Do We Really Want A Fearless Society?

R. Michael Fisher, **Ph.D**.
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In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute
507 S. James St., Carbondale, IL
62901

Contact author:

rmichaelfisher@yahoo.com
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The In Search of Fearlessness Institute is dedicated to research and publishing on fear, fearlessness and emotions in general, as well as critical reviews of such works. Preference is given to works with an integral theoretical perspective.

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- R. Michael Fisher,[1] Ph.D.
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Abstract: This paper summarizes the literature across disciplines and cultures that examines the possibility of a "fearless society." The author presents various theories and critical methodologies that critique this literature and yet support its inherent impulse of the Fearlessness Principle. The author suggests, despite the problems of interpretation of a "fearless society," the concept is essential to a future unifying vision for humanity, sanity and sustainability in the 21st century. This paper serves to develop a critical literacy of fear and fearlessness knowledge (i.e., fear management/education), as part of a 25 yr. long project, initiated by the author.

INTRODUCTION

If we were to 'dare to tread where angels fear,' what would we talk about in public, or even in our families? Would it be favourite and opposing sports teams and political parties, ideologies and their heroes? Would it be movies and actors we love and those we hate? We could talk about which religion is best, if any? We could talk about controversial tax or marriage laws? We could talk about the growing 'gap' between rich and poor, the sacred and the profane, the guardians of order and the anarchists. The list is endless and conflict continues to grow.

Yet, I think our differences really come home when we talk about children, how they should behave, how they should be educated and socialized, and the preferred, if not ideal, role they play for some view of a future better society.

On that theme, why not dare go right into the mouth of the lion, as I have done for decades and talk about whether one wants to really raise fearless children or not? I mean raise them as the late Bertrand Russell in the 1960s rather optimistically proposed:

One generation... could transform the world by bringing into it a generation of fearless children.... Education is the key to the new world.[2]

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[1] A public intellectual, the author teaches online courses and seminars in the Department of Integral and 'Fear' Studies, at the Center for Spiritual Inquiry & Integral Education (http://csiie.org). He is a consultant and coach (http://loveandfearsolutions.com).

This quote has always taken my breath away, not because it is some simplistic, idealistic or spiritual romantic view, but because it was delivered by a very staunch mainstream rationalist, secularist, and eminent international Western male philosopher (old white man). Of course he meant this in a positive way, but research shows that many would completely disagree that "fearless children" is either a reality or a positive option for the future of any "new world." My spiritual new age friends, and the philosopher mystics of diverse kinds, of course, have been saying this for a long time: *we have to stop the destructive cycle of the adults passing on their fear to their offspring and polluting the next generation before it barely gets started.* Krishnamurti, for one, wrote specifically of the challenge to education:

> *The right kind of education must take into consideration this question of fear, because fear warps our whole outlook on life. To be without fear is the beginning of wisdom, and only the right kind of education can bring about the freedom from fear....*[3]

And Russell is famous for: *"To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom."*

I tend to agree with this philosophical and spiritual take on things and the role of socialization and education for liberation beyond fear. But I am little optimistic, generationally speaking, of the past few decades as I have watched myself and my friends and colleagues who have preached "fearless" living do less than fully encourage it in their children and their children's children. Nor have they petitioned the schools these children attend to ensure the liberation of children. And worse, I have seen our children show little to no interest. Yet, we adults are responsible for the next generation because we have differential power to change it, yet, we simply gave up, forgot, or distracted ourselves from really caring about the larger issue of the role of fear and fearlessness in shaping the future of the world.

In my dissertation (2000-03) I studied the relationship between fear and education. I critiqued and divorced myself from the very discipline of Education that I was doing my dissertation within. The discipline was too concerned with petty issues and its own status and funding supports to care about things deeper. It was filled with cowardice. I claimed that until the field of Education is willing to look at its State-borne, fear-borne collusion in fearism/adultism, "education" is guilty of a furthering of the oppression of human potential and a lot worse things that are leading to unsustainable practices on this planet. I also claimed that fearism, which is not

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[2] Excerpt retrieved March 11, 2004 from
http://geocities.com/arguivogl/Glauco/HomePage/ FightThePower/FTPengl.htm.
[3] Krishnamurti (1953/81), p. 34.

even mentioned in the educational literature, is the base 'ism' of all other 'ism' dis-eases we bear in human cultures.

Following a lone path, and after dedicating several publications to the topic of fearless children,[4] it was evident that we have to ask whether we want to create the context for such fearless children to thrive? We also have to come to terms with our polar opinions about whether such an aim of education is positive or negative, and why. It seemed to me the focus of the challenge ought best to be organized around: *Do We Really Want a Fearless Society?*

The focus of the debate, at least for adults, ought to be about "society" not about children. I do not want to put adult hope (and despair on its other side) on the children's shoulders but on the responsibility of adults, who actually design, pay for, and deliver the context of children's educational experiences, be they formal or informal. Adults have the power to make a big difference in any transformation, and sure, so do children as they grow up too. But who's going to lead? My dissertation was entitled: "Fearless Leadership In and Out of the 'Fear' Matrix."[5] The prophetic call was made to all adults, and rare has one attended the call, and for lots of 'good' reasons. It's a bit terrifying to take the step and say "I'm in" to really challenge the fear-based System (the 'Fear' Matrix). There will be real consequences if one does.

A Fearless Society: What Some Have Said

In an earlier technical paper,[6] over a decade ago, I outlined evidence from the scholarly and popular literature to show there is a reasonable assertion to be made that there is a social movement, albeit, in loose and non-unified form, across cultures, geography and time, that is attempting to bring about a "fearless society." I have called this the Fearlessness Movement.[7] Not all the evidence given there was specifically designated by individuals or groups as focused on the goal of a "fearless society" per se; but that I read that impulse from the evidence. I shall not repeat here all of that evidence as that technical paper is now available online.

My grounds and criteria for reading into the various texts by various authors and groups of this social movement is not fine-tuned but more intuitive, yet with a critical discourse analysis of what is being said by such

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[4] E.g., see Chapter Four in Fisher (2010).

[5] Fisher (2003).

[6] Fisher (2000).

[7] Fisher (2007).

individuals and groups. If a group proposes that we ought to be living in *"freedom from fear"* or *"without fear"* as I have documented there are many such cases, then it is assumed by me that that is part of an inherent impulse toward a society that is more valuing of us all being "fear-less" than "fear-full." Of course, there are exceptions to this rule or movement, which need to be discussed as well.

The international contemporary version of such a fear-less move is the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), of which the core is made up of the right to live *"without fear"* of needs not met, of retribution for speaking one's own truth and so on. Another popular movement, originating in 1989 in the USA, *via* business smarts recognizing the youthful social rebellious climate, that spread like wild-fire, was the "No FEAR!" slogandia. This was followed with a wave of products, promotions, and services, in mainstream and radical circles, tagged with "*Fearless*" (e.g., "fearless cooking," "fearless living," "fearless leader"). This latter movement is still going strong.

Of course the challenge for me as a researcher is to discriminate what is a "good" definition of "fearless" and what isn't. One needs a critical theory and set of methodologies to do that. That's another topic, some of which will be referred to in this essay. It is this basic ethical discernment (i.e., movement from fear-full to fear-less that is key) that greatly interests me and acts as a foundation in my more complex writings for a premise based on an argument for what I now call the *Fearlessness Principle.*

This Fearlessness Principle, along with three others (Fear, Love, Freedom), form the basis of an integral ecological model of meta-motivations (Fisher, 2012). I am always in search of a basic human nature (or "humane nature" as Erich Fromm would put it), which is universal and acts as a referent for motivations that drive (more or less) ethical decision-making and planning, development and evolution of consciousness, for human healthy and sustainable societies (as well as Education curriculum).

Yet, besides the implicit trend of a social movement for a "fearless society," we can find some explicit references to it in the literature as well. I now want to document some of them, as they have not been part of my earlier papers. Inevitably, as we look at these quotes, one has to encounter the contentious and long-historical discourse about the value of "utopian" visions, and/or their mis-educational uses, while some extreme poststructural postmodernists prefer "dystopias."

All along, my interest is not so much in that somewhat stale debate, but to gather systematically evidence for the actual impulse (i.e., theoreti-

cally called "Fearlessness Principle")[8] of a social movement that wants (apparently) a "fearless society." Abstract arguments are one thing, but looking at the evidence is another. I wouldn't want to choose one or the other but to integrate these. At this point, in this essay, the focus is less on the arguments for and against but examining how to see the evidence and impulse (i.e., fearlessness principle) and how it can best be understood, and preferably understood in some fresh ways. I'll propose an integral evolutionary theory of Fear Management Systems to takes us along in that direction.

Okay, now for some quotes on "fearless society." One populist maga-zine article by Katare,[9] shares her interest in a "fearless society" where individual's full potential is held up as highest value as well as a govern-ment that protects peoples' "individual security" and secures equality, jus-tice, liberty, fraternity and human rights for all citizens. Katare cited a Tagore poem on "*Where the mind is without fear...*"-- all kinds of wonderful things can happen. Dozier wrote of a significant dilemma, if not confusion, in our thought about contrasting societies in regard to the nature and role of the individual and the collective:

> Relatively fearful societies are more likely to have coercive govern ments, limited civil rights, resistance to change, and hostility toward outsiders. A fearless society, in contrast, is more likely to have the maximum latitude toward individual liberties, outside influences, and social change that is consistent with public order. [but on the

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[8] Although I'll elaborate on this principle as part of our inherent human nature ("humane nature" as Erich Fromm would call it) later in this essay, for now, it is the radical revolutionary 17th century philosophy of Spinoza that I draw upon to support (in part) this Fearlessness Principle. "People by nature, according to Spi-noza, seek desperately to be liberated from fear—the least tolerable of affects [i.e., "sad affects" which are destructive to individual and social bodies, argues Spi-noza], especially when dominant..." (p. 601). This impulse and motivation or "de-sire to be liberated from fear" is a "natural law" according to Spinoza (Sharp, 2005, p. 605). The implications of Spinoza's philosophy casts a sharp contrasting shadow on the way "fear" (and I'd argue, also "fearlessness") has been configured (and/or virtually ignored) in typical W. Enlightenment discourses, especially in its constitution in social and political bodies re: power and affects. My current hy-pothesis, not yet well developed or tested, is that Spinoza offers the W. a radical alternative in the "progressive" political framework for understanding fear and fearlessness. Mostly, at this time, we are dominated with a "conservative" political framework for understanding fear and fearlessness. I wish to attempt to critically integrate these views (to some degree) in a longer study in the future. I am con-vinced we need something better than the Enlightenment philosopher's (e.g., Des-cartes, Kant, Hegel) have to offer.

[9] Katare (2000), p. 1131.

downside] Fearful societies run the risk of stagnation and decay. Fearless societies are vulnerable to rampant individualism and fragmentation.[10]

From a somewhat Eastern Advaitism and Buddhism perspective on freedom that is both moral and cultural, Es Desapande cited Narhar Kurundkar's philosophy: "Fearless man in fearless society" is what freedom practically means.[11] But from a mid-Eastern view of Islamic statecraft and governance (according to Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad), a negative view is asserted:

> The masses are confused. Would you prefer the Word of God and that of the Holy Prophet of Islam or would you rather have men under a godless and fearless society to guide and shape your political manifestos?[12]

In the ancient Indian tradition of *rajdharma* of the king, he is to provide "better conditions of life, [which] facilitates generation of fearless society. The Mahabharat explicitly sanctions revolt against a king who is oppressive" and fails to provide and nurture such a fearless society.[13]

The contemporary social philosopher, Cunningham, develops his own theory of fear and possessive individualism in his examination of capitalism and its alternatives. He suggested "Removing fear from the market would inhibit selfishness at least to the extent that people could afford to be moral." He calls for a "fearless market" economy. He ends with asking "whether capitalism could accommodate a fearless society[?]."[14] The anthropologist, Henry, develops a theory of economics via notions of consumption. With "egoistic consumption" he notes, it begins and ends in fear as "consumption euphoria [in America as one example] is based on international fear. Hence it is also correct to say that the consequences of a fearless society [if possible] cannot but be economically dysphoric" and a disaster to typical euphoric capitalism and its obsessive consumption pattern.[15]

Western philosopher, Kantzios, examined the "politics of fear" in Aeschylus's *Persians* play in ancient Greece. In comparing the Athenians with the Persians, Aeschylus (according to Kantzios) makes the democratic

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[10] Dozier (1999), p. 149.

[11] Es Desapande (2005), p. 54.

[12] Cited in Ahmad & Ahmad (2011), p. 32.

[13] Sharma (2003), n.p.

[14] Cunningham (2005), pp. 137, 140.

[15] Henry (1966), p. 103.

Athenian culture one associated "with a masterless and fearless society, one that has no other source of authority beyond the will of its citizens" in contrast to the Persian culture at the time which he makes out to be more despotic and totalitarian (a "culture of intimidation"). Kantzio clarifies a nuance in Aeschylus's assessment:

> Here it must be pointed out that references to the fearlessness of the Athenians should not be understood as the negation of fear *in toto*, which leads to anarchy and lawlessness, but as a counterpoint to the servile [dictatorial and authoritarian] fear of the subject toward the despot. [Aeschylus believes there is a good place for fear and is not exactly a full proponent of a fearless society because he implies it would lead to anarchy and lawlessness if taken too far].[16]

A highly controversial Italian Marxist philosopher, Negri, an expert on the philosophy of Spinoza and our postmodern era of "Empire," wrote:

> We have in our hands the promise of a fearless society. This is what Spinoza said—and what has been rediscovered by feminists, workers, students, and all those who hoped and wished that something would change in 1968 [time of the student protests in France's major universities, and later in many other W. countries]...".[17]

On the NGO website for Global Education Associates, Samdhong Rinpoche (endorsing the organization) said that GEA, using E. and W. approaches, and materialist and spiritualist too, is offering a balance of "outer and inner life so that a peaceful and fearless society can emerge in the 21st century."[18]

Spinoza, according to interpretation by the contemporary philosopher Sharp,[19] claimed in a "true democracy... there is hardly anything to fear."

In concrete empirical terms, beyond ideological notions, we still have to ask: Has there been any fearless societies ever? Of course it is very hard to answer that question without delving into a fine-tuned definition of "fearless society." In my own book I pushed up against the progressive notion of an "open society" that many thinkers have espoused for centuries, and asked is this the same as a "fearless society"? As well, I offered readers of my work to check out the chapter in the human geographer,

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[16] Kantzios (2004), p. 11.

[17] Negri (2004), p. 29.

[18] Retrieved October 10, 2008 from http://www.g-e-a.org/endorsements.html.

[19] Op. cit., p. 604.

Tuan, where he discusses (in quote marks) "Fearless" Societies.[20] Tuan concludes, with anthropological evidence, there are some societies in primal conditions historically, that have been near fearless, and some very rare situations where a society may act quite fearlessly for a time under extreme circumstances, but he makes no commitment that there is such a "fearless" society or has been one for any length of time; a similar conclusion, from a sociopolitical view is offered by Corradi when he commented "a society in which fear is unknown has not existed and is unlikely ever to exist."[21]

In 2008, after preliminary research on "fearless society" discourses, I concluded that there were several examples (some from the above quotes) that indicate there is "a long and tried tradition of the 'fearless society' imaginary."[22] I was much more lenient in my classification than say Corradi and some other are. Surely, the criteria of a "fearless society" has to be different, and improved upon, because it is not at all my understanding that such a society is one where "fear is unknown." My own theorizing, and that of many others, would take a very different developmental and evolutionary perspective on "fearless" in general. In other words, we'd assert that a "fearless" society develops and evolves, just as would an individual classified as such and that is based on a deep understanding of fear and how to best manage and transform it. That now, will lead us into my big picture theory of Fear Management Systems. Yet, before that, it is important to summarize a few points from the quotes above.

First, there is an unaddressed issue that is worth taking up eventually, in regard to a more complete understanding of a "fearless society" than what I have written or others I've cited. There isn't really any good systematic explication of such a society under that label of "fearless society" by anyone, anywhere, which I have found. I also found only one reference to "fearless civility"[23] which may prove to be a good term, as is "civic courage" (much more commonly used), when we talk about a fearless society in operational terms. Fearless civility is a way to express a fearless society, perhaps(?). But I shall not dwell on that discussion here. Similarly, I will not dwell further on "fearless children," "fearless citizens" or "fearless organizations."

In summary, what I have found is that the Eastern traditions (cultures) of religion, philosophy and spirituality are more embracing of a notion of "fearless" for individuals and groups (or societies) than are middle-Eastern

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[20] Tuan (1979), pp. 35-44.

[21] Corradi (1992), p. 267.

[22] Fisher (2010), p. 5.

[23] Anonymous (2001).

(Abrahamic tradition) cultures.[24] I would tend to call this an E. vs. W. difference in this regard. This is especially the case also with the notion of "fearlessness." In the West, "fearless" is thrown around very loosely and popularly. Usually seen as a positive trait, but not always. And Dozier's comments above show a confusing contradiction in his message about "fearless society." I'm sure a big part of the problem is because the term "fearless" is not clearly defined, or if it is, it is very incomplete and non-holistic. That's another topic.

What we do know, is that "fearless" means something significant to a lot of people, but in the W. it typically lacks the philosophical, religious and spiritual credibility and wisdom as found in the Eastern traditions. Most see it as behavioral and psychological, and/or simply stylish and nothing more. These E. and W. contrasts are both interesting and problematic to any study of the concepts of *fear, fearlessness* or *fearless*. I have written about this in other works and will not go into it here, other than through some discussion of the importance of clarifying a set of methodologies that are adequate (apparently) to the task of critically analyzing which discourses on fearless can be trusted and which are less convincing, if not pathologically distortive. My aim is to improve our fear management/education with a better (21st century) critical literacy.

A Critical Literacy: "Fearless Society" Under Systematic Critique

I'll offer a skeletal outline of some of the integral methodologies that I have brought to this study, and the general study of fear and fearlessness for the past 25 yrs. You likely gathered my emphasis is on categorizing all teachings on fear as more or less with an overt or covert interest in assisting human being to better manage fear. Of course, "better manage fear" may be constructed very differently by different locations of consciousness and/or group ideologies. Some more benign and some much less.

The spectrum of intensities of such fear management, even though inherent, are quite distinct and could be identified as *coping with fear*, to *healing and transforming fear*, or what some see distinct as *transmutation of fear*. I'll leave that here and add an adjacent, if not analogous spectrum of fear management forms/strategies more relevant to a critical literacy (i.e., Fear Management Systems theory): *bravery* (and *bravado*), *courage*(*ous*), *fear-less*, *fearlessness*, *fearless*. This spectrum of fear management/education approaches and discourses can be found around the world, across cultures and time (as my book lays out in great detail). I call

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[24] I acknowledge this generalization is tenuous, and one ultimately would need to make a distinction between esoteric (mystical) and exoteric (institutional or *status quo*) teachings in these traditions to see if this notion holds true.

them all "fearlessness" (or "spirit of fearlessness") in imperative operations in developmental and evolutionary levels going from most primal (simple system) to most advanced or mature (system). They are Defense systems.

"Fearless" is the highest level achievable of these fear management/ education systems. It must grow, over a long period of time to be stable as a 'center of gravity' of operations within an individual and/or a group or even a society. I am focusing on "fearless" in this essay to show the extreme end of possibilities for humans, not to show what we are most familiar with, and in that sense, I am a philosopher of fear and fearlessness like Spinoza, or Fromm, among others. I want us to imagine (realistically) the possible, not the average, of what a human being can be. And for heuristic purposes, this essay focuses on the highest "fearless" conceptualization and fear management/education strategy.

Using Spiral Dynamics integral theory[25] (a la Don Beck and Ken Wilber, etc.) I construct 10 fear management systems that have been identifiable (as orienting generalizations) in an integral evolutionary theory of Fear Management Systems (i.e., FMSs, see my book for details). FMS-0 is the system before birth and separation of the umbilical cord attachment to the mother, and from there FMS-1, then, all the way to FMS-9 (Fearless). *Bravery* (and *bravado*), *Courage*(*ous*), *Fear-less* are all expressions of the spectrum from FMS-1 to FMS-6 (with some subsystems identified). Then after that, in development and evolution of Defense systems, there is a quantum jump of sorts, across an abyss, into an entirely unique and powerful FMS-7 (Integral, *Fearlessness* proper). Then follows, FMS-8 and FMS-9 (Nondual, *Fearless*). The spectrum map is infinite, ever-developing and maybe a FMS-10 will be seen someday. Of course, the making of patterns and categories is always relatively imprecise (arbitrary to some degree) by its very nature, so we have to be aware of gradients and overlapping here in a much more messy world than a theory or model/map. I am reporting on only what has been articulated in other studies and my own experience. The point of this essay is not to give more details of these systems but to show my methodology, which allows me to critique discourses of any of these forms and/or systems.

So when people talk about being "fearless" or wanting a "fearless society" (or not wanting it), then I go to work with analyzing what discourse(s) they use to construct meaning for that term. It is then that I find immense inconsistencies, distortions, and just simply a good deal of ignore-ance and arrogance in the way people use these terms in general. Some authors are much more rigorous. However, in all my 25 yrs. of study of these discourses, I have found no one fully and systematically writing about fear and

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[25] I recommend Wikipedia for its summary of this theory and model of socio-cultural change.

fearlessness from FMS-7, with this integral ontology. FMS-7 is the first location to be aware of all the other FMSs on the spectrum. This has enormous epistemological consequences. I have developed it more than anyone else.

This very essay is crafted within the context and lens of FMS-7, as is the theory of Fear Management Systems. It is integral theory. None of this classification of course suggests that it is right. It may be distorted itself. However, one of the precautions that I have brought to the epistemology of fear and fearlessness is the intention to oversee the entire study (including FMS-7) from what I've called a "*fearless standpoint theory*" (thanks, mainly, but not exclusively, to Ken Wilber's transpersonal and integral work over three decades[26]). Without going into the details of the fearless standpoint theory (nondual consciousness), it is this location that guides and theoretically "corrects" any Fear Management Systems theory and my research as a whole, including the 'outer' and 'inner' aspects of reality. In other words, I have to be at least using a standpoint completely (or nearly so) *outside* of the 'Fear' Matrix (i.e., FMS-1 to FMS-6) as I have called it. Of course, this transcendent position is untenable if it is the *only* position one takes (or claims too). The integral reality is that me (or anyone) is going to stand both in the 'Fear' Matrix and outside of it (more or less). FMS-7 is relatively *outside* and FMS-9 is way more *outside*.

Theoretically, I find the FMS-9 location or standpoint very useful to conduct this research. When I first started this in 1989, I knew intuitively I wanted to be able to study fear without the study being fear-based itself. There are many epistemological reasons for this, as well as political ones, and it seemed a philosophically sensible possibility to ensure the best information on fear and its management was attained with minimal distortion by fear (or its more constructed forms of 'fear' patterning). Again, a long argument could be drawn up, as I have done elsewhere in many publications, for this caution and for the remedy of FMS-9 as a standpoint I need to take. At the same time, I do not claim at all to have stabilized my own development and evolution of consciousness to "hold" my being at FMS-9 (Fearless). Such is a very rare occurrence on this planet, apparently. I would rather feel confident to say I can "hold" it at FMS-7 (also somewhat rare), and from there I can see FMS-9 quite well, and read and utilize much of its offerings to fear management/education in general, and certainly to research.

I realize I have thrown in a lot of ideas and theory, assumptions, premises, without arguing all of them out. That's beyond the scope of this essay. Although, I think that "fearless" anything has to be brought up against the critical understanding of Fear Management Systems theory (and FMS-9

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[26] E.g., a good guide can be found in Wilber (1995).

specifically). Now, I'll add one more complexity to the methodologies, it is my latest thinking (hypothesis) and one I mentioned earlier. Also "fearless" can be located on my new theory of meta-motivations. In Fisher (2012) I give an outline of this model/theory and hypothesis. It is a pyramid model of hierarchies of meta-motivations (where meta-motivations are very large categories of many sub-motivations within them). See Figure 1 below.
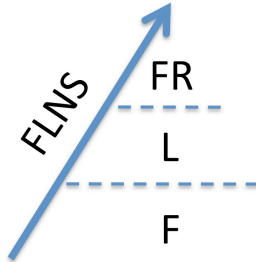

Figure 1 Meta-Motivational Theory (R. Michael Fisher ©2012)

KEY: F = FEAR, L = LOVE, FR = FREEDOM, FLNS = FEARLESSNESS

To be brief, and I refer you to read Fisher (2012) for more details on this model, the location of "Fearless" (FMS-9) is at the top of the arrow of the Fearlessness Principle and in the zone of Freedom Principle. Again, this is the highest state and maturation stage of human consciousness development that we know of at this time. The working hypothesis of the model of meta-motivations is that one has to fully engage the Fear Principle (and resultant Fearlessness Principle) at the most base foundational aspects of reality and human nature. If this is accomplished well, then the next higher levels emerge in healthy forms, if not, they will be distorted by the problems in the lower foundational (junior) levels. Fear is the first psychotrophic level to negotiate. I call it the "Reality Principle" (somewhat after Freud). The "Pleasure Principle" and "Transcendence Principle" make up the two next levels above, and the "Transformation Principle" makes up the Fearlessness arrow of development and evolution.

The point of this methodological and theoretical model is to show that "Fearless" is a very complicated system of fear management and needs to be taught and integrated as such. It comes about in operations after a lot of work and development (evolution). We all have some access to it any time however, but only when we have thoroughly and healthily integrated the lower principles in the pyramid, will we even be able to see "Fearless" correctly (that is, without lower interpretive distortions, especially distortions that are fear-based due to problems we've had in the lowest FEAR psychotrophic level). Most popular ideas about "fearless" are completely ignorant of this model and reality of how complex "Fearless" (FMS-9) is, and how hard it is to attain.

A Few Summary Thoughts

What I have shown in this essay is that "fearless" can be easily tossed around as an expressive term, but often without any rigor in terms of psychological, developmental, evolutionary, philosophical, or spiritual and theological understanding. Thus, it is often adopted because it is not really understood and sounds "simple" to make an affective point. But it is also rejected by just as many because it is not understood and sounds "dangerous." In both cases, the theories and frameworks (lenses) for understanding "fearless" are lacking a thorough holistic-integral understanding and critical methodologies. I have attempted to show how a notion of a "fearless society" cannot easily be ignored, and ought not be. It means something to people who write about it and teach about it, just as "fearless" as an expression with a lot of other activities is meaningful.

Accepting the meaningfulness of "fearless" to people, however, is not enough. We have to inquire deeper into what is a good interpretation and what is not. Thus, I have provided some tools for that critical literacy, including the theory of Fear Management Systems and a meta-motivational model. There is still a lot of work to be done, obviously. But in conclusion, despite the inherent impulse to want to be liberated from fear, as the term "fearless" (and other terms) suggests, there are predominant forces and many factors that prevent such an attainment, and often, are so repressive that people don't even think about a "fearless society" as anything but utopian and unrealistic today.

On the contrary, I do believe there are optimistic (yet sobering realistic) grounds for a re-imagining and re-thinking of the value of a notion of a "fearless society." It could be the very notion (vision) we need today, in a world lacking in a unifying vision that is grounded in the spirit of human nature, and the motivational principles of that human nature to develop and evolve. Any educational curriculum, formal or informal, cannot be "sane" that leaves out this debate and research. At least, let's bring it up on the table when looking at what kind of education we want for our children, and ourselves, and a future world that we would desire, rather than fear.

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