

Unfear Newsletter

Change is scary: How to harness that fear and ride it

Dear Reader,

Each second that slips past bears us toward our deaths. The same holds true for organizations. But unlike people, organizations can't get physicals, watch their sugars, and sweat on the elliptical. The only way to extend a company's life expectancy is to constantly evolve. The challenge is that evolution engenders uncertainty, and uncertainty creates fear. To evolve through that fear, we need to shift our mindset from one that defends the status quo to one that embraces continuous evolution.

Unfear Organization Mindset Four: From Defense of the Status Quo to Continuous Evolution

Most fear-based organizations, especially successful ones, defend the status quo because they rightly attribute their success to their past practices. Yet this tunnel vision on what **made** them great makes it more likely that individuals, teams, or even the whole organization will fatally miss critical new market signals.

On the individual level, this mindset manifests as egoistic defensiveness about our work. Once we accomplish a task, we take pride in it. This is natural and even positive. Driven, talented people **must** believe in their capabilities. But when that pride transforms into defensiveness, it can lead to stagnation. On a team level, the defensive mindset leads to the tribalism/inter-silo competition we discussed in [last month's newsletter](#). On an organizational level, all this defensiveness leads to a lackluster innovation pipeline and inability to adapt to change.

Making two changes will allow us to move from a defensive mindset into one of continuous evolution.

First, learning to hold who we are right now lightly. As we laid out in our [first newsletter](#), we all are infinite potential and have the ability to fashion that potential into whatever form is wanted and needed in the moment. Viewed this way, there's no reason to become defensive about the status quo. That was one form our energy took. It doesn't have to define us going forward.

Second, we must strive to take a balcony view of every situation. Instead of being completely identified with our current situation, try and look at it as if we were watching from a balcony. Ask, is this current path **truly** what the organization needs right now, or would we benefit from a different direction?

In Conversation with the Muses

The legendary musician, Tom Waits, considers the music he produces to have been brought to him by the muses, ancient goddesses of creativity. He tells a story about being stuck in L.A. traffic when suddenly, a beautiful melody pops into his head. He begins to develop it in his head, but he can't get to his instruments to explore it. He rolls down the window, sticks his head out, and shouts to the sky, "Can't you see I'm busy?" While composing new rock hits is slightly different from planning a product launch, there is a valuable lesson here. Creative people often think of their work as a collaboration between themselves and the muses, and we believe the same can be said of all innovation, even in business. We can each strive to make ourselves the best possible instrument for a creative force to express through us. But we should remember that everything we do is a collaboration. Have confidence that if you stay open to inspiration, the right idea will present itself, and the correct path for your evolution will appear clear.

Worth thinking about

Assess your organization. Does it embrace evolution and change or double down on the status quo? Do people, especially those with formal power, invite new ideas and feedback, or do they adopt a defensive posture? What about you? Do you seek new ideas or expend energy on protecting your current *modus operandi*?

Take it to go

The next time you share work with colleagues, try to hold that work lightly. Step on the balcony. Solicit their honest opinions and try to step away and see the situation as if from a balcony. How does this change your approach to the conversation? Change the conversation? What new possibilities present themselves?

Questions?

Please contact us and schedule a call if you are interested in applying Unfear to improve your team and organizational culture and effectiveness. We'd love to hear from you.





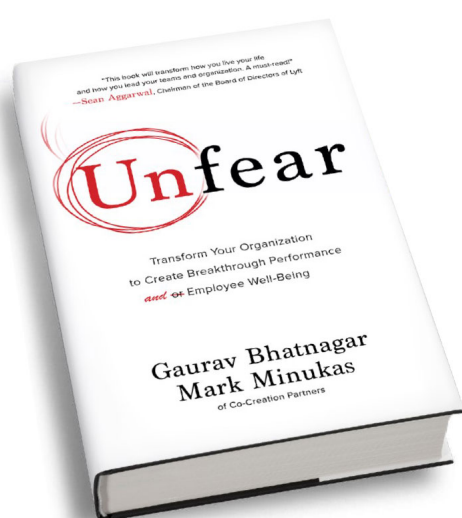
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