



PAUL SUTHERLAND is chief investment officer of the FIM Group and founder of the Utopia Foundation, which sends volunteers around the globe through utopiavolunteers.org.

Paris put me over the edge! Now what?

I've spent the last few years budgeting and digging out my finances—and all that's fine. Thanks! But now I'm dealing with a bigger issue: The massacre in Paris in November put me over the edge! I don't feel safe anymore. How do I plan for that?

Paul Sutherland: "Fear is the mind killer," according to Paul Muad'Dib, the hero of the *Dune* series of books by Frank Herbert. "Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration." I think of this quote often when I feel fear creeping into a decision. Lately, the quote has been at the front my mind.

The quote came to mind because my wife, Amy, was thinking about taking our 5 and 7-year-old boys to see the Pyramids. We are in Kampala, Uganda, and there are cheap flights to Cairo. Our two middle boys are obsessed with pyramids, mummies, and pharaohs, so we saw this trip as a great education experience and the timing

seemed right. Then Paris happened. It brought to a head a rush of fears that Amy and I have wrestled with as we have traveled around the world with our (now) six kids.

The quote is also on my mind at this moment because Amy is on her way to the hospital with our 8-week-old son. It is the rainy season here in Kampala and she had to call six taxi drivers to get a ride, and she left an hour and a half later than planned. As she got into the cab, she was soaked by horizontal rain. Meanwhile, the lead story in the local newspaper this morning tells of a scandal involving hospital administrators who only show up for work about three days a month. The article says there's little oversight, compliance, or enforcement, which had has led to local hospitals only sterilizing 38 percent of the instruments they use. Obviously, this is a cause for concern.

As I think about our lives here, I realize we could live in a constant high alert. But we don't. When Amy gets home I am sure she will have stories about how she asked the nurse to use a new needle, or to wash her hands before holding our baby, Emmanuel. Then we will sit with the calendar to see when she can take the boys to Egypt.

Part of the reason we don't worry so much is because we talk to people here who think we are from a gunslinging nation where anyone's child may get shot at school by a 12-year-old son of a gun nut who left part of his arsenal on the kitchen counter. We try to explain to them what the US is really like, just as they tell us not to worry about Uganda or flying to Egypt.

Another reason we don't worry so much has to do with the rest of Herbert's quote, which continues:

I will face my fear.

I will permit it to pass over me and through me.

And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path.

Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

The key to travel and to life in general is “Don’t be stupid.” In Buddhism “stupid” translates into ignorance. So, as Paul Muad’Dib counsels: look at the fear, explore it, let it pass through your mind and heart, and do not let the fear have any effect except to inform your decision.

So your life is good financially! You were feeling free! But now Paris has trapped you. So my

To ask Paul a question, email him directly at paul@spiritualityhealth.com.

guess is that you had “planned” that things would be good with your newfound financial freedom. That’s a common mistake. We dream and plan for a future when everything will be safe and our plans won’t be interrupted. That future never comes—meanwhile, we are trapped by fear. Instead, we must live in the moment and move forward realizing that the future is unknown. We will always have incomplete information.

Life is to live! Each breath we take should bring us closer to peace and love. Fear is the

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away from living, and away from love.**

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My advice: If Paris put you over the edge, read *Dune* on your flight to Paris. Rooms are now at bargain prices, you should have no problem getting a good table, and you won't have to share the Mona Lisa with 100 selfie-taking tourists. Maybe you will need to say to yourself a few times, *Fear is the mind killer, or Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [truth] art with me.* **S&H**

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