

What is 'the antidote to fear'? Many remedies are suggested in literature and lore—faith, love, knowledge, gratitude, action and more. Possibly my favourite is from the mind and hand of author Paulo Coelho—"We all know fear, but passion makes us fearless."

I am often wide-eyed at the wisdom I receive in life when facing a challenge with an open heart. Sometimes as quick as I realise change is needed, the gift of a solution is laid at my feet.

Morning walks take me to the back corner of the local golf course. It is quiet there. Bordered by scrub and rocky outcrops on one side, and green oasis on the other, the early rays of summer light illuminate the landscape and undulating fairway grasses hot pink and golden. My mind floats off into the salt bush and red dust or is absorbed in learning what the latest podcast has to offer. I'm in my own world. Spectacular light, a frequent subject for my camera, is ephemeral and universal. I walk this way for the *lack* of human contact. Such are the choices made by an introvert. At the earliest hour I don't often have to interrupt my reverie to politely say 'good morning' or fend away an overly friendly dog, off leash.

On the way up the hill to pick up the trail, I stopped to chat with a neighbour, telling him of my recent grisly discoveries. Three dead, and disemboweled, wallabies in the previous two days, lay just passed his house along the trail. He told me he had recently, and regularly, seen two adult dingoes and a pup near his place. He thought they were living in a small valley along the rocky outcrops near his home. Hard to believe, since we are a 20 minute walk from the middle of town. In fact, within minutes of the neighbour telling me about the dingoes, I walked over the saddle of the hill and down the trail to see in the distance, one of the adult dogs. And then, *he* saw me. He moved into tall grass to study me. In the still dim, early light his reddish golden colour blended in well with the grasses and the red dirt but I could still see his dark eyes watching me. When I had walked passed his position, he got up and started to follow me, coming closer and closer. Not having anything to protect myself with, I turned suddenly, clapped my hands and shouted 'Go—way!'. It startled him and he jumped. It was a risky behaviour on my part, knowing as little as I do about the habits of wild dingoes, but it usually worked with domestic dogs. He regained his composure and continued following, but at a slower pace, and farther back. Now I was doubting the wisdom of walking where so few other humans would be seen. Then, just after I picked up a rock to carry, in case I needed it (useless since I have no arm for throwing, but still...), he veered off toward houses and a line of trees that would give him more cover. Dingoes are known to invade private yards and take small dogs in the area. They, and many other native animals, have adapted to the human invasion.

As I breathed a sigh of relief I recalled the first such incident several years ago. There was a dingo family living in the area, two adults and two pups. Being surrounded by three of the four one morning, spooked me to the point of changing my walking route. It was a favourite trail, and after a couple of months of walking the alternative, I was bored and wanted to return to the previous path. But I was afraid.

While not necessarily wishing to participate, I am a keen observer of human behaviour. During the time when I was walking the alternate route, I watched an investigative forensic tv program in which a woman tried to murder the man who had murdered her daughter. Gruesome, I know. The forensic team tried to no avail to

understand who was pursuing the man and why he was a target. When they finally realised at the end, it was the mother, the investigator asked her how she could do what she had done?

Her answer– “Because my rage was greater than my fear.”

Early the very next morning I was nearly trembling with excitement to see spectacular golden light covering the trees atop the rocky outcrops. The very best camera is the one you have with you. I always carry my only camera, an iPhone, and I hurriedly headed toward the best view of the ranges, which was coincidentally, my old walking trail. Before I knew it, I had gone quite a distance, scaling rocky hillsides and sidestepping clumps of prickles, chasing the light for a good photo. I stuffed the fear to the back of my mind. Lured by the sunrise and with scant regard for my surroundings, I chased after the inspiration. When I arrived back home, I realised my desire for the light had overcome the fear of what had once kept me from walking that way. Isn't life often that way? We are pushed forward by love or light or desire to live more fully, and that desire overcomes our fear, or whatever has held us back.

On that day I discovered, I am not so much fearless, as I am a Light Chaser.