

**Don DeRosa's**

# *Real Estate Investing for The Real World*



Volume 1, No. 3

## **Fear: Your Own Course-In-The-Box**

*Anything I've ever done that ultimately was worthwhile initially scared me to death.*  
-- Betty Bender

Did you have a jack-in-the-box when you were a child? They're hard to find now, but I remember playing with them when I was little. You'd crank the little handle while it played music, and at some point the top would burst open and out would pop a cloth clown with a plastic head. Then you'd stuff the clown back in the box, smash the lid down on top of it, and crank it up again.

As young as I was, I couldn't help but notice that when it came to jacks-in-the-box, there were two kinds of kids. The first kind of kid liked playing with the little toy. She liked the clown, she liked the music, and most of all, she *liked* not knowing when that little guy was going to come out. She'd play with it over and over again with delight.

The other kind of kid hated the jack-in-the-box. This kid thought the clown was creepy and he found the music unsettling. And most of all, he hated not knowing when that clown was going to jump out at him. This kid would play with the jack-in-the-box a couple times, but the only part he really liked was stuffing that creepy little clown back down into the box.

What does this have to do with fear? Well, ask yourself this question: when faced with an opportunity to change your life, do you avoid it because you don't know how it's going to come out? Or do you grab the opportunity and embrace the fact that you can't see what's going to happen?

The fact is, every opportunity for growth – whether personal or financial – comes with a big unknown. We simply don't know how it's going to turn out. Yes, it could be a disaster. On the other hand, it could be the break you've been waiting for all your life.

Now, I'm not saying we should be fearless. In fact, I think fear has gotten a bum rap. Fear is a *good* thing. It keeps us from doing really stupid things, like driving 100 miles per hour down a crowded freeway, or trying to pet the alligators at the zoo. And naturally and properly enough, fear makes us move cautiously when we're faced with incomplete information – like what the future holds, or whether we should invest in a business. It counsels us to get as many facts as possible before we make big decisions. And fear also helps us get moving – like when we're facing a deadline.

Unfortunately, too many people let fear paralyze them into inaction. We let it stop us from reaching our full potential. It's not so much that we fear the footwork we'll have to do. If we break the work into small enough pieces, there's little we can't handle. No, what frightens us is wondering whether it's going to work out well in the end. At its worst, fear leaves us helpless to move forward.

So how can we overcome this fear? One thing we can do is distinguish between good fear (stress) and bad fear (*distress*). To let the good stress help you, set goals, create budgets, and strive for continuous improvement. Get rid of the *distress* by letting go of the things you can't control and by focusing on revenue. If a particular task scares you, break it into small pieces that you can handle. Focus on your successes, do the footwork, and let the future take care of itself.

We all have fears. When it works *for* us, our fear provides us with motivation and energy. When it goes amuck, though, it can bog us down so completely that we can't move. If we can change the way we approach our fear, we may find ourselves rewarded with riches of all sorts. One thing's for sure, though: if you don't turn that crank, you'll never find out what sort of surprise is in the box.

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*Don DeRosa* was recognized as one of the nation's top 21 real estate investors in the New York Times bestseller *The Millionaire Real Estate Investor*. Don, who is a full-time investor, trainer, and mentor, offers a complete system to build and run a thriving real estate business. For more information on *Building Wealth with Real Estate*, visit [www.donderosa.com](http://www.donderosa.com).