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# Fear and Non-fear

## Mondo with Roland Yuno Rech

**Question:** *What is fear ?*

**Roland Yuno Rech:** Fear is an emotion, something which bothers. It is very strange, the first time I heard Master Deshimaru speak in public at a conference, he said: "You must be afraid, afraid of cosmic order", that was his speech. And then, practically the last time I heard him speak, he said « you mustn't be afraid. Fear has no intrinsic value and there are all sorts of fears, there is positive and negative fear. Fear can be very useful for protecting life, others' lives. If fear didn't exist, we would become reckless and thus constantly in danger. For example, children 'play' with fire, and then afterwards, they become afraid of it, fortunately. There are many types of positive fears. Take pollution, for example, or the land mines you take care of\*, that's important. These are small examples, but there are hundreds of them. All human karma which creates suffering, we have to be afraid of it, it's very dangerous.

Fear is also a source of awakening. We can be afraid of wasting our time or our life, be afraid of death, in a certain way, of impermanence. This is the starting point of the Buddha Way. Fear, contrarily to what we usually believe, can be a very positive tool and even a source of awakening. It's a stimulant. When we're afraid, we run quickly to avoid danger: that's proof that it is very stimulating.

There are also fears, which are paralyzing. This is the opposite, like when we're fascinated by danger and can't move. At this moment, the mind is no longer clear, we are completely upset. Also when the fear is of criticism, it's when there is attachment, it is the ego which is afraid. Beings attached to their belongings and who fear losing them. Attachment to life and fear of death can poison our existence. In other words, there is fear which is connected to greed, to the attachment to our ego. It is often a very negative fear which causes horrible suffering. But fear of danger for others, for the future of humanity, is a positive fear. One mustn't say: "Oh! Fear isn't good". At every moment when an emotion arises, one should ask oneself what the nature of that fear is, there are 36 types of fears. Is this a fear which indicates an important threat which I should fight against or is it an egotistical fear based on my small attachments, in which case, I should forget about. For example, someone who is afraid that their partner cheats on them, who constantly feels jealous, they might isolate their partner, poison their existence, and this could even lead to separation, and it's really stupid. Or fear of becoming poor, so we try to continuously pile up more and more money, we become stingy, we hold ourselves back from being generous and don't want to help those who don't have any money. This increases social inequality and this fear is thus negative.

**Question:** *There is also the term 'non-fear'.*

**R.Y.R.:** That was exactly the subject for a symposium which Master Deshimaru suggested to us just before his death. Non-fear is not separate from fear. At the same time, there is positive fear, which gives a sense of responsibility. It's what Master Deshimaru called 'fear of cosmic order' in his first conference. In other words, that means being conscious of the fact that all of our actions have effects, which we are responsible for. In a certain way, it could be called the

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fear of making a mistake, which maintains in awakening. And then, there is non-fear which isn't the opposite of fear, which is in another range, non-fear connected to detachment to our ego, and which is truly liberating.

I don't think one should try to eliminate all fears. In fact, since it cannot be controlled, you don't control it, we can only become conscious of: "what is it, what's going on here?" Either you take it into account or you let it go, depending on the object of that fear. For example, because of the different experiences one has had in their life, we have realized certain mistakes. There are people who have wallowed in alcoholism, in drug abuse, and who realize the destruction which it causes them and they manage to come clean. The fear of falling back into substance abuse is important for these people and this fear is even a sort of protection for them. Think about it yourselves, you'll find many examples.

This question makes me think that in general, humans beings want everything to be either black or white. We want to hold a form of truth which applies to everything, but in fact life is much more complex than that. Just living in fear or in non-fear is not the right conduct.

Note: \*the person asking the question is in charge of dismantling land mines.