

## **Fear of Uncertainty**

by Kelvin Chin, M.A.  
Life & Death Coach and Meditation Teacher

The fear of uncertainty is at the basis of many fears, including the fear of death, and related fears about dying. Uncertainty is part of life. We all know that.

Planning a BBQ tomorrow? Can you guarantee what the weather will be? See what I mean?

We cannot guarantee the weather forecast.

But...

How can we reduce the fear of uncertainty and eliminate it?

Many people will tell you that you need to “Go and strengthen yourself from the inside.”  
But, what does that mean and how can you do it?

## **The Supermarket Aisle Mind**

Most people are stuck in what I call the “supermarket aisle mind.”

In other words, when we walk down the supermarket aisle, we are in the mode of asking, “Do I need bread? Do I need almond butter? Do I need apples?”

We are in “focus” mode. That is what most of us are familiar with when we think. That is the style of functioning of our minds that we are used to.

What I’m suggesting is that we need to allow our minds to experience more of ourselves in a different way than just that “supermarket aisle mind.”

Because most of us think that IS our mind, that is ALL there is to our mind.

## **“Conscious of XYZ...”**

Let’s look at this from another perspective. A more modern Western perspective.

What’s another way of looking at this idea of the mind and uncertainty?

The “Conscious of XYZ...” model is a simple but ingenious model that Charlie, a good friend of mine who is now a philosophy professor, came up with in 1970 when I began teaching meditation.

He said all experience can be captured by the phrase “Conscious of XYZ.” The idea is that most people identify themselves with the XYZ’s of life — the concrete, easily definable, very specific *objects of experience*. The physical experience of life.

For example, if you go to a party or a reception where you don't know anyone, and someone you meet says, "Tell me about yourself..." — what do you usually say?

I'm guessing that your answer goes something like this, "Well, I'm a doctor (lawyer, student, etc.), and I live in (fill in the blank)."

Then the conversation typically goes to specifics like sports teams, where you went to school, social groups, cars you drive, and maybe even how much money you make. Because this is how many of us define ourselves.

By our things. Stuff we can point to. Stuff we can touch. Material stuff. Stuff with certainty.

But is that all of 'who we are'?

Charlie would point out that we have ignored the left side of the equation, the "Conscious of" side.

Don't we need that part of the equation to even have experience in the first place, to even be able to appreciate the objects of experience? I would say Yes.

And in my terminology, I would call that side "the mind," my mind. I need to have a conscious mind to experience. It is the mental side of experience.

So again, it does not matter where we think or believe that mental experience *comes from*. (I will leave you to debate that point among yourselves.)

But we all can agree that we all have mental experience that is *separate from* our physical experience.

As my friend Charlie would often say, "We are 'conscious of' XYZ, but we are *not* the XYZ's — that is not the totality of our experience." Those external XYZ's are not "who we are."

We are not our cars, we are not our bank accounts, or our clothes, or any of our things. Those things are not our identity — they do not represent what makes us up, they are not what we are made of. If they were, we would disappear if we lost our car. And that is obviously not the case!

We fool ourselves because we associate characteristics of our personality with those things — status with expensive cars, power with money, etc. But even those are "things" in the way that we are discussing. Status and power are fleeting — they come and go. They are uncertain. What is constant is our minds.

So, what is the point here?

The point is that this view of looking at our life experience through this "Conscious of XYZ..." model is yet another way to look at our minds from a different perspective, perhaps a perspective that is more constant than the ever-changing, uncertain "things" of life.

Allowing our minds to ‘turn within’ and experience that conscious side of experience — i.e., our mind experiencing itself — as opposed to always having our mental experience immersed in the “things of the world,” provides us with balance in life. It gives us inner stability which breeds self-confidence.

### **Find a Technique That Works For You**

My suggestion is that each of us find a technique that allows our minds to unfold and experience themselves in a freeing way, so that each of us can expand our experience beyond the “supermarket aisle mind” that we are typically used to — to allow our minds to experience beyond the usual XYZ’s that my friend Charlie, the philosophy professor, talked about.

When meditation students experience their minds in this different way, while being anchored within themselves, and expanding beyond their “supermarket aisle mind,” they naturally feel more inner peace, power, and self-confidence.

Their bodies relax.

And the Fear of Uncertainty goes away.

Why? Because they then realize that their minds are much more vast and expansive — and therefore powerful and full of untapped mental potential — and they develop a more welcoming attitude towards uncertainty. A “bring it on, let’s see what creativity I can bring to my world of uncertainty” attitude.

An attitude of enjoyment of life, appreciating the fun of living life in a world of uncertainty.

**If you would like to schedule a Free private phone consultation with Kelvin  
to discuss this further,  
feel free to contact him at [kelvin@TurningWithin.org](mailto:kelvin@TurningWithin.org)**