



# DEALING WITH FEAR

Fear is a powerful emotion that can paralyze us or move us to act. We draw inspirational and practical resources on how to face our fears to become empowered to take a stand. They had to go through a process of dealing with fear.

Here are videos, articles and exercises that can be used by individuals, in small groups and workshops. We are in the process of creating agendas to share (and please share what you might have with [joanne@warresisters.org](mailto:joanne@warresisters.org)). We need to practice dealing with our fears through nonviolent action, workshops and trainings provide the opportunity to practice.

## VIDEOS

**A Force More Powerful** <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/force-powerful-english/> is a documentary series of 6 examples of how collective nonviolent power overcame oppression. Here are additional resources for 3 of them:

- “Chile: Defeat of a Dictator” - there are several articles below by Roberta Bacic who was involved in that struggle
- “South Africa: Freedom in our Lifetime” - anti-apartheid solidarity activist Janet Cherry, who appears briefly in the video, has an article below on lessons from that struggle
- “Nashville: We Were Warriors” (see WRL’s “Learning from Nashville Workshop Agenda”)

[https://www.warresisters.org/sites/default/files/learning\\_from\\_the\\_nashville\\_campaign\\_workshop\\_2023.pdf](https://www.warresisters.org/sites/default/files/learning_from_the_nashville_campaign_workshop_2023.pdf)

**James Lawson**, who trained the Nashville students, shares his insight and lessons on overcoming fears to be able to act in the Lunch Counter sit-ins in this powerful 3:18 minute [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C\\_FGc9c9as](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2C_FGc9c9as) which ends with *“The talking and thinking are all critical, especially for evaluation and knowledge and intellectual development but it is the willingness to step forward and act that really confirms you in a different way of life and a way of thinking.”*

## ARTICLES

**Roberta Bacic** was a human rights activist during the period of Chilean dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet.

- “Fear - a sign we are alive” <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2001/fear-sign-we-are-alive-0>
- “Saying 'no' to Pinochet’s dictatorship through non-violence” (2010) <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/saying-no-to-pinochets-dictatorship-through-non-violence/>

From the [Handbook on Nonviolent Campaigns](#)

### Articles

- “**Fear**”, by Andrew Rigby. <https://nonviolence.wri-irg.org/en/resources/2017/fear>
- “**Coping with the Stress and Strain of Taking a Stand**”, by Roberta Bacic & Clem McCartney <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2014/coping-stress-and-strain-taking-stand>
- “**Activism in Repressive Regimes:Some lessons from South Africa**”, by Janet Cherry <https://nonviolence.wri-irg.org/en/node/40519>

### Exercises:

- **Risky Situation** - *to identify different kinds of fears we will face in taking part in direct action, with an understanding of how we can respond.* <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2014/risky-situation>
- **I could do that if...** - *to help people become aware of their fear boundaries and to think of ways of being supported. Good for personal and group empowerment and for campaign planning.* <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2014/i-could-do-if>
- **Tools for grounding, protecting and blockading** - *to learn physical tools that can help you protect yourself and others in your group, and de-escalate a situation.* <https://wri-irg.org/en/story/2014/tools-grounding-protecting-and-blockading>
- **Spectrum/Cross Spectrum** - *Cross Spectrums can help people identify fears and test ways to deal with them.* <https://wri-irg.org/en/search/node?keys=Spectrum%2FCross+Spectrum>

## Know Your Rights

Share information about legal rights, like:

- National Lawyers Guild’s [Know Your Rights](#), and [Know Your Rights: A Guide for Protesters](#)
- ACLU’s [Know Your Rights: Protesters Rights](#).
- [If An Agent Knocks](#) – *Center for Constitutional Rights*
- (see also National Lawyers Guild’s [Federal Defense Hotline](#))

**WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE**

[www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org)

01/21/2025