

Choosing Courage

The Everyday Guide to being brave at work

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Aspire as we might there are as of yet few truly ‘fearless organizations’ where one can speak his/her mind.

We all have fairly regular opportunities to act in courageous ways, to undertake actions that we or others perceive to be worthy or noble despite the risks the behavior entails.

This book challenges the notion that courage is a province and responsibility of the few.

This book is about kinds of behaviors that are desperately heeded in organizations if individuals and organizations are going to learn, be healthy and thrive.

Workplace courage is work domain relevant acts done for a worthy cause despite significant risks perceivable in the moment to the actor.

Workplace courage comes in many forms – speaking truth to power, to peers, to subordinates whose behavior is causing problems or falling short of what’s possible.

People normally view courage as a rare trait practiced by a few

We have to act courageously and cannot hide behind expressions like 'we cant all be gandhi or mandela''

If you want things to be better at work, the only thing you control is your willingness to take action.

Our instincts are honed by what we see. Sadly we see people who lack courage get ahead – at least in the short term. This is ‘getting ahead by getting along’.

One of the reasons people are not courageous is their need to be liked. We certainly don't want to be disliked.

Most of us have potential career risks. Despite all the talk about flatter organizations with more shared leadership, most still have bosses and are still wage dependent in one way or the other.

When someone acts courageously, the people in the organization say they had a 'great sense of pride' and people were motivated to work harder and be more creative”

I offer you two reasons why you should choose
courage- " legacy and regret"

Truth to power behaviors includes:

1. Confronting or challenging direct bosses
2. Acting with more autonomy than you technically have
3. Protecting or promoting others and
4. Owning your mistakes.

Courage is often in short supply not just because the world of work is filled with objective risk, but also because we are hardwired to overestimate it.

Truth to power includes challenging bosses on strategic direction, pushing back on boss's boss on poor strategy or choices.

Speaking truth to power also includes standing up for people who are being mistreated.

The people we challenge are least likely to see our challenge as 'courageous'.

The risks of physical harm are in all kinds of workplaces , like journalism, like police etc.

Acts of courage can also be about confronting peers and subordinates about inadequate work quality or quantity or timelessness/responsiveness.

Acts of courage are also about disagreeing with a broadly shared view or popular position held by peers.

Engaging in a difficult or unpleasant conversation with customers , external partners or stakeholders is also an act of courage.

Quitting your job isn't the only way to show courage.

Workplace courage also has social and psychological risks.

Workplace courage is putting your values on the line, few people do it.

Aristotle argues that courage is a moral virtue developed through habit, and Stanley Rachman's research in military settings two thousand years later proved Aristotle right.

The absence of fear is not courage, it is some form of brain damage. Courage is the capacity to get ahead despite fear, in spite of pain.

Small but consistent acts of goodness show people that you really care. Warmth engenders some trust.

Though warmth is important, in an organizational context, warmth with competence is worth listening to.

Many people feel financially trapped in a job and hence lack courage, sometimes we ourselves spin this web to suit the traps, called “financial handcuffs”

Work life is filled with things that irritate us.
The challenge is get clarity on when to engage
and when to let go.

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but something else is more important than fear” -
Ambrose Redmoon

Clarity about key values and goals also helps a person know when they have to act because 'this is who I am'.

Emotions play a huge role in how courageous acts turn out.

‘Good emotional control’ does not equal to ‘show no emotions’. There is a mistaken notion that good leaders don’t show emotions.

What we do after a courageous act is more important than the big moment itself.

You have two choices when you face setbacks
– you can view them as conclusive results or
chances to get data you can learn from.

Michael Jordan the greatest basketball star didn't get recruited by his top college choice, he practiced longer and harder than anyone else after that rejection.

Hoping or thinking that we will be courageous when the right moment comes along is a cowardly approach. We cannot become someone in 30 seconds that we haven't been for the past ten years.

Things can change for you and the others , but
you must out in the effort.

Courage also requires a 'must do it attitude"

Colin Kaepernick the quarterback San Francisco 49 ers, knelt down when the national anthem was played for black lives matter. In the end he found himself out of a job, but he is happy to live with the consequences.

