

GLS21: Hello Fears!

It has been said that the strongest of leaders overcome their fears and compel their team to do the same. But what if this isn't how a great leader tackles fear? What if our best leaders don't get rid of their fears but lean into them with bravery and pass that courage on to others?

At The Global Leadership Summit, Michelle Poler explored different types of fears and how our body processes them, ways to engage when we feel afraid and the difference between fearless and brave.

Enjoy these official session notes to help you dive deeper into what you learned!

Our Fears and Our Comfort Zones

- Do you remember your earliest fears? Was it clowns? The dark?
- Our comfort zone is unique to each of us.
- They can change and expand as we face our fears.
- To me, life felt like a checklist that I had to do for society. But was the checklist making me happy?
- There was an obstacle keeping me from moving forward: fear.

The 100-Day Project

- 100-Day Project: do anything for 100 days in a row that help me grow
- I decided to face 100 days without fear and documented it all on YouTube.
- If you think that was scary, uploading the videos was really scary. 40 days in, my face showed up all over the internet. I soon received messages from all over the world that people were inspired to go after their own fears.
- The difference between fearless and brave—I had a fearless boss and then a fearful one. What I needed was a brave boss. Someone who despite fear was willing to take action.
- At the end of the day, I cannot be fearless. I can be brave.
- The best way is not to hide fears and insecurities. It's facing the fear and acting.
- The last fear: #100. I was offered by a big brand the chance to rappel down Rockefeller Center. I declined the offer and instead faced my fear of public speaking...at TEDx Houston.
- What's the worst that can happen? It's the worst question. I flipped the question. What's the best that could happen? It allowed me to see the possibility that existed. I felt no more fear, only excitement. I got my first standing ovation, and the rest is history.

Understanding Fear

- I felt the end goal was to eliminate fear. I realized fear is an ally. When we keep fear in its place, it allows us to grow.
- Now I see every fear not as an obstacle, but an opportunity.

- I divided fear into three categories: universal fears (no matter where you are born), cultural fears (revolve around our need for belonging and to be loved) and personal fears (keep us from disappointing ourselves)
- If we are not careful, our need to fit in may hurt our authenticity. When I was speaking at ESPN, I was comparing myself to the speaker in front of me. My imposter syndrome was making me think that I needed to be someone else, instead of myself.
- "Our job in this lifetime is not to shape ourselves into some idea we've imagined that we ought to be, but to find out who we already are and become it." - Steven Pressfield
- The enemy of success is not failure, it's comfort. Comfort keeps us from innovating. Comfort begs us to look down at our phones rather than sparking a conversation with the person next us.

What Comes Next

- Day 101, now what? My husband asked, "What if you can inspire people for a living?"
- Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) - keeps us from acting
- Behavioral Activation System (BAS) - tied to reward, encourages you
- How do you put growth into motion? You have to focus on the reward. I started asking myself, "What's the best that can happen?"
- Say Hello to your fears!
- How would you feel if you faced your fears?
- I checked all my boxes. Start writing your own boxes. What do you want to accomplish?

What would you get uncomfortable for?

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