

# **FEAR OF SUCCESS: A Phenomenon with Assorted Explanations (Including Psychoanalytic, Feminist, and Other Theories)**

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## **Executive Summary**

Persons who fail to realize their full potential deprive organizations and society of potential leadership. Various explanations for short-circuited careers have been put forth that often reflect proclivity of the authors, rather than a comprehensive coverage of the subject. This article provides a comprehensive review of the many theories that attribute personal and career failure to fear of success. The concept is discussed from psychoanalytic/psycho-dynamic perspectives, while taking heed of cultural, relational, behavioral, and cognitive paradigms. Oedipal and castrating metaphors allude to fundamental conflicts and fears of retaliatory punishment, object loss, and abandonment. Cultural, societal, and development influences, plus here-and-now situational conflicts contribute to success phobia. Parents relationships with their child are explored. Metaphors are explained that bridge theories of development and later day success or failure. Various perspectives provide a fuller picture of the fear of success phenomena than more parochial approaches.

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Lady Macbeth, Greg Norman, and Gary Hart demonstrated a common failure. Each of them was competent, ambitious, hard working, and all were high achievers who had obtained considerable recognition and acclaim for their accomplishments. Nevertheless, they each serve as exemplars for *fear of success*. The wife of a distraught king, an outstanding golf pro, and a leading presidential candidate had all attained much — but each fell short of her or his ultimate goal.

Sigmund Freud first discussed “Those Wrecked by Success” in one of his 1916 papers.<sup>1</sup> He noticed the bewildering phenomena that “people occasionally fall ill precisely when a deeply-rooted and long-cherished wish has come to fulfillment.” Freud wrote:

[I]t is not at all unusual for the ego to tolerate a wish as harmless so long as it exists in phantasy alone and seems remote from fulfillment, whereas the ego will defend itself hotly against such a wish as soon as it approaches fulfillment and threatens to become a reality.

This set the stage for the psychoanalytic study of fear of success (FOS). Psychoanalysis is but one of the explanations for FOS and others will be considered in this comprehensive article.

Before proceeding, a question is: Why would business executives and professionals, management consultants, and academics be interested in the phenomena? Unachieved aspirations not only result in personal disappointment but are a loss of much needed talented leadership in organizations.

## **Implications for the rest of us**

Famous front-runners’ failures are not only fodder for Shakespeare’s plays, sports analyses, political columns, and news items. These extraordinary celebrities are of interest because they dramatized conditions that also befall ordinary people.

Many lesser-known hard-working aspirants in business and academia do not reach their ultimate potential. For example, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*<sup>2</sup> reported that fully one-half of people who pursue a Ph.D. degree stop with an A.B.D. (All But Dissertation) status.

Questions arise: Could there be some psychic dilemma playing out in people who do not obtain their stated goal? Is success to be feared? Obviously, hard work and time commitment does not seem to always guarantee achievement of aspirations. One would expect that if the protagonists lacked basic characteristics, aptitude, or ability, these people would not have risen so far. Possibly there are unconscious fears playing out in their accomplishment dynamic.

By understanding the conditions that led to the failure of celebrities and reports on patients we may be able to counter our own demons, whether they be psycho-dynamically, behaviorally, socially, situationally, culturally, or relationally formed. Awareness, counseling, and psychotherapy may remediate the negative consequences of the success neurosis.

## Understanding fear of success

Fear of success or success phobia has been studied from classical and relational psychoanalysis to social and cognitive psychology. To shed light on this phenomenon, the major rationales for fear of success, as they were put forth in academic and business literature, and other credible sources, were explored. Also explored were other sundry theories that appeared in scholarly articles.

Psychoanalytic theories believe unconscious forces are at work. Other explanations emphasize conscious and environmental influences.

Three major groups that evoked the most interest were students, vocations, gender and sex. Consistent with latter-day Zeitgeist shifts; multicultural issues have been looked at recently. Also, more interest has been shown in athletes. These later studies have not enhanced our theoretical understanding of the problem but reflect practical, political, and academic interests.

Various, less popular, theories that have been put forth include considering students rebelling against parental authority when they flunk out of school.<sup>3</sup> Manfred Kets de Vries,<sup>4</sup> a psychoanalyst who has studied leadership and human dynamics, argued that the fear of success is really the fear of loss of affiliation. Top executive may develop a success neurosis because of the “loneliness of command” brought on by isolation at the top. Feminists argued that women are reacting to stereotypes that inhibit females.<sup>5</sup> Other theories incorporate Eric Erikson's development model<sup>6</sup> and rationality or a straightforward choice between alternative life styles.<sup>7</sup> The last two theories had less of a following, but gave interesting perspectives and insight into fear of success. Social theories leave the family of origin out of the etiology but cultural theories embrace family expectations.

Psychoanalytic theories contend that our activities are determined by the unconscious content of our minds, a process called psychic determinism. That means unconscious psychic motivations determine humans activities, not the rational conscious thinking process. While these processes are out of conscious awareness they influence actions in ways that are *metaphorically* consistent with past methods of coping with anxiety producing situations.

## Metaphorical consistency

Metaphors allow us to draw parallels that are emotionally consistent while being contextually different. For example, parents were authority figures and reactions to bosses or police officers may follow ways learned in early relationships with all-powerful caretakers. Adults develop a view of the world as a safe or dangerous place from reactions to experiences they developed as helpless children, when it was necessary to bury (repress) thoughts and feelings in order to survive.

Psychoanalysts maintain these repressed attitudes survive in unconscious memory. They influence later events in convoluted and mysterious—but metaphorically consistent—ways. When

present conscious desires activate subtle connections to anxiety producing events from our past, which were long ago repressed, a conflict develops. The later-day solution may be to flee the situation for *consciously* unknown reasons.

Action that is based upon past experiences that is irrationally carried over to present situations is called transference. They may reflect earlier conflicts that were not resolved, so their effects continue to bedevil life in the present. It should be noted that transferred neuroses are based upon once *valid* solutions for dealing with situations that were uncontrollable by the young child. A later adult intellectual understanding alone, however, may not easily purge the carryover feelings.

Cognitive-behavioral therapists use the word *schemas* to describe imbued thought patterns. These are ways in which we perceive or think about experiences that have an emotional affect on us. A simple and convenient way to visualize this is to view the landscape with and without sunglasses or with rose-colored glasses. Schemas do not necessarily entail an unconscious. They are ingrained beliefs.

However constructed, these early “solutions” or explanations influence latter-day attitudes, decisions, and behavior in adults. They operate largely in the emotional sphere.

## THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

Good and bad experiences of the child leave unconscious memory traces that influence future attitudes that may not be explained by language. Many feelings stem from pre-verbal times. The re-experience or transference of childhood reactions and means of dealing with *metaphorically* triggered situations carries over to adulthood. As this paper is not an in-depth defense of classical psychoanalysis, sexual drives or libido will not be elaborated. Some psychoanalysts, however, further focused on the sexual nature of the intra-psychic conflict associated with success.

Otto Fenichel,<sup>8</sup> in 1945, identified many examples of the success fearing characterological group as having intense guilt from infantile sexual conflicts. To them success is something wrong and unmerited. Fenichel considered work a substitute for instinctual needs, and a defense against them, in modern culture. Therefore, imminent achievement activates untoward feelings, but hard work without achievement is intra-psychically acceptable. Thus, some people who work hard never strive effectively to achieve.

Conversely, the opposite effect is also possible. The conflict resolves itself as a counter phobic reaction in the other (dichotomous) extreme. For example, there are "Don Juan's" who are identified as a specific group for which no accomplishment mollifies unconscious guilt so they keep searching for more conquests. Thus, humans vary; people are not simple cause and effect machines.

A decade later, Daniel Schuster,<sup>9</sup> in 1955, extended Fenichel's and Freud's work to those who accomplish less than their native talents would indicate they could, or who pay too great price for success in terms of anxiety. Dr. Schuster basically organized his paper around the tensions and struggles that comprise the Oedipal problem and castration complex.

### Oedipal and castration metaphors

Oedipus and castration myths are useful metaphors that do not have to be considered purely sexual. Oedipal conflicts represent the child's perception of the love-hate relationship with his or her parents. Castration represents the young and powerless child's fears of severe punishment when pitted against an all-powerful parent.

Repressed Oedipal conflicts are not an antiquated idea relegated to ancient couch-oriented, long-term psychoanalytic technique. They are the foundation theory of psychopathology that drives

the brief dynamic psychotherapies.<sup>10</sup> Resolution of early conflicts between a child and his or her parent(s) is the crux of these short-term in-depth treatment approaches.

Schuster's examples generally emphasized the fear and awe which a son may have for his father. Obviously, a boy is considerably weaker than his father and this disparity may be carried over into adult life where the son feels inadequate or small in some way.

Consequently, the adult man has a persistent character structure based on his childhood situation, where his father was an opposing force to desires and from whom the child feared signified retaliation and punishment. Fear of what might happen resulted in defenses rooted in passivity and timidity. To avoid the resentment of others, in adult life the grown man continues to carry over timidity or reluctance to assert himself.

Positive and negative, good and bad, desire and competition, love and hate feelings for parents do not have to literally reflect sexual attraction and castration. Children have strong fantasies and fears. To reject them because of a sexual connotation will inhibit understanding of the concepts.

## Women and society

Schuster discussed men in his article, but mentioned that he has seen less conspicuous but similar examples in women. Perhaps, the male focus was due to a cultural reflection on the role of women in society prior to his publication in 1955, when vocational advancement was not as prevalent an issue for females, at least not publicly discussed. Betty Friedan's publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, created a social upheaval supporting women's aspirations.<sup>11</sup>

Not generally known is that Freud explicitly stated that social psychology was integrated into his psychoanalytic method and understanding of the psyche. Therefore, there are probably cases where social expectations slant how an individual views success both consciously and unconsciously. Freud tied social psychology to his intra-psychic theory, in 1912:

The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.<sup>12</sup>

Work is a prime example where the individual and society intersect.

## Fear of vocational success

Lionel Ovesey<sup>13</sup> developed the Oedipal theme of a success phobia in vocational endeavors. He contended that fathers and significant males are considered major forces in the development of phobias. Ovesey found in his clinical practice that a male was always the person from whom the patients feared retaliation and punishment. Therefore, attempts by adults to surpass their childhood fantasized (or real) rival are blocked by guilt and fear of retaliation.

Ovesey considered the nuclear conflict in women the same as in men but evolving in a different gender related psychosocial framework. Thus, it is important to examine the father's role, and not just the mother's, in the development of both girls and boys.

Complicating matters, it is not only fear and hatred but love of parents is also an issue. Lajos Szekely,<sup>14</sup> in 1960, described the case of a successful male engineer who could not consolidate his sense of self with his consciously despised but unconsciously admired father. The engineer was not able to reconcile his *love* for his father, which constitutes the *negative* Oedipal phase and precedes the conflictive hating of the *positive* Oedipal phase. Both love and hate are powerful emotions, but to the child are comprised of fleeting occurrences.

For example, the child wanting candy and screaming at the checkout line “I hate you” is believed to be momentarily angry and not resorting to a negotiating ploy. Each feeling must be resolved in the service of reality and growth. A healthy individual is able to tolerate *ambivalence* toward significant other persons. Both the negative and positive phases must be worked through to develop a self.

Later writers extend the construct of conflict beyond the oedipal period to over determined resolution of conflicts at several developmental levels. Understanding and resolution of these conflicts is the subject of the Object Relations School of psychoanalysis.

## Object Relations

Melanie Klein,<sup>15</sup> the mother of the British School of Object Relations, an extension of Freudian psychoanalysis, clearly and succinctly explained the many complex interactions in the relationship between boys and girls and both parents. Paraphrasing would do her an injustice; she deserves to be extensively quoted:

[T]he Oedipus Complex ... can clearly be observed in children of three, four, or five years of age. This complex exists, however, very much earlier and is rooted in the baby's first suspicions of the father taking the mother's love and attention away from him. There are great differences in the Oedipus complex of the girl and of the boy, which I shall characterize only by saying that whereas the boy in his genital development returns to his original object, the mother, and therefore seeks female objects with consequent jealousy of the father and men in general, the girl to some extent has to turn away from the mother and find the object of her desires in the father and later on in other men. I have, however, stated this in an over-simplified form, because the boy is also attracted towards the father and identifies with him; and therefore an element of homosexuality enters into normal development. The same applies to the girl, for whom the relation to the mother, and to women in general, never loses its importance. The Oedipus complex is thus not a matter only of feelings of hate and rivalry towards one parent and love toward the other, but feelings of love and a sense of guilt also enter in connection with the rival parent.

Many conflicting emotions therefore center upon the Oedipus complex.

Thus, love and hate, affection and fear, acceptance and guilt, complexly interact in childhood to form the basis of our self-soothing and anxiety which comprise our adult psychic makeup.

While much of the earlier applied literature was focused on men, Klein clearly showed differences in the relationship dynamics of women.

## Developmental issues of women

Female clinicians<sup>16</sup> working with women determined that their intra-psychic conflict could arise in many places along their developmental continuum—including, rapprochement, separation-individuation, Oedipal, and narcissistic phases.

Rapprochement is a period of child development elaborated by Margaret Mahler.<sup>17</sup> This condition is quite apparent and readily observable when watching young children in the park or playground distance from their caretakers. The child explores new things and moves away from her or his parent while frequently checking back to see if the source of stability and nurturance is still there and available. Consider healthy growth as mountain climb with a belayed safety line.

During rapprochement, the child curiously but reluctantly explores independent ventures while tenaciously holding on to the mother's "apron strings," so to speak. The young child needs to know she is branching out from a secure base to venture forth with confidence. Separation, individuation, and assertiveness revolve around rapprochement.

Girls and their mothers find it harder than boys to move away from each other. Hence it is more difficult to become involved in the outside world. Resolution of Oedipal feelings, described above by Melanie Klein, is more difficult for girls than for boys.

The Oedipal phase has many aspects of the above two issues. The girl must feel safe enough to loosen her attachment to her mother and shift to her father as a desired love object—in competition with her mother—then she must be comfortable enough to return to the mother and to identify with her.

Analysis of girls brings into focus the parallel developmental process of the self and that of narcissism. The narcissistic woman's ego ideal is of an internalized image of a parent who is unreasonably harsh and has unreachable high expectations. Thus, whatever is accomplished, the daughter cannot have a sense of achievement.

## Narcissism

Heinz Kohut<sup>18</sup> and Otto Kernberg<sup>19</sup> were the primary contributors to our understanding of narcissism. While there is disagreement between Kohut's developmental perspective and Kernberg's pathological construct, as to the conceptualization of narcissism, they have sufficient similarity to explain the narcissistic psychodynamics at work in a success phobia.

Kohut explained that narcissists are unable to maintain their self-esteem with endopsychic mechanisms, so they are compelled to use other people in their service. In order to maintain an intact "grandiose self," which is fragile, a narcissistic person cannot tolerate the frustration needed to learn and obtain success. Therefore, they do not subject themselves to the efforts, trial and error learning, and frustrations needed to learn, so they devalue achievement oriented goals.

Kohut's self psychology would take time to develop and it is sufficient to understand that development of self requires appropriately supportive interactions between parent and child, called mirroring relationships. Essentially, a child must feel *appreciated* to develop a healthy, aspiring, accomplishing, independent self.

At least one significant other person but ideally both parents provide an attentive and appreciative audience that positively and appropriately responds to the child's development performances. Healthy development proceeds best when all in the parental system interact well to provide a supportive and loving environment for the child.

## FROM UNCONSCIOUS TO CONSCIOUS CONFLICT

The late 1980's brought some interesting new views about the success issue. The compromise explanation sees successful people making a conscious *rationale choice* between different goals, not reacting to unconscious conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

One viewpoint rejects the traditional psychodynamic view of this self-destruction and considers it a *conscious conflict over personal values*. People today are considered to know what they want and to not have unconscious conflicts from earlier times.

Nevertheless, whether a *conflict* is conscious or unconscious, if it is *unresolved* it will lead to uneasiness, anxiety, and possibly fear.

Manfred Kets de Vries<sup>5</sup> considered the disharmonious feelings of executives to be the result of *isolation* from being at the top. Needs for reassurance, support, dependency, and contact with other humans are unavailable as a person rises in an organization. CEOs are isolated and their subordinates expect leaders to be infallible and to have “magical” powers.

Group psychology and psychotherapy has informed us about the relationship between subordinates and their superiors. Freud and more recently Irving Yalom<sup>20</sup> discussed the need of people to idolize their leaders. Eric Fromm<sup>21</sup> called it a “lust for submission.” So, the phrase “it is lonely at the top” stems not only from organizational structural relationships but also from psychological dependency needs at play in the group.

The transference expectation of employees, seeing their leaders as idealized parents, further isolates the leader from mortal reality. The “parental role” is taken over by “authority figures” in later life, for those who are dependent. Guilt feelings ensue because of a fear that this support may not last, which has psychic underpinnings. Also, guilt feelings may come from a perception of betraying one's origins, which also seems like a psychodynamic construct.

## Horner's feminist viewpoint

A feminist viewpoint was the focus of Matina Horner in her 1968 dissertation and 1972 journal article.<sup>22</sup> An accomplished woman, by 1973, at age 32, she was appointed president of Radcliffe College; she remained in the position until 1988.

She promoted an expectancy-value theory of motivation to explain achievement conflicts in women. This theory maintains that the beliefs and expectations that a woman has about her nature and the perception of negative consequences resulting from choosing competitive achievement arouses anxiety.

While this sounds somewhat like the intra-psychic origin of development models, the conflict proposed by Horner is more conscious and of social origin. A woman's goals and resistance are modulated by the value placed by her on consequences and motives of action. Thus, social and internal psychological barriers limit opportunities.

Horner's thesis is that generations of culture have caused women to repress their aggressiveness and this has become internalized. Thus, the psyche and unconscious are socially determined and not primarily a result of familial upbringing.

Horner concluded that women are conflicted when they show competencies, interests, and abilities that go against their stereotypical and internalized sex role. The motive to avoid success must be aroused, however, in order to have an effect on performance. Horner's methodology scored:

... the Motive to Avoid Success ... as present if the subjects, in response to a thematic lead about a successful figure of their own sex, made statements in their stories showing conflict about the success, the presence or anticipation of negative consequences because of the success, denial of effort or responsibility for attaining the success, denial of the cue itself, or some other bizarre or inappropriate response to the cue.

Horner's hypotheses were the foundation for much research into female success and aggression. It remains a useful but underdeveloped thesis.

Horner motivated many studies that looked at more and more refinement of her basic approach. Lack of replication has been a major criticism of Horner's theories. Later work shows less difference between men and women.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it remains a popular basis for research.

Horner's original research and replication used projective techniques to identify attitudes. In 1983, objective tests were developed<sup>24</sup> to determine both fear of success and fear of appearing incompetent.

## **The imposter phenomenon**

A decade after Horner, Paulene Chance and Suzanne Imes<sup>25</sup> coined the term imposter phenomenon (IP) to describe highly educated women who had significant professional accomplishments yet feel they are fooling people about their brightness. The authors noted there were two types of early family history that led to insecure feelings in adulthood. One group of girls could never achieve anything of note and was always compared to a more intelligent sibling who could do no wrong. The other group was constantly praised for anything and everything she did regardless of its merit.

Four types of behavior were identified that maintained the imposter phenomenon. The first group lived in constant fear that their ruse would be discovered. A second group resorted to flattery and a third group used their charm on superiors, to gain favor. And the fourth group fears rejection for appearing too smart and accomplished as a woman in our society. Chance and Imes found they could help their clients by using multi-modal therapy.

Manfred Kets de Vries extended the concept to men and discussed feeling like a fake in a *Harvard Business Review* article, in 2005.<sup>26</sup> He introduces the possibility that there are genuine fakers that lack qualifications and skill. This article and its conclusions assume that personal attitudes are not based upon reality but internal psychic inequities. IP continues to be researched<sup>27</sup> but there needs to be differentiation between merely successful and truly competent subjects.

The imposter phenomenon continues as an organizing principle. A 2006 issue of the *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*<sup>28</sup> devoted an entire issue to the subject. Most articles were written by feminist authors and placed much emphasis on social attitudes toward women, in addition to psychodynamics. Attitudes toward women are problematic and the glass ceiling exists but the interest here is in how these very real circumstances are approached. Intra-psychic forces determine whether injustices are lamented or challenged and whether one acquiesces or fights when faced with resistance to personal achievement.

## **Other feminist viewpoints**

Countertransference that women psychotherapists experience when they treat women patients was examined by Ellen B. Ruderman.<sup>29</sup> One of the five themes that emerge from her study is the relationship of women to their mothers. "Fear of success is linked to the earliest relationship between women and their mothers; all subsequent conflicts about women's roles: family versus profession; autonomy versus dependency; stifled ambition, assertiveness and creativity—emanate from that source." She made no mention of the relationship with fathers.

Mallinger<sup>30</sup> described a more toxic relationship between the mother and daughter: "Her mother is viewed, frequently, as nonnurturing, competitive, powerful, erratic, and sometimes

childish.” The rest of the paragraph gives an even more extreme negative description. Then, Mellinger portrayed the father as weak and controlled by the mother. As a result the woman developed transferential attitudes toward men that are skeptical and angry.

Erikson's model of psychosocial development<sup>7</sup> proposed the fear of success was related to identity formation and Ruderman's studies supported that hypothesis. There was uncertainty, however, as to where the identity formation process goes awry.

So, we have competing hypotheses to explain the fear of success in women. Multiple explanations also exist for job related environments.

## **Vocational and school situations**

A vocational tact in the literature is found in business and professional publications. Several years ago there was an article in an engineering trade publication calling the fear of success the “Gary Hart Disease.”<sup>31</sup> Why did presidential candidate Hart tell reporters to follow him and then get caught having a clandestine affair? The article dealt with the phenomena of smart men who self-destruct, as they are about to attain their long sought goal.

Fortune magazine, in 1996, began a “careers” article lamenting the perplexing situation of Greg Norman, who was pro golf's biggest moneymaker, yet has never won a major tournament.<sup>32</sup> The Fortune explanation was based primarily on the assumption that the motive to fail was unconsciously motivated. Over a decade later, he entered the 2008 British Open and led the first three rounds with scores of 70, 70, and 72; only to finish tied for third with a fourth round tally of 77. This match was one month after he married the Hall of Fame tennis ace Chris Evert. If Norman has a fear of success it appears to be limited to golf and has apparently not affected his ability to become a billionaire or wed an accomplished woman.

Student models focus on two more consciously motivated explanations of school difficulties, in college boys. One, a control paradigm, focuses on passive rebellion against parents who demand performance and academic achievement.<sup>3</sup> Parental coercion is felt to establish a retaliatory behavior of flunking out, a passive-aggressive reaction.

Another line of thought is the son does not want to surpass his father. He fears the loss of relationship, either consciously or unconsciously, with his father whom he perceives a failure.<sup>3</sup> This is a negative Oedipal effect in which the son is unable to separate and oppose his father in preparation for later role modeling.

Four cases from 15 students treated for two to nine months uncovered the psychodynamics of poor performance in Columbia College.<sup>3</sup> One of the cases was purely Oedipal, but all cases involved intra-psychic conflict. The evidence pointed to an underlying desire on the part of parents to keep their child constrained, but not to admit it even to themselves. Thus, a double-bind prevailed. Children are encouraged to compete but not to win and to have goals but not to achieve. Notably, when a double-bind is created, it is also a conflict based model involving a paradox that cannot be resolved. This is also analogous to the intra-psychic psychodynamic conflict.

## **REVIEW**

To understand a person's fear of success, it behooves us to view the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. Each victim of success neurosis is a unique individual.

Psychoanalytically informed conflict models seem to offer the most useful consolidating explanation of the fear of success in both men and women. Therefore, for a person to realize her or his potential requires an understanding of their underlying psychodynamics at work.

Psychotherapists and counselors would serve their clients well by allowing each person's idiosyncratic life story and personal interpretations to emerge and not dictate a particular explanation for an individual's fear of success. The several theories elaborated herein indicate the complexity of the human condition and warn against prematurely clumping persons into undifferentiated groups.

## DISCUSSION

Whatever its etiology, there is considerable evidence that fear of success exists. There are several theories. If professional help is sought a particular cause might be sought. This might hinder finding the idiosyncratic nature of the condition. Choose help wisely!

The costs of persons not maximizing their contribution is expensive both personally and socially. Each person needs to do the best they can within the frame of their ability and ambition.

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