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## Fear Not

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## Fear Not

How many of us, parents, teachers, guides or friends have at times told others not to be afraid? Our intention is always to give reassurance and comfort to some who experience fear or face a daunting challenge. If we are non-judgmental, we avoid conveying the suggestion that those who happen to be afraid are somehow at fault for feeling as they do. Also, we have reason to believe that we ourselves and others as well, can move beyond such feelings and become free to act as we believe is right.

Sometimes, when we give assurance to others, we exercise the authority that comes from our sincere and effective desire to aid or protect them. The "reason" we provide for someone not to fear is the strength of our own beliefs. We might have had enough experience to be convinced that there is no reason for someone to be afraid in his or her present circumstances, or that those we encourage are at least as capable as we have been in facing fear and continuing on a chosen path. Also, we might speak from conviction that feelings of fear will pass when we confront them by proceeding to do whatever we believe is right for us at this moment.

We all have feelings of fear as part of our healthy reactions to all threats, real or perceived. So we have not need to rationalize such feelings away as if they are unworthy of us or have no place in our lives. Rather, in taking to heart a message akin to "fear not," we consider whether we have before us a real threat to our well-being or merely a natural response to something that is of less importance to us than a present, deeper, more personal, option. We do not choose to abandon our values in the face of fear. Also, we can enquire of ourselves whether or not a particular fear is grounded in an immediate danger or arises only from imagined negative outcomes that could possibly occur. These latter thoughts, rather than protecting us, usually impede progress and keep us in a state of indecision.

"Fear not" is often associated with God, not only because it is found in many passages of the Scriptures, but especially because it expresses so well the attitude of God towards us whenever we engage in honest dialog about any of our concerns. We know that our presence to one another is very helpful, whether staying with children or adults when they are sick or in emotional pain or experiencing any kind of suffering. In an even more effective manner, God addresses our fears with absolute authority, as the only person who is with us during every moment of our lives now, but also after this life, and whose presence assures us that nothing can prevent us from achieving the purpose of our existence; nothing can prevent us from loving.

We cannot avoid all experiences of fear, but we can move through them by attending to the One whose "fear not" carries with it the power of infinite love.