

# 16

## Yield to the Fear of the Unknown



**By Wylie McGraw**

Combat Veteran, Bull Rider, Performance Accelerator  
Boca Raton, Florida

*“If we fear the unknown then surely, we fear ourselves.”*

- Bryant H. McGill

**L**iving with the fear of the unknown is arduous. It stifles and suppresses potential.

I needed to face it. To yield to it.

So do you.

If you are a high achiever, an influencer, or a leader in any capacity, this is the most important factor you need to embrace if you wish to attain peak performance in all areas of your life and, consequently, achieve the results you strive for.

Let me make this point clear: you cannot eliminate fear itself, nor should you. You need fear to grow. By learning how to yield to fear, rather than trying to control or avoid it, you'll discover that the actions you take will accelerate your ascension towards

what you define as success.

Trying to control your fear causes you to believe that you can plan and prepare for all possible outcomes, but that's just the fear of the unknown doing its damage from within. And this forces most leaders into a few possible, yet destructive scenarios:

- Being too rigid in thinking and/or decision-making.
- Overworking themselves and/or their employees.
- Becoming stagnant and not innovating.

Think of it like yielding to traffic on a highway. As you merge, it's natural to feel a form of fear or uncertainty as the cars go zipping by. If you're too slow, you'll create a bottleneck; if you're too fast, you'll cause a crash.

So, yielding to the traffic is the ever-perfect pace that enables a seamless integration. The same goes for any unknown, which at the core is simply a new direction with new discoveries in store for you.

The following section headings and the supporting story below serve as a breakdown of what yielding looks like and how you can begin to effectively do it for yourself.

You'll find easier access to your power and potential, both in your business and personal parts of your life, when you step into this yielding mindset and embrace the purpose of its discomfort. It'll show you that what you have been afraid of is not what is unknown to you; it's what has not been faced and resolved that still resides within you.

Dive into this challenging, new way of approaching life and business, so you can attain your highest level of performance possible.

## **Allow What Goes Against the Grain to Seduce You**

Baseball. I lived it, day in and day out from a very young age. Son of a semi-pro ball player, I was expected to follow in his footsteps.

I had an impressive arm with speeds reaching 80 miles per hour. I played religiously, year after year, perfecting my natural talent. I rose to the ranks of success as I

was meeting players like Mickey Mantle, Rod Carew, and Bo Jackson. So, I felt a sense of loyalty to the game despite the inner stress that I was feeling at the time from being pushed to be perfect every time I took the mound.

After years of intense training, I started to feel something wasn't right as I played. It became clear that I was playing for my father's expectations and not for the love of the game. And despite how much I tried to stay focused through that stress, I just couldn't accept the expected need for perfection to rise to the level of star athlete.

Soon thereafter, my baseball career started to wane. As this fracture grew, I found new friends from a different world. This was the world of rodeo, a dangerous sport full of unknowns. As I stepped into that world and began gearing myself up for my first ride, I felt a seduction that was strong, scary, exciting, and wildly unknown. And for the first time I felt my soul igniting like it was finally waking up. This was the very first time I felt like I could release the stress of expectation and perfection, and embrace a challenge I did not experience in pro ball.

*Consider where and how others may be placing expectations on you and observe how you feel about it. Is it causing you stress and strife? Or is it empowering you?*

*Also take the time to identify if you are operating from a place of perfectionism. If so, give into a seducing outlet, whether it's dancing lessons with your spouse or taking a bungee jump.*

*The time is now to step towards it. You'll be amazed by what you learn about yourself and what new perspectives will present themselves that help innovate your personal and professional goals.*

## **Let Challenge Ignite Your Inner Harmony and Power**

I remember tying my rope to the fence, putting on my glove and spurs, and gripping the rope handle to prep my gear. The smell of the wood-burning fire mixed with the undistinguishable scent of livestock was intoxicating. I finished gearing up and getting my rope as sticky as I could. I was up next.

I pulled myself over the fencing as the others prepped my rope around this 1,500-pound beast. I felt the power of the bull shifting within the tight confines of the main chute. He seemed calm, but he was not unaware.

Pulling myself down onto his back slowly, I suddenly felt alive in a way I've never experienced. His power, warmth, and life-filled body connected to me. I realized at that very moment I was in for an unexpected challenge unlike anything else I had experienced.

Sitting back, my hand sliding into the handle, I breathed deeply. I wrapped the rope around my hand tightly and began to slide myself up onto the rope itself. Just as I did, the bull began to sway and lean against my leg, pinning it against the metal bars. We all pushed him back to center, and then he tried again. It was at that moment I knew I needed to start riding.

My mind, emotions, and body all began to respond with intense focus. I experienced a version of this playing baseball, but this was something deeper, sobering. I felt every part of myself fully engaged.

This was an intimate connection with something outside of myself, something unpredictable and wild. And it was exactly what I needed.

*When was your last wildly exciting and challenging encounter?*

*When was the last time you felt all aspects of yourself fully engaged and deeply focused?*

*As a leader and high achiever looking for greater performance, it's crucial to stimulate yourself in this way. Just like bodybuilders change and challenge different muscle groups to prevent atrophy, the same applies to your personal and professional development.*

## **If It Doesn't Shock You, It Won't Change You**

My maiden ride lasted a mere 2.5 seconds, but I discovered the ride itself was only half the draw to my newfound passion. On that cold, rainy Saturday afternoon, I recognized this as a milestone in my exploration of life.

The power and connection between man and beast cannot be put into words. It released a side of me I'd been waiting to meet.

As I fell off the bull's side, he slipped in the mud and landed on my leg, pinning me underneath him for a moment. We locked eyes, and that brief stare changed me

forever. I later realized that the feeling of being stepped on, and the thrilling pain of the charley horse that ensued, was the other half of the draw for me. I had finally found something that would allow me to expand beyond the limits that had been put on me.

And I was hooked.

This was the tougher, but more natural evolution I was seeking as a man. I uncovered a deeper focus to a more personal challenge, one that began to showcase more of my capabilities and potential. My pro rodeo mentors told me that if I should stick to this life, I surely had the talent to rise the ranks. But, for me it wasn't about the competition. This was the place I felt more alive and more open to life. Here I knew I was becoming a stronger version of myself.

*As we strive for peak performance, we tend to find ourselves gravitating towards steps, systems, and programs in the hopes they will give us what we want.*

*But it's in the shocking and challenging experiences that we are transformed. It's in our consistent reflection of our actions and responses that change our capacity to handle the intensity we face in life and business.*

*Are you welcoming in resources or experiences that shock and challenge the way you think, feel, and operate? If not, consider what you're leaving behind regarding your potential and start seeking outside-the-box solutions.*

## **Discomfort Is Your Friend, Not Your Foe**

As I stepped into the wild unknown to garner more control and power over my life, the result was an unleashing of my own inner beast that matched the wildness of being a bull rider. Being a bull rider demanded vulnerability, more trust, and more confidence in myself than anything else I had done before.

And even though I was uncomfortable every time I sat on the back of this amazing creature, I leaned in and embraced it. The more I embodied the energy of it, I found advantages in doing so. I found myself more in tune with the bull, resulting in successful rides that put me within the ranks of the pros that coached me.

I couldn't let myself fall victim to discomfort or uncertainty. Here I forced myself to stay engaged, and consequently this strategy had me develop greater mental fortitude and emotional stability. It helped me access more of my own intuition as well; I gleaned deeper insights that further propelled my performance each time I showed up to ride.

*How do you react when you find yourself in uncomfortable situations? This can be news of a problem within your family, your spouse irritated by something you've done or did not do, or a serious business dilemma like a financial loss.*

*Whatever it is, do you become stressed, maybe express some select profane words and pull away? Or do you lean in further and allow the situation to be absorbed to discover the right response or solution from within?*

*Next time you are faced with an uncomfortable situation, try leaning in fully and walking towards the discomfort. Seek the clarity it has to offer rather than succumbing to the natural reflex of distancing yourself from it.*

## **Commit to Being Multidimensional**

My decision to ride bulls regularly highlighted a multi-faceted version of myself, rather than the one-dimensional side that came with baseball. Being immersed in this environment while being pushed and challenged by my mentors further galvanized how I could better manage myself in many unforgiving situations. It was within this unleashing of parts of me that were otherwise suppressed where I discovered that my mindset and capabilities could be stretched beyond what I thought possible.

Baseball was challenging in and of itself, but it was all about perfecting my arm and the fundamental systems that made the sport function. It gave me mental focus, but it was all about being hyper-focused on one skill—what I call the Band-Aid-on-the-bullet-hole approach. It may produce results in the moment, but in the end, it'll erode your personal and physical balance, ultimately limiting the scope of your success.

Much like most sports, today's professional culture teaches us that total focus on one specific skill set is the best path to success. But nothing could be further from the truth. It limits you and sabotages your ability to reach your full potential.

*Are you laser-focused on one aspect of your life, ignoring or overlooking every other area to your own detriment?*

*If so, eradicate the imbalance by committing to being multidimensional and stop ignoring the areas of your life and business that you know you've swept under the rug.*

*When you do, you will revive your overall performance and accelerate your results.*

## **Achieve Deeper Success by Being Awakened to Who You Really Are**

Rodeo allowed me to tap into a useful wildness that I didn't know existed but was part of who I really was. A wilder side that was ideal for cultivating healthy challenge, competition, and winning.

It did still come with its not-so-healthy challenges. There were the occasional combative situations with other cowboys, often alcohol-induced. However, I found myself handling altercations differently than I had before.

I grew exponentially in this holistic environment, one that required me to use my senses, my intuition, and my mind simultaneously. Being a bull rider enhanced a new-found mental and emotional endurance to my surroundings. It released many internal struggles. I began understanding more about my power and its effects on my surroundings and others. The rodeo life felt like a wild unleashing of myself that not only inspired those around me, but also provided me with courage to take bigger, more calculated risks in other areas of my life and business.

For you, this means accepting and even inviting a proper challenge, but one that's unfamiliar and makes you uncomfortable. One that forces you to open yourself to more of your power, potential, and personal freedom.

You need to be pushed beyond the comforts responsible for your perceived limits to achieve peak performance. You need unencumbered confidence in the unknown. A willingness to face potential loss knowing you'll still come out on top stems from fearless decision-making outside your comfort zone. Yielding to the fear of the unknown is a true means of doing just that and reaching your fullest potential.







## About the Author

Wylie McGraw is a former star athlete, competitive bull rider, and three-tour combat veteran. He's the founder of Radical Performance Acceleration, and for well over a decade now he's been behind-the-scenes doing life-altering work with powerful CEOs, entrepreneurs, leaders, and public figures accelerating their performance, both personally and professionally.

His work is the proverbial "Navy SEAL training" equivalent to high performance and leadership development—pushing even the elite beyond their limits, so they not only hit their peak but sustain it.

Wylie's formal title is Performance Accelerator. He has been named a "secret weapon" by some of the most influential leaders across industries from Wall Street, Hollywood, professional sports, Fortune 500 companies, personal development, and everything in between.

His work is about giving an elite edge to high-achieving individuals while ending their cycle of stress, sacrifice, and suffering that's unfortunately associated when reaching their levels of accomplishment and success.

**Email:** [wylie@wyliemcgraw.com](mailto:wylie@wyliemcgraw.com) | **Website:** [www.wyliemcgraw.com](http://www.wyliemcgraw.com)