



Courage Newsletter

THE INDEPENDENT FORUM FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE

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Happy Spring!

March is a transition month between the cold depths of winter and the vibrant growth of spring. During this transition, the Open Grove will help you prepare for your own personal spring with a look at Risk. Our look at every day Risk begins with the risk of Expressing Yourself. Next, we look at avoiding conflict. This newsletter addresses the meaning of courage and includes helpful ways to help you manage your fear and increase your courage.



Courage

Americans love the courageous. Stories about courageous people performing super-human feats fill movie theaters and create best selling books. We celebrate the financially courageous who earn and lose fortunes over and over again. We cheer on courageous firefighters and police officers while we sit on the couch watching courageous athletes run head long into loss or injury. We celebrate courageous individuals who overcome illness, disability or disease.

Courage is defined as a mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty. Courage is the vital force between action and inaction when our physical, mental and emotional health is at risk. In a “dog-eat-dog” world, courage can be the difference between success and failure. 🌸

The facts of life

Everyone experiences fear. Courageous people are not stopped by their fear. They continue to move forward, do what has to be done, regardless of their own panic and fear. Most courageous people acknowledge that they feel fear and do not respond to it. These people seem to have an incredible tolerance for their own fear. 🌸

Moments of Danger

When we are in danger, our systems respond in what is called the “fight or flight” system. When we experience a threat, our bodies and minds are designed to either flee or freeze. No one is certain what determines this first response. The response seems to depend on what will best ensure our safety. We then respond in two additional ways. We might fight the danger or care for other people who are in danger. These responses are based on biochemical reactions not psychological reactions.

Courageous people frequently fell and understand these reactions, yet continue to pursue their course of action. For example, mountain climbers feel a rush when they are in life threatening situations yet they continue to climb the mountain. They have some tolerance for their own reaction and rather than fight, flee, care take or freeze, they continue up the mountain. Entrepreneurs feel the fear of risking their resources and pride, yet continue to create businesses. 🌸

Becoming Courageous!

Frequently we look at resolving fear and then moving forward. Maybe it's time to learn how to become courageous in the face of your fear then let the fear resolve itself over time. Here are a few ideas to help you increase your courage.

1. What works for you? Everyone is courageous in at least one area of their life. Where do you stretch to respond to a challenge? Review all the situations in your life. You were courageous once. Make a list. Then ask yourself, “Why did I respond this way?” Try to come up with the reason you were courageous in these situations. These factors are your personal courage motivators. The next time you need to be courageous – asking for a raise, standing up for yourself to

a bully – remember these criteria. If you are motivated by injustice, what is the injustice in the current situation? Motivated by power? What is the power in this situation? Knowing what motivates you allows you to motivate yourself again when necessary.

2. Nothing to fear: When our emotions run the show, we can become terrified of our own fear. Franklin D. Roosevelt inspired a depressed nation by saying “the only thing we have to fear but is fear itself”. This is always true. If you find yourself afraid of your own fear, it's time to work through your fear. Get some help. You don't have to live in fear!

3. Learn to breathe. Becoming courageous is an intricate balance between feeling your fear and still moving forward. It's important to learn how to manage your fear. When you notice you are feeling fear, learn to take a few deep breaths. Tell yourself, “relax” or “there is nothing to fear”. Exercise is also an excellent way to reduce your overall anxiety.

4. You are not alone. It's impossible to be courageous alone. Isolated people are often afraid. If you are isolated, it's time to reach out to other people. Find a support group. Join a book club. Get a second job working with the public. It can be frightening to reach out to other people. There are lots of people in your same situation. You are not alone.

Courage is a delicate balance between knowing and understanding your fear and continuing forward. We are designed to respond to our fear. Yet we are courageous by nature. Make an effort to be courageous. Your life will expand in wonderful and amazing ways.

the
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