



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Courage

We all know what it looks like, this thing called courage. It's what heroes are made of. It's the soldier charging up the hill in the face of enemy fire. It's the helicopter pilot flying through storms to save lives threatened by nature's fury. It's the casual passerby leaping into icy water to rescue a stranger from drowning. It's going above and beyond the call of duty, and often beyond the call of reason. That's courage!

Acts of courage inspire us. They stir our spirits and draw from us expressions of gratitude and praise. And rightly so! We all appreciate witnessing the "greater" side of human nature and seeing the remarkable good humans are capable of.

Yet, few of us ever expect to be in a situation where we could display such acts of courage. We live fairly routine lives, seemingly safe from the situations that call for "real" courage.

But wait! Perhaps our view of courage is too limited. We all face situations each day that challenge us and "put us to the test." We all must decide between different courses of action, different responses, different words. Daily, we are called on to make choices and to face the consequences of those choices.

This is precisely where the opportunity for courage exists. In these situations, daily acts of courage find expression.

Let's consider a few examples. Acts of courage are clearly evident in:

- 1) the willingness to change, to risk, to grow and move forward into uncharted territory rather than hold on to the perceived easiness and safety of sameness.
- 2) the willingness to follow your convictions in the face of hardship, opposition, and intense pressure to change course.
- 3) the willingness to speak up and honestly share in love when silence, avoidance, or deception would be easier, safer, and less painful.
- 4) the willingness to admit and address personal flaws, rather than hiding from them.
- 5) the willingness to do the right thing, even though it may appear, at first glance, to be wrong to others around us.
- 6) the willingness to make the hard decision when there clearly is no perfect option.

Actions such as these require courage because they typically exist in the context of fear - not necessarily fear of death, but the fear of losing relationships, professional position, financial gain, and social status. Courageous conversations and decisions

are risky, and indeed may result in loss. But, they also hold the key to potential benefits otherwise forfeited. Consider, for example ...

- 1) **Courage empowers truth.** When we speak the truth in love, truth is given a voice. When others hear that voice, they are emboldened to speak out and join their voice with ours. In this way, courage promotes courage.
- 2) **Courage builds respect for the courageous.** Those who witness courage and recognize the strength behind it grow in their respect for the one possessing such strength.
- 3) **Courage creates freedom.** By standing up to our fears and the oppression of others, we directly address the forces that would otherwise limit and control us.
- 4) **Courage creates opportunities.** This is the natural outflow of the newly established freedom.
- 5) **Courage builds further strength and confidence.** As we exercise courage, we get better at it, so that fears diminish and courage becomes a more natural way of life.

We all have the opportunity to be courageous. Let's be strong, wise, and committed as we face the challenges of life. And let's encourage those around us to be the same.

The rewards await!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Guts, Brains, and Self Control

Often, after heroic acts of courage, heroes question the wisdom of their actions. "If I had time to think about it, I probably wouldn't have done it." Such is the spontaneous nature of heroic courage.

In contrast, daily acts of courage often follow periods of thought and consideration ranging from a few seconds to a few days or more. Such periods of consideration are crucial in planning the expression of our courage.

The Creator God has empowered each of us with the ability to establish personal values and commit to them. He has also given us the ability to think. As we plan a course for our courage, it is important that we consider what course of action best respects the multiple values we hold. Such self control helps to ensure that our actions are not only courageous, but also wise and value-based.

Thoughtful action instead of simple reaction helps us to tune our acts of courage to best fit specific situations. Some situations may call for us to speak up; others may call for us to be silent and listen in wisdom - at least for a time.

Courage, wisdom, self control - it's a powerful combination!



" Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires ... courage. "

- Ralph Waldo Emerson