

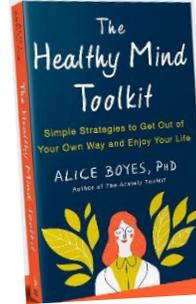


How to Overcome Your Fear of Making Mistakes

by Alice Boyes, PhD

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Key Points:

- ❖ The traditional image of a leader is one who is smart, tough, and unafraid. But fear, like any emotion, has an evolutionary purpose and upside. Your concern about making mistakes is there to remind you that we're in a challenging situation. A cautious leader has value!
- ❖ If you have a natural tendency to be [prevention-focused](#), embrace this quality as an extension of your commitment to reduce unnecessary risks.
- ❖ Cultivate a healthy awareness of your emotions and what those emotions are telling you, then respond in ways that will serve, not paralyze you. State your fears out loud to diffuse them, like turning a light on in a dark room.
- ❖ Direct your worry towards solution-focused behaviors that will realistically reduce the chances of failure. Focus on answering questions like these:
 - Is the data you're relying on reliable? What are its limitations?
 - What activities help people (leaders) see their blind spots?
 - How do engage/learn from segments of the population that are underrepresented?
 - What people or processes alert you to a problem quickly and facilitate corrections if/when a decision has unexpected consequences?
- ❖ Identify five values that guide your decisions in a crisis and refer to them when an incident occurs or complex issue requires action. These values will keep you on track.
- ❖ We need leisure (and sleep!) to step back, integrate the threads of our thinking, see blindspots, and think creatively. Quiet time makes it easier to think holistically and solve problems.
- ❖ Detach from judgment-clouding noise. Information overload will overwhelm your mind and cause you to shut down or feel cloudy. Recognize when you're suffering from too much "noise" and reduce information seeking behavior to stay balanced and avoid feeling frenzied.

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Read the full article here: <https://hbr.org/2020/06/how-to-overcome-your-fear-of-making-mistakes>

See other topics & Dr. Boyes' blog on Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>