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Things That Go Bump in the Night: Working with Children and Fear

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*The only thing we have to fear
is fear itself.* – Franklin D. Roosevelt

The energy of Halloween is upon us. While some young children find excitement in the creepy decorations, costumes and ghost stories, these visuals may bring up fearful emotions for other kids. Many parents and teachers have noticed children born during this time are extra sensitive beings — more empathic and intuitive than their predecessors. Parents are also aware of the necessity to be more conscious of their sensitive child's needs.

A child's imagination is so much greater than adults because children constantly live in the world of make believe and fantasy. For children, a scary story can expand in their minds, play with their feelings and then a small ugly lizard can become a huge powerful dragon in their worst nightmares. Our greatest fears come from our own thoughts. We can blow up a small image into something so huge it consumes us, until it may turn into something more detrimental to our psyche.

Fear can also be thrilling — like riding on a roller coaster or walking through a haunted house. These types of thrills can be addicting and unpleasant at

the same time. These contradicting pleasures give you a sudden burst of adrenaline, which is why some of us crave it. Throughout evolution, fear has been our greatest teacher of survival. Fear can be a teaching tool if we learn from it and do not allow it to control our lives.

What happens within our bodies when we get scared?

Fear makes our hearts beat faster; our mouth goes dry and our palms sweat. We may get 'butterflies in our stomach' when we speak in front of a class or our breathing may stop when a child knows the bully is right around the corner. The burst of adrenaline that happens also makes our senses — eyesight and hearing — sharper. Being aware of these reactions can keep us attentive and 'on our toes,' as well as save us from dangerous situations.

When we are stressed, blood tends to leave our heads and move into our limbs for the fight, flight or freeze response. We react by choosing to stand and fight, run away or freeze in our tracks. We call this the Triple Warmer Effect in Energy Medicine, related to The Triple Warmer Meridian. Triple Warmer is an energy system in the body whose main job is to fight off illness and stress when you are under extreme pressure. Triple Warmer is like a great warrior that is



always there to help you survive. In fact, in Chinese Medicine Triple Warmer relates to three sections of the body (upper, middle and lower) as well to the three different ways of dealing with stress.

In life-threatening circumstances, Triple Warmer energy helps us live. It marches into action when we are in a near death situation, such as anaphylactic shock or suffering with a severe allergy to a food or medication. Triple Warmer energy proudly steps in to help with the danger. Remember the burst of adrenaline that happens in these circumstances? This is the same energy system that has been known to give a boost of strength to a parent in drastic situations, such as lifting a heavy car off a child's body in a car accident.

smallest of situations.

With your children, Triple Warmer can raise its scary head in anticipation of taking a test in school or encountering a bully on the playground. As a parent, when you are stuck in traffic trying to make it in time to your kid's soccer practice, the Triple Warmer effect can make you react as if a saber-toothed tiger were chasing you. Before you know it, you are yelling at your kids for no reason.

Triple warmer is about survival habits and is very smart! As your body's militia, it has established strategies which have literally saved your life throughout our evolution. — Donna Eden, My Mother and Holistic Health Pioneer

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This warrior-like energy system has not changed in our body since the time of our ancestors, who were in survival mode all the time. Their daily routines included helping their tribe endure through harsh winter seasons. This Triple Warmer system was essential in ancient times when physical survival was paramount to protect you and keep you safe.

In normal everyday occurrences, Triple Warmer can swoop in like a superhero to save the day but unfortunately, it also pops up at times when it is not welcome. This natural stress modality has not evolved in our energy system and like a bad habit, Triple Warmer will often overact and become a driving force in your life, making you feel like you cannot relax. It does not recognize the difference between a real physical threat such as a stressful classroom or a house full of screaming kids or a giant woolly mammoth. Triple Warmer still mimics the same prehistoric patterns of panic and fear in the

There are literally about 30 different hormones that come in to help you react when your body feels danger. When your child feels like the scary monster is under their bed, their breathing speeds up to supply the lungs with oxygen to run away. Their heart races and pumps more blood to the brain and muscles to fight or their in preparation for a fight. Or freeze to be so still the monster will not notice them underneath the covers.

Fear can sometimes cripple and freeze us to the point where we cannot move. I believe freezing in fear is the worst of the three reactions. We feel paralyzed and therefore the energy gets stuck and feelings may stay inside us for years. When energy/emotions get trapped in our body, they can develop patterns of hidden psychological blockages or disease. We can push away the monsters, but they never really go away — only out of sight for a while, just to resurface at another time.



What happens with the emotion of fear, over time?

Fear takes us off our rhythm and we have to catch our breath to get back on track. Studies show fear and shock can make the heart lose its own rhythm as well. Experiencing too much fear or nervousness can interfere with our daily lives, especially with children, who are trying to find their own individual rhythm. If they know the bully is awaiting them at school every single day, it can trigger a habitual state of internal anxiety and fear.

As noted in the work of many neuroscientists, biologists and alternative medicine scientists such as Candace Pert, Bruce Lipton and Carolyn Myss, traumas hidden away in childhood will stay in our cellular memory, only to arise later in different but similar situations. Emotional triggers within the traumas can activate the negative cellular memories and one can experience similar stress, sometimes even worse than the initial stress, as different layers have been formed within the psyche.

When our body has a long-term habit of experiencing fear and anxiety, it can lead to being in a constant state of Triple Warmer reaction or in the “on” position all the time. This is when we develop phobias and anxieties in life. If we have not dealt with our initial emotions of fear or anxiety, sometimes an experience similar to our initial fear/shock can trigger us into a similar fearful state.

As a child grows into a young person, the patterns can get embedded in their psyche and cause emotional, mental or physical ailments. Chronic fearful conditions can lead to cardiovascular damage, heart palpitations, gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome, panic attacks, depression and fatigue among so many other things. If we have not dealt with this state of anxiety and fear, we do not enjoy the fullness of life as much as we could.

We have forgotten a lot of the monsters that seemed to live... in our room at night. Nevertheless, those

memories are still there, somewhere inside us, and can sometimes be brought to the surface by events, sights, sounds, or smells. – Fred Rogers

Fear separates us from our true selves and makes us vulnerable. Shame and embarrassment lie at the heart of fear. It can start early in a child's life and cut them off from communicating to their parents or guardians. Fear invades our cells and forces us to hide and create a lack of communication, hiding a secret that is all your own. The energy of the experience gets submerged and may later fester in poisonous ways inside your body or psyche.

Sometimes a parent or teacher can even bring shame to a child by dismissing a child's fear. The child can get embarrassed and think what they were feeling was wrong, believing there is something wrong with them. Children always want to please their parents and teachers and to gain approval from them. A parent's disapproval can make a child judge themselves, thereby creating a harmful pattern that continues far into their adult life. If a child feels embarrassed or ashamed by their response, especially when an authority figure dismisses their fear, they can hide their feelings away in denial. If, as a child, we do not receive acknowledgement from our guardians that the fear for us is real, we can hold onto these emotions within us and hide them away, especially if the adults of our childhood did the same thing. Children are like sponges and can easily learn and unconsciously mimic what their parents do.

What happens when we suppress the fear?

Sometimes a parent wants to quickly save their children from fear and help them forget the scary experience and substitute it with a positive experience, “Let's go and get an ice cream cone!” This temporary fix can help, but if the child and adult do not deal with the initial fears, then this is only a temporary band aid. The emotions will still be stored deep inside the child and they will have to deal with them later. The ‘boogeyman’ will still be lurking under the bed or in the closet and the child will know it.



As their guardian, if you keep dismissing the child's initial fears, it will not empower them for future life struggles. As the child grows up, they will not learn to stick up for themselves and find the confidence they need to stand up to their fears.

If we begin to work with the child's reactions right when their fears happen and allow them to recognize their true feelings, we can melt their terrors, so they do not rear their ugly heads in the future in bigger ways. When you dissipate the anxiety of the trauma and get the child to figure out a better scenario or cure for their monsters, then the images do not become the bigger dragons but instead, show their "true selves" as the small lizards they are. In this way, the dragons do not live on within the child to show themselves later on as an adult. Then and only then, go and get them an ice cream cone!

Teaching Eden Energy Medicine Exercises to your children can bring about a powerful liberation from their fearful thoughts. All the energy exercises mentioned here will help our old friend Triple Warmer relax and then our nervous system can bring in a sense of comfort, creating a feeling of self-protection that your children will have for the rest of their lives.

The Forehead/Backhead Hug

This energy exercise can help ground a child's energies and reprogram their thoughts so they are not persuaded by the scary fantasies in their mind. When your child has a nightmare, cannot stop thinking about something fearful or is panicked or nervous do this exercise to calm them down. This calming hold will bring more blood and oxygen back into the brain and help them relax. This is also great for insomnia, when your child cannot go to sleep.



1. Make your child comfortable. Calm them by holding their head — place your palm on their forehead and your other palm on the back of the head.
2. Hold their head for up to 10 minutes or until you feel a pulse. The child will find it hard to hold onto their scary feelings.

The Fear Tap

This is an easy little tool for you or your child for empowerment when either of you are caught in fear or anxiety, and parents can teach and demonstrate to their children how to do this. It becomes especially helpful when your child is alone.



1. Tap on the back side of your hand, halfway between your wrist and your fingers, in between your fourth and fifth fingers.
2. Tap on the other hand too for extra benefit.
3. You may want to even say a little affirmation. *"Even though I am so scared, I am brave and can face my fears!"* or *"Even though I am nervous, I know I can do it!"*



The Dragon's (or Dinosaur) Roar

This energy exercise is used for anger and frustration, but also when a negative image is stuck in our head, such as a nightmare or a traumatic experience. Release the stress and tame your own inner dragon!

1. Stand firm and place your hands on your thighs, feeling your energy going down your legs like strong roots into the earth. Breathe in and out.
2. With a deep breath in swing your arms out to your sides as you imagine a mighty dragon's or pterodactyl wings. Bring arms high above your head.
3. Imagine something you are fearful or angry about or an experience that keeps playing on in your head. Grab onto it with your fists.
4. Like a powerful Dragon (or Dino) with a fire breath, make a loud roaring sound, as you bring your fists down fast, through the central space in front of you.
5. "Roooooaaaaarrrr!"
6. Open up your fingers at the bottom and throw the "icky energy" to the ground! Imagine it leaving your body.
7. Repeat 3 times. On the 3rd time, do it slowly. When you get to the bottom, push out the last remaining breath from your throat like poison from the Dragon's (Dinosaur's) throat. Make the sound, "Haaaaahhhh...."



8. Open up your Dragon wings of light and bring in positive feelings once more as you close your wings around you, landing on your heart with a positive feeling or affirmation. "I am not fearful of this situation anymore and I am brave!"

We all want to protect our children and create a better life for them than we had. They will come up against fear and challenges their whole life, whether it is a neighborhood bully or an abusive spouse. Over time, ugly confrontations get easier as they encounter and tame their own dragons. Help them find their own power and strength. Be their cheerleaders and their confidants, so that learn to face their own demons. Meet the child where they are at and empower them with courage and love, so that they create a better energy on this planet for their children and for years to come.

These Eden Energy Exercises come straight out of Titanya Monique Dahlin's upcoming book, *The Energy Playground*. All rights reserved. Permission to duplicate this article is required in writing. €



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