



It's not the
thing you
fear that
you must
deal with:
it's the
mother of
the thing
you fear.

David Whyte
(b. 1955)
Poet

It's not the web, but the spider; not the cave, but the bear. We are taught to face our fears and as we do, we often discover that what we face is not what we really fear. Meeting our fears may require that we look a bit deeper.

Meeting our fears may open us to a more active life.

Fear might be about the potential of loss. Behind some of our fears can be concern that we will lose things we cherish, things familiar to us, or things we depend upon. Discerning what we don't want to lose might reveal our true values or unmask our hidden attachments. We can explore our deeper needs and better understand our hesitance. Anticipating and honoring our grief might allow us broader choice.

Fear might be about protecting us when we are tired. Life requires us to be agile and creative – able to safely allow for change. When weary, openness to difference is limited. Fear can protect our resources but it can undermine our growth. Gifting ourselves with rest restores these reserves. Offering ourselves compassion renews our confidence and allows us to try something new.

Fear might be about learning to trust. Sometimes we fear because we are alone and sense the limits of individual strength. In these moments, it is hard to turn to those around us. And yet, when the burden of our individual fear is borne by many at our side, fear can lose its limiting grip. The capacity of a community supports us and, as our trust expands, courage thrives.

Facing that which is behind our fear might lead us to a brave path.

When I think of a fear I have, what might be behind that fear? How might I build confidence in my strength?