my story about being in the World Trade Center and escaping on September 11, 2001. What kept me focused in an obviously threatening and dangerous time was the mindset I created. When I first began spending time in the World Trade Center I realized that I needed to take a somewhat different approach to working there than most people did. I couldn't walk around the building reading signs and gathering information like my sighted colleagues. Instead, I spent many hours walking around the twin towers and other buildings within the complex asking questions of people and listening to what was going on around me. What I was doing was creating a detailed mental map of the complex. There proved to be a great and life-saving advantage to learning my surroundings in this way. I could literally go anywhere with my eyes closed, so to speak, without the need to rely on signs and other visual cues.

As I traveled around the complex, I realized that what I was doing would give me an advantage in case of an emergency. If something happened and I, possibly along with others, needed to evacuate on a moment's notice I would know where to go as well as how to find exits. That knowledge caused me to also contact the appropriate WTC people to learn about all emergency preparedness and evacuation protocols and processes. The next thing I began doing was to ask myself everyday as I arrived in the Center for work, "what will I do if there is an emergency and I need to escape today?" That question became a daily habit for me. I made the effort to not only ensure I knew all I could about the emergency processes in the complex, but also to continue to remain in contact with others in case rules and practices changed as they sometimes did.

I also told myself while answering my question that if there were an emergency I needed to remain calm and focused not only for my well being but also for Roselle my guide dog at the time. As I said earlier, my guide dogs and I are a team. Roselle would look to me for direction and support as much as I might look to her. Remember, a guide dog waits for commands as they are not trained to know where to go and how to get there. This is especially important in an emergency situation. What if I trained Roselle to find a specific exit, but that way out was blocked during an emergency? It is my job to command her based on my observation. If I panicked and became blinded by my fears, not only would I be unable to appropriately direct her, but she would sense my panic and become uncomfortable or worse.

So, I created a mindset about fear and what to do in an emergency situation. Habits I put in place helped, but ultimately it was the creation of a way of thinking and learning to focus that helped Roselle, me and my colleague David Frank escape and survive. We can train our minds how to react to all sorts of challenges and issues. Fear is an emotion we must learn to conquer and address. Again, the ability to feel and acknowledge fear an important part of being human, but we do not need to let our fear blind us. Instead, as I have said, fear can be used as an incredibly positive means to help us get through any situation we encounter. We spend too much time worrying about the things we cannot control and not enough time focusing on those things we can influence in our lives. Learning to focus and adopting a focus-oriented mindset about whatever is relevant to us will help us live better lives and it will help us be better people in the way we respond to other people and creatures around us.

How can we overcome fear?

I have already partially answered this question with the concept of creating a mindset. However, there is more to the solution. I think the most well-oriented people are those who learn self-analysis or self-examination. That is, do you take time sometime in your day to ponder how you reacted to different situations? Do you ask yourself, “did I do this right, or did I make a mistake?” If we can look at an action we take and honestly say that we made the right choice then GREAT. However, if we look back on something and realize that our choice was not the best one, or we simply made a mistake, then how do we deal with that discovery? A true mistake is one where we honestly made a choice or took an action which may have turned out wrong, but we genuinely acted thinking at the time that we were right. It involves conscious choice and deliberate action.

So, when we look back and discover that we could have done better, how will we react? If we work to imprint in our mind the right choice including why a different choice was better than the one we made, then we are well on our way to learning how to better focus and analyze. We must learn not only to learn from our mistakes, but we must learn not to beat ourselves up. Instead, we should develop a mindset, (there I go again), that praises us for realizing our error and also, when a similar situation arises and we make the better choice, we should mentally reward our better action. I will tell you that learning to honestly analyze what we do and how we live our lives can be hard if that process is not something we are used to performing. It takes practice to get into a frame of mind to joyously be willing to look at ourselves. Rewarding ourselves for growth and improvement are positive incentives for growth and change, as opposed to shame and denial.

I mentioned earlier that I record my talks and listen to them to identify ways I can improve. I think the action of listening to what I say afterward does make me a better speaker. Also, many times I come up with new ideas to use in future talks. It took lots of will and practice to make listening to recordings a natural part of my life. You can do the same thing.

Allow me to share how I began to use my life-analysis mindset. Two things got me started down this road. First, when I was still in undergraduate school, I heard of Transcendental Meditation. I decided to explore it and found it to be quite helpful, as it gave me time every day to experience an inner peace I hadn't felt before. TM was a great way to help cope with all the pressures of being a blind Physics student, much less just a student on campus.

The practice of Transcendental Meditation involves saying a specifically assigned "mantra" that is taught to you by a trained practitioner. There is a second type of meditation that has become popular, especially after it was highlighted in the book *10% Happier* by the Good Morning America weekend host, Dan Harris. Mr. Harris talks about both types of meditation and shows the value of learning to use these powerful tools.

Meditation helped me focus and often generated new ideas I could use later. One such idea came about while I was the Program Director of the UC Irvine radio station, KUCI. I wanted to help all our announcers to improve their broadcasting experiences and programs. One day, I came to the innovative and controversial idea to require all announcers to record their shows and then listen to them. You can imagine the resistance and objections to this idea. However, the Station Manager supported my plan.

Rather than leaving the process up to the discretion of the individual announcer, we devised an automatic system to record each announcer, and provide immediate access to their recordings. By the end of the college year, when they went back and listened to their first broadcasts they could not believe the improvements they experienced. Some of them even went on to successful broadcasting careers. I also hoped that the self-analysis we required of them stayed with them, and proved to be a useful practice elsewhere in their lives.

While we generally grow up not liking the processes of self-analysis and forcing ourselves to disconnect each day for a time, they do make a positive difference if applied consistently. Adopting them creates habits which create a successful mindset. The mindset of analysis is a powerful tool for overcoming fear. You can do it, but you need to be committed and not allow yourself to deviate from consistent practice.

Trust

We have discussed trust previously, and are now ready to introduce the concept of a “trust mindset.” Being open to trust is a powerful first step to overcoming fear. Unfortunately, we have been taught not to trust, and to close our minds, even in the face of overwhelming evidence. For example, due to lack of trust in the media, science, doctors, health agencies, and politicians, there are people who deny either the existence of Covid-19 or the seriousness of its impact. While the scientific evidence supporting the existence and danger of the virus is overwhelming, there are groups of people who think this pandemic is fake or the Coronavirus is no worse than a cold.

I bring this up not to shame or denigrate those who struggle with trust during this unique season. There are reasons for lack of trust, including inconsistent and conflicting messaging, reversals of the “facts” which added to a question about the legitimacy of our news media and even previously venerated institutions. Some people experienced a sense of betrayal because of these inconsistencies, and as a result, shut off trust completely, trusting only in their own lack of trust.

My wife encountered a person caught in such a struggle just this week. This woman was certain that the virus was a hoax. That is, until she was convinced when a close relative died from the Coronavirus. Only then was the evidence for her too great to personally ignore.

Karen's friend didn't trust. Was she blinded by fear? Good question. I think in a sense that she was. While it may have appeared on the surface that she was unafraid of the virus and its impact, she was actually fearful to trust and accept the opinion of others no matter their qualifications or stature. Will her relative's death make her more open to trust? Not necessarily, which is why I am presenting this material. Even the impact of loss and tragedy is not enough to change a mindset that does not trust. My hope is to offer people a tangible, practical way to go beyond their fear and lack of trust to develop a mindset which empowers them to control their fears and experience freedom to reach goals.

I do not advocate that we should trust blindly and without question. Trust must be earned. We should, however, be open to the idea of trust, as well as open to permitting others to earn our trust. Connections and relationships make us stronger and give us a better grounding which helps us either fear less, or at the very least, draw on the strengths and knowledge of those we trust to better control our fears and concerns.

Alamo is my eighth guide dog. He and I were paired in February of 2018. As with the seven guides before him, we had to go through a bonding and team-building period. In short, we needed to learn to trust each other. I believe it takes a year of hard, consistent work to create the seamless bond that makes a good team. Alamo and I now have the trust and team relationship I love. It all starts with me and my desire to be open to the possibility of trust, and my positive expectation of forming a trusting environment. My experience with him and the other seven highly trained dogs is that dogs, as I said earlier, are more open to trust than humans. If only we would think a bit more like a dog and look at life as an adventure to be undertaken and enjoyed, we would be much less afraid!

When is a level of fear important?

I indicated earlier, fear can be a useful tool. No fear at all is just as bad as being blinded by fear. Fear is a reaction to the stimuli you receive as you observe and draw conclusions from what you observe happening around you. Whether you can absorb all that your senses tell you, yet still remain calm enough to interpret the information you receive will determine to some degree how fearful you become.

I need to comment on two issues here. It may be that the information you take in from all your senses is negative, or even threatening. First, I do mean ALL your senses. Most people primarily rely on using only their eyesight for what they regard as necessary information. This tendency limits you. God gave us five senses. Learn to use them all.

In an unexpected situation, it is possible that all the information you receive from all of your senses could indicate danger. Even so, the mindset you adopt related to how to live your life and how to control fear will help determine the way you interpret and process the information available to you. For me, the most striking example goes back to September 11.

After escaping from Tower One, David Frank, Roselle and I walked to Broadway and then turned North to walk uptown away from the WTC toward Time Square some 3 miles away. We had just crossed Fulton Street, putting us near Tower Two, when that tower began falling. We were perhaps 100 yards away from the collapsing 400-yard tall building. I first heard a sound that grew quickly louder. David saw the building buckling and began to run away, leaving me with Roselle to decide where to go. I literally lifted Roselle by the guide dog harness handle, turning her and me around, and began running back the way from which we had come. As I tell this story during many of my talks, I say that this was probably the scariest time for me that day. Even so, I did not totally panic. I forced myself to listen while running. I looked, using my senses, for any information to help me, knowing full well that Tower Two might be falling toward my position. If the building had tipped sideways and not pancaked straight down, Roselle and I would definitely have not survived. The building, however, did exactly what it was designed to do, and we lived. It turned out that we had run in the same direction as David and we caught up to him after we turned off Broadway onto Fulton street.

I tell you this story to show that I do understand imminent danger and the fear associated with it. I didn't panic and fall into the clutches of blind fear. Yes, I was afraid, but my mindset was so overriding that it helped me continue to focus and be aware of my surroundings. Also, the fear I experienced gave me the courage to do something I didn't normally do which was to run into a scary situation while being guided by a guide dog. I trusted Roselle to continue to do her job and keep us walking, or in this case running, safely. We both kept up our commitments to the team and we survived. Make no mistake, if I had totally panicked and if I had been blinded by fear I would have not been able to pay attention to Roselle and she might well have behaved differently as she took her cues from me.

Where do you go from here?

I assume you acquired this eBook because you resonate with the concept or experience of being blinded by fear. Perhaps, due to the issues confronting us in the world today, whether in the area of politics, financial security and safety, the health of our democracy, the economy, the Covid-19 pandemic, or combination of any and all of the above, you are experiencing a level of fear that is holding you back. And maybe you are ready to do something about it. If I have accomplished anything for you in this book I hope it is to have shown you that you are not alone and that I have been there. I hope you see that it is possible for you to address your own blinding fear and take back some control over your life, emotions, and thoughts.

If you are ready to embark on an accelerated journey to create or strengthen a winning mindset to help you overcome fear, I invite you to join a personal coaching program designed specifically to help you put into practice the concepts and success strategies shared here. In addition to group webinars, I offer one-on-one coaching sessions. You can learn more by visiting my Website - blindedbyfear.net. I also invite you to join my "Blinded by Fear" Facebook page [here](#). I would be happy to answer any questions and invite you to email me at info@michaelhingson.com.

Together, you and I can lessen the debilitating effects of fear, to overcome it and to make our lives better. I look forward to being part of your journey and to seeing you succeed.

Discover the 9 Secrets to Control Your Fear Now

**Go from the unexpected scary event that
changed your life to analyzing your fears and
moving on**

Take off the blindfold and flip your fear

**Control your fear and go to clarity and
confidence with one mindset shift...**

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