

4 Myths about Courage at Work

By Sandra Walston, The Courage Expert

Debunking a few myths about courage in the workplace:

1. Most People Display Courage at Work

Like demonstrating ethical standards, most people tend to be followers. There are loads of stories that when asked or told to do something unethical, most people will do what they are told. With courage, when a situation requires you to display your heart, do you fall on your sword or cross swords? For example, working at a hospital, you notice that a peer decides to reduce the number of procedures required to disinfect and sterilize surgical utensils. Will you be the whistle-blower?

2. Everybody Is a Hero at Heart

Most people believe firefighters and police officers are heroes. They were called heroes after Sept. 11. However, ask these professionals if they think of themselves as heroes and they will say, “No, I am trained to do my job. If you call 911, it’s a day from hell for you, not me.” Most people are not “heroes,” but we seem to associate only heroes with having courage. Certainly the hijacked group of 9/11 passengers who curtailed the loss of additional lives demonstrated heroic passenger boldness. However, everyday courage is not that amazing. We just pay tribute to these types of courageous actions more than we practice them.

3. Courage Leadership Development in Business Is Easy

If the goal is to implement a courageous culture, then employees must be led by example. It’s the same with quality control, risk-management and diversity. Courage leadership in business means managing with courage the paradoxes that occur, such as:

- If I tell my boss we’ve understated our debt by a billion dollars, I lose my job. If I don’t tell my boss, I may go to jail.
- Are you given assignments that don’t make sense? What do you do? (This example tends to be more prominent the higher up one goes.)
- If people are empowered with courage, then how do I stop them or control them?

4. Past Generations Had an Easier Time Being Courageous Because Work Was Less Complicated

Courageous behaviors displayed by Florence Nightingale, Henry Ford and Smuckers (a family business noted as one of the best companies to work for) were just as difficult to attain then as they are now. All generations have a set of barriers to overcome. That’s just one more reason why courageous behaviors in the workplace must be managed, such as being able to admit a mistake (error reduction), speaking up with candor and grace when facing a difficult situation, promoting an ability to think on your feet, tackling issues as the facts happen, sponsoring challenges to the model/system and creating a culture that commends instead of blames, to name a few.

About the Author:

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Specializing in understanding courage behaviors, individual personalities and leadership styles that focus on the tricks and traps of the human condition, the author/trainer facilitates individuals and groups in discovering their hidden talents. She is the internationally published author of the regional bestseller, *Courage: The Heart and Spirit of Every Woman/Reclaiming the Forgotten Virtue* (Greece and Brazil). Her second book is currently agent represented. She is qualified to administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® and is a certified Enneagram teacher. Currently she is a candidate for an Honorary Doctorate Degree.

Sandra provides skill-based programs for public and private businesses, including Caterpillar, Inc., Auburn University, Procter & Gamble, Wyoming Department of Health Public Nurses, Farmers Insurance, Wide Open West and Hitachi Consulting. With over eleven years of experience with finance professionals, she instructs for the University of Denver Graduate Tax Program Continuing Professional Education courses and she formerly taught for the Colorado Society of CPAs. To learn more about how Sandra can help your business cultivate success or to purchase a copy of her first book, visit www.sandrawalston.com or contact her 303.696.1010 or Sandra@SandraWalston.com.