



THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER IN TERROR

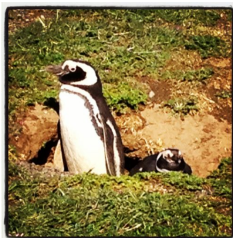
By Gina Mollicone-Long ©2013

Don't be thrown by the title of this article. There is a massive amount of energy in feeling terrified (not just regular fear, a more pointed, acute type of fear - terror). Granted, for most people, it's overwhelming and extremely unpleasant. However, if you can learn to break through your terror then you can learn to tap into this powerful energy. The secret here lies in being able to transform the energy from that of terror to something new, powerful and positive.

I had a terrifying experience today. We crossed the Magellan Strait in a glorified zodiac boat. It looked like a floating coffin to me as we approached the dock. It was windy. I was not happy. Boats are not my favourite pastime even on a calm day. Everything started out ok since we were still in the shelter of the mainland but as soon as we entered into the open water, all hell broke loose inside of me.



Why on earth was I doing this? Truthfully, I was doing it for my children. We were off to Magdalena Island to see the Magellan penguins in their natural habitat. My motivation was for them. Otherwise, I wouldn't be going on a boat into the windy ocean in southern Chile. However, what transpired was both one of the worst experiences and one of the best experiences of my life.



There were about 40 people on the boat. The boat was covered and protected from the elements. The water was rough and we started bouncing around like a rubber ducky. I was freaking out on the inside. It wasn't anxiety as I was logically aware of the fact that we were not in any real danger. It wasn't fear. This was a visceral terror that took over my thoughts, feelings and physiology. I don't have any phobias but I can only imagine that this is what a phobia felt like. I was using every technique that I had ever learned just to stay sane. Eventually, I went outside to the back of the boat just to see if that would help. I wasn't seasick. It wasn't that kind of problem. It was so illogical and yet so undeniably real that I was both awestruck and confused. I made it to the island by sheer willpower and massive disassociation. The experience with the penguins on the island was magnificent but I couldn't stop thinking about the ride home. The wind was picking up and the whitecaps were getting bigger.

By the way, things got much worse for me on the way back. Being outside was a paradox. The fresh air and blue sky was refreshing. However, I could see the two metre waves pounding across the wake as we made our way through the water. I could feel the splash from the waves and the salt was stinging my face. The most disturbing part of it for me was the utter feeling of



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helplessness as I fought to gain some notion of control in an otherwise completely uncontrollable situation. Willpower and disassociation weren't working anymore. I was out of coping mechanisms: "rock bottom" as I've called it in the past. The energy running through me was impressive to say the least – my breath was strong and fast, my legs and hands were shaking, at some point I was crying and believe or not, singing. The singing seemed to help disperse all the energy. I felt like I was going to explode.



Then, it hit me. An insight pounded me like the waves were pounding on the boat: outside inside, inside outside. Perception is projection. What if the outside circumstances were reflecting to me an insight as to what was going on inside of me? Was it possible that I was not really terrified by the waves and the situation but rather I was terrified by the awesome powerful energy inside of me that I didn't know how to cope with? I literally didn't know what to do with it and it was pushing on the edges of my body. Now, I'm not saying that this is true for everyone but something incredible happened when I used that perspective as real. I started channeling the energy inside of me. I used breathing techniques and visualization techniques. I directed my thoughts and my mind chatter to gather the energy and circulate it. In that moment, I kid you not, my terror literally disappeared. My hands and legs stopped shaking, my mind stopped freaking out, my body returned to normal. It just vanished. I got up and walked back inside and joined my family like nothing had happened. The boat crew was stunned.

For the last 30 minutes of the ride, I reflected on this journey as we continued through the waves and wind. My circumstances hadn't changed at all and yet everything was different. I realized that I had moved through a significant breakthrough. In my teachings, I have called this the "coping threshold" or the "obstacle". What was amazing was the serene feeling of calm and certainty that now occupied my experience despite the fact that the waves were still pounding. What if the power that I had witnessed outside of myself was actually power that was available inside of me but I was too terrified to embrace it? The ancients believed that water was associated with feminine energy. So what if this was a sign that was it time to embrace the awesome power of the feminine energy inside of me? I'm not saying that this is true to for everyone but maybe sharing this story will help others to realize what might be possible in transforming their own terror. It requires willpower of a different kind: the will to accept your own power and greatness. This is quite possibly the hardest thing I have ever done.



It was at that point that I looked around to see how other people were coping with the turbulent circumstances and





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pounding waves and noticed that both my son and my daughter were asleep on the seat beside me. Point taken 😊

Gina Mollicone-Long helps people get what they want. She is an international best-selling author, compelling speaker and peak performance specialist with a mission to reveal greatness in individuals, teams and organizations. She is the co-founder and CEO of The Greatness Group, a multi-national corporate team building and training company. Since 1998, she has trained, coached or spoken to tens of thousands of people globally. Her books, *Think or Sink* and *The Secret of Successful Failing* are widely read and enjoyed by people around the world. She can show you exactly how to get out of your own way.

