A FREE COMPANION TO DON'T LIVE IN FEAR

Measure Your Walls

A workbook for finding the fears that fence you in, testing which ones are still live, and pushing on the first one this week.



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How to Use This Workbook

Bring a pen and no excuses. Most of the work here takes minutes. Acting on it takes a little nerve.

Don't Live in Fear argues that everybody lives in a box with walls made of fear, and that most of those walls are like the buried wire around a yard: the dog got shocked once, the current was shut off years ago, and the dog still stops at the line. This workbook helps you find your own lines in the grass and test them.

1. **Find your smallest box**, the one with the walls closest in.
2. **Walk the rooms** and list the walls in each.
3. **Run the tests** that sort live wires from dead ones.
4. **Climb the staircase** when you can't get out, and untie the knot.
5. **Keep an evidence log** of what really happens when you push.
6. **Set your dates**, so the walls don't quietly rebuild.

> *Everybody has a box. That's settled. The goal was never no box. The goal is to build your own.*

Part 1: Find Your Smallest Box

Fear always guards the exit.

Read this list slowly and notice which one makes your stomach tighten. Check it. That tight feeling is your own fear pointing at the wall it most wants you to leave alone.

- ☐ The job
- ☐ The relationship
- ☐ The money
- ☐ The body
- ☐ The thing you don't say
- ☐ The dream you won't start

What I keep not doing there:

_____

_____

The blank I'm afraid of (what I picture happening if I do it):

_____

_____

Can I name a real, specific danger in it? Or is it vague?

_____

_____

The smallest step in:

_____

Part 2: Walk the Rooms

Your walls don't feel like walls. They feel like you. Listen for the sentence that starts "I'm not a person who."

For each room, write the wall as you'd say it out loud. Then mark it: **C** if you chose it and would choose it again, freely, on purpose; **H** if it just happened to you, an old fear or a rule someone handed you.

ROOM	THE WALL, IN MY WORDS	C OR H	SMALLEST PUSH I COULD MAKE
Job			
Money			
People			
Being alone			
Body			
Voice			
Place			
Dreams			
Faith			

You are a different size in every room. Brave at work and timid at home is normal. Keep the C walls gladly; the book calls them the best walls there are. The H walls are the ones to test.

Part 3: Run the Tests

Don't Live in Fear hands you a test question in chapter after chapter. Here they are in one place. Write your honest answer for the wall you checked in Part 1.

WHEN THE FEAR SAYS	ASK	MY ANSWER
Something bad might happen	Am I afraid of something I can point to, or a blank I filled in myself? What are the odds, not the vividness?	
I've come too far to quit	If I were not already in this, knowing what I know now, would I sign up for it today?	
Better not say it	Would saying this cause harm, or would it just be uncomfortable for thirty seconds?	
What will people think	Who is the audience? Strangers who won't remember me in an hour, or the few who know and love me?	
Don't be greedy	What would I ask for if I knew the answer was yes? How big is the gap between that and what I say out loud?	
It's too late	Is there an actual physical clock on this, or did I invent one so I wouldn't have to start?	
I'm just not that into it anymore	Am I backing off because I don't want this, or because winning would make me someone I don't yet know how to be?	
My faith forbids it	If every other person vanished, just me and what I believe, would this rule still be here?	
They won't let me	If I push once, gently, in a low-stakes way, does the wall stay down or do I get punished?	

One exception the book insists on: a bad feeling about a particular person counts as specific, even when you can't say why yet. Keep your distance first and work out the reason later.

Part 4: When You Can't Get Out

When you can't move the wall, move yourself a few feet inside it.

Quitting, leaving and moving sit at the top of a staircase. Below them are smaller steps that most people never try. Write your staircase from the bottom up.

STEP	WHAT IT WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR ME
Top (the big leap)	
Higher	
Middle	
Lower	
Bottom (a few hours of air)	

Examples from the book: change one thing about how you do the work; ask for a different shift or team; get one afternoon a week that's yours; ask one other person to take one caregiving shift; take the walk, the drive, the few hours somewhere that feeds you.

Untie the knot

If you're pressed on all four sides, pull the strands apart. Each one has a different nature.

STRAND	REAL OR FEAR?	ON A CLOCK? HOW LONG?	WHERE'S THE GIVE?

The one strand I'll pull this week: _____

Part 5: The Evidence Log

Watch what happens. Not what you feared. What happens.

Feelings don't yield to arguments. They yield to evidence. Each push you survive is a piece of it. Start small and walk it up.

Small pushes to start with

- [ ] Name a real preference when asked where to eat
- [ ] Open the email or bill you've been avoiding
- [ ] Send the invoice you haven't sent
- [ ] Ask the friend for the money they owe you
- [ ] Ask the question in the meeting
- [ ] Eat a meal alone, in public
- [ ] Spend an evening alone with no screen
- [ ] Walk to the corner
- [ ] Make the doctor's appointment
- [ ] Say no to one small request you'd resent
- [ ] Introduce yourself first
- [ ] Have one conversation with someone who already does the thing

DATE	WHAT I DID	WHAT I FEARED	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Count the people who openly judged you. The book predicts the number will be zero, or close enough to zero to make the fear look ridiculous in hindsight.

Part 6: Set Your Dates

Freedom is a practice, repeated. It comes with a calendar instead of an off switch.

Pick a door

The hallway has no natural end, so give it one. Shrink the first step until it's too small to fail: the first page, the first call, the one class.

The door: _____

By this date I will have started: _____ **First step:** _____

The annual trial

Once a year, maybe on your birthday, put your life on trial. Ask of each piece: would I choose this again, today, starting fresh, knowing what I know now?

- ☐ The place I live
- ☐ The shape of my week
- ☐ My routine
- ☐ The career I fell into
- ☐ My commute
- ☐ The people around me

My trial date each year: _____

The wall check

After any big leap, set a date six months or a year out and label it **Wall check**. Spend one hour asking: Where am I not reaching? What has quietly gotten smaller since I got here? Watch for your old wall in new clothes.

Wall check date: _____

For someone you love

You can't drag anyone out of their box. The next time you want to make the speech, spend that energy on your own nearest wall, where they can see it. Be the proof.

> *A wall you can see is a choice. A wall you can't see is a cage.*

When it isn't an ordinary fear. If someone is controlling you or pushing back could put you in danger, skip the tests and go straight to help. The book names the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. If someone is talking about ending their life, get help on the phone: 988 in the US. For addiction, depression that won't lift, or anything a doctor is treating, get that help too.

The Whole Story

This workbook gives you the questions. Don't Live in Fear gives you the stories behind them: the dog at the dead fence, the empty cave, the bad movie you won't walk out of, and Richard Lowe's own walls, the ones he broke and the one he rebuilt without noticing.



Don't Live in Fear
Prepared, Not Paranoid

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