

Take out sheet of paper and pen (or open up a blank text document).

Write down all of your fears. (Examples: not having enough money, not making time to do the things I want, people not liking what I create)

Next to each fear, write down why you are afraid in question form. (Examples: How will I make money if I quit my job? If I stay at my job indefinitely, how will I accomplish all of the things I want to do? Am I making a fool out of myself with what I create?)

Next to why you are afraid, write down the underlying uncertainty. (Examples: money, regret, image)

Phase 2: Overcoming Uncertainty

Posing what you are afraid of in question form, as you did in the third step above, allows you to see the opportunity in your fears. Now, start answering them! It will help you gain confidence that things will be OK when you do make the leap.

For example, if you posed the question “how will I make enough money if I quit my job?”, some possible answers are:

Cut expenses and save \$500/month.

Take on a side job—either as a freelancer or consultant, or working a temp position.

Offer one month of free work to a company I love with potential for hire if it works out.

Go to events in the industry I’m passionate about to meet people I may be able to work for or who may become my clients.

If you posed the question “how will I accomplish all of the things I want to do?”, some possible answers are:

Pick one idea that speaks to me most and start today.

Each week (or month), eliminate or outsource one thing that I don’t want to do.

Remind myself that I will accomplish as much as I can and I’ll focus on what matters.

Phase 3: Embracing Fear and Turning it into an Asset

Now that you know what you're afraid of and you have concrete steps toward overcoming your uncertainty, all that's left is action. There are two things that will help you embrace your fear and make taking action easier:

Look at life like an experiment. It's OK if every decision you make isn't perfect! It's more important to open yourself up to trial and error, taking risks, and making mistakes. You take life less seriously and you learn to enjoy the ups and downs—and in the long run, you'll find that you're moving yourself forward to a happier life.

Take charge of defining your success. You don't have to define success according to how others do. What does a successful life look like to you? For example, if you're thinking about switching from a financial services job into a creative field, you'll likely take a substantial hit to your paycheck—and you're probably a little worried about it. And that's fair, because one of your former success metrics (money) is going to become a whole lot less certain. Which means now is the time to redefine or re-articulate what you value! Yes, you will have to figure out how to eat and pay your rent or your mortgage—but beyond that, it'll be up to you to get yourself comfortable with trading those nice summer vacations or your designer handbags for having a job you love. And to do that, you need a definition of success that supports you in the trade-off you're making.

Uncertainty is one of the most powerful things in the world. While it can be unbearably powerful in a negative way at the start, it can ultimately empower you. After all, opportunity and uncertainty often go hand-in-hand—so get out there and embrace it.