

A tall, intricate tower of sticks and vines against a blue sky. The tower is constructed from a dense network of vertical and horizontal wooden poles, with thick, gnarled vines or roots wrapped around them. The structure reaches towards the top of the frame. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. At the bottom, there are green trees and foliage. The overall scene suggests a traditional or natural construction method.

If big changes and big decisions scare you, here's what you can do.

OVERCOME YOUR FEAR OF THE FUTURE

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Imagine you are a young man on Vanuatu, an island nation in the South Pacific. You stand atop a 100-foot-tall wooden tower. Two vines are tied tightly around your ankles. You're about to dive headfirst off the tower with just those vines to keep you from hitting the ground. This is the land dive—an ancient coming-of-age ritual to prove your bravery and adulthood. You take a deep breath, try to swallow your terror, cross your arms over your chest, and leap.

YOUR OWN RITES OF PASSAGE

You probably don't have a land dive coming up. And if you do, cancel it. Seriously, don't try this at home. But even though no one is asking you to literally plummet into adulthood, you will face different kinds of coming-of-age rituals. You're coming up on some big, life-changing milestones—things like going on your first date, graduating from high school, continuing your education, getting a job, or serving a mission.

You might be excited for these changes and the big decisions you'll soon be making, or you might be white-in-the-face, shaking-in-your-seat terrified.

If thinking about the future sends you into an anxious spiral, you're not alone. Getting major anxiety about major milestones is super common. And that's OK. Because just like a land dive, a true rite-of-passage is supposed to test your bravery.

FACING YOUR REAL FEARS

Oftentimes we aren't actually scared of dating, or college, or missions, or whatever. We are scared of the failure, the unknown, and the rejection that might come with these things. If you find you're nervous about the future, take a minute and ask yourself: What are you really afraid of? Here are some common fears that tend to surround big changes and some tips for coping with them.

FEAR OF

FAILURE

Have you ever not tried something because you were so worried you might be bad at it? The fear of failure can hold us back in a big, terrible way. But try to accept that you're sometimes going to fail—and that's OK. Messing up, being bad at things, and failing are all part of life. Take comfort in the words of Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy: "Mistakes are a fact of life. . . . Hopefully, each mistake we make becomes a lesson in wisdom, turning stumbling blocks into stepping-stones."¹ In addition, if you stay close to the Spirit, you won't blindly walk into any major mistakes or sins. And thanks to the Savior, you can repent. So keep trying! Keep moving forward.



FEAR OF

REJECTION

Rejection is the worst. Or is it? Usually, it's not the rejection that stings as much as the lie we tell ourselves: that getting rejected means we aren't good enough. But the reality is, when a person or organization rejects us, it usually means we weren't exactly what they were looking for, not that something is necessarily wrong with us. And the sooner you realize that no rejection can change your divine worth, the sooner you'll stop fearing it so much! (See Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.)

Another quick way to stop fearing rejection (especially when meeting new people) is to stop thinking so much about yourself and whether or not they will like you. Instead, focus on them. Think about helping them feel comfortable.



FEAR OF BEING ON YOUR OWN

Doing anything on your own is daunting at first. But with time, you get the hang of it. And soon, it's no big deal, right? Remember how you don't have to plummet headfirst into adulthood? Becoming an independent adult is a process. And you already started that process a long time ago. Yes, there are a lot of things you need to take care of when you're on your own, but you've already developed many skills to help you! And you'll learn more and more as you go.

It's important to remember that you are never truly "on your own." Strengthen your relationship with your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They are always right there with you. "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

FEAR OF

THE UNKNOWN

Many people are terrified of the unknown. But the future is always uncertain. You had no idea how this past year would go. Or the year before that. And look at you now!

Your mind will naturally imagine future scenarios to try and guess how you might think, act, and feel. If you're dreading the future, there's a good chance that all the scenarios you're imagining are pretty bad—or downright terrifying. Why not imagine a good scenario? Let yourself imagine the best happening to you. This will help you create positive emotions to carry you through whatever is coming up.

Just because the future is unknown to you doesn't mean Heavenly Father doesn't know what will happen (see 2 Nephi 9:20). Turn to Him continually and He will guide you. His guiding light may often illuminate only a few steps ahead of you, but if you take those few steps, you will receive more and more light as you continue pressing forward.²

TAKE COURAGE!

"Fear is the beginning of defeat," said Elder Derek A. Cuthbert (1926–1991) of the Seventy. "On the other hand, courage is the beginning of success. We gain courage by the realization that we have a lot going for us. We derive strength from the knowledge that the Lord is with us."³

Does that mean if you're scared of change or intimidated by growing up, you've already lost? Not at all. Fear will only be the beginning of defeat if you give in to it. Instead, choose to act in spite of your fears. That's what courage is. No matter what lies ahead, you have so much going for you! Most importantly: you have a loving Heavenly Father and Savior, who will help you all along the way. Never forget that. **NE**

NOTES

1. Lynn G. Robbins, Apr. 2018 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 21); see also Boyd K. Packer, Oct. 2011 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 17–18).
2. David A. Bednar, "Patterns of Light: Spirit of Revelation" (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library/video/2012-01-012-patterns-of-light-spirit-of-revelation](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library/video/2012-01-012-patterns-of-light-spirit-of-revelation).
3. Derek A. Cuthbert, "The Futility of Fear," *New Era*, Nov. 1985, 46.