



“Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees all others.”-- Winston Churchill

I've always loved the topic of courage. Courage reminds me of people who are heroic when it's hard to be fearless. Thoughts of soldiers, police officers and firefighters usually pop into our minds when we think of individuals with courage. Last year I read an online article in an Illinois newspaper. The author, Frank Haney, spoke of two different types of courage: Loud Courage and Quiet Courage. This is something to think about!

What is Loud Courage? Well, the article said “it's the stuff legends are made of” and I believe it.

My great Uncle Gilbert Bennett lost his life in World War II when his plane went down over enemy lines in the European Theater. Uncle Gib's courage started before he even boarded his aircraft the day of his 23rd birthday in 1945. As the bombardier, his place on the plane was in a small compartment under the seat of the pilot. If the plane were to have troubles or be shot down it would be nearly impossible for him to get out. For this reason the number of parachutes on this aircraft did not include one for him. Gib knew this before he boarded and within a few hours he lost his life as he went down with the plane. All his crew-mates survived, even as captured prisoners of war, to return home to their families. Uncle Gib and the others on that flight showed the kind of Loud Courage that “legends are made of”.

Now, what about the quiet type of courage? Quiet Courage is far much more subtle but just as important as Loud Courage.

Quiet courage is when you don't postpone what you know you should do. We all have projects, goals, and aspirations that we work on no matter what age we are. As you make efforts towards meeting your goals or finishing a project have you

noticed how quickly LIFE gets in your way? Mr. Haney wrote, “Quiet courage is taking that next step toward a goal even when the conditions are not ideal...(it) is executing when there is a perfectly good excuse for putting something off....”.

How do we benefit when we use Quiet Courage instead of excuses in our daily lives? Mr. Haney gave several examples in his article but I'll paraphrase just three:

1) The tired parent, who after a very long day, takes 15 minutes to read to a child because they know that children who read with their parents have advantages in life over children who don't. It's with quite courage a tired parent takes care of the future.

2) The student who works hard and keeps life in perspective. They recognize how challenging it can be to balance a social life with academic life and a spiritual/family life. It takes quiet courage to not succumb to peer pressure as they look toward future goals.

3) The employee who stays late to make extra calls when the economy tightens and competition is intense. They show quiet courage in helping to secure not only their employment but that of others.

Courage is a characteristic that can and should be developed. We must dare ourselves to exercise this exceptional quality. Courage, whether Loud or Quiet is not done without fear or dread, it's done in the face of it.

Randi Powell, Lindon City Council

Book List



One More Border by Killiam Kaplan and Shelley Tanaka

The Legend of Sleeping Bear by Kathy -jo Wargin

The Lost Sailor by Pam Conrad

Seven Brave Women by Betsy Hearne

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man by David A. Adler

Cello of Mr. O by Jane Cutler

Family Activities

1. Carlyn has taken piano lessons for 1 year. However, she is also very shy. Her first recital is in one month. She is terribly frightened of the event. Discuss as a family your answers to this question: *What does courage have to do with accomplishing tasks despite emotional, physical, or mental handicaps?*
2. David Ben-Gurion said, "Courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared." Have your family make a list of some foolish fears and then a list of some rational fears. Talk about the courage they have used in overcoming difficult situations. Look for examples of courage in the lives community members, then write a Chronicle of Courage about someone's life of valor.
3. Baron Pierre De Coubertin said, "The most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well." There is a poem that talks about the courage of the one that loses:

Let others cheer the winning man,

There's one I hold worthwhile;
 'Tis he who does the best he can,
 Then loses with a smile.
 Beaten he is, but not to stay
 Down with the rank and file;
 That man will win some other day,
 Who loses with a smile.

Have each family member write about the kind of courage it takes to do your best, even when you are losing. Memorize the poem as a family.

Thoughts on Courage

"Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air."—John Quincy Adams

"He who loses wealth loses much; he who loses a friend loses more; but he that loses his courage loses all."-- Miguel De Cervantes

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear." --Mark Twain¹³

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." --Walt Disney

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Lindon Character Connection is a not-for-profit organization encouraging the enhancement of character development in our community. We are accepting volunteer or financial support.

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