

# The Many Definitions of Courage

## By Sandra Walston, The Courage Expert

THERE ARE MANY definitions of courage on the Web such as: “Courage, also known as bravery, will and fortitude, is the ability to confront fear, pain, risk/danger, uncertainty” or “the quality of a confident character not to be afraid or intimidated easily but without being incautious or inconsiderate; the ability to do things which one finds frightening” (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/courage>). These definitions narrow courage to facing and dealing with danger and fear. Courage is much more complex than spontaneous reactions to traumatic events.

In my thirteen years of original courage research, I return to the etymology of courage based on the Old French corage, meaning “heart and spirit.” There is a big difference between physical bravado versus generic heart and spirit. This is where the power of personal courage lives—a quality so important that it qualifies as one of the four cardinal virtues. This distinction empowers people to realize their full potential as courageous human beings.

Pulp fiction, comic books, action-oriented television programs and films have all contributed to the limiting, male-oriented view of courage. For women, it may be even more important because the more they recognize the essence of their courage, the more society will break from its stereotypical understanding of courage as physical daring or bravado.

To fully understand this concept of courage, it might be best to start with a foundation that reveals a few perspectives about what courage is and is not. Join me next time to learn what “impoverished courage” looks like.

### **About the Author:**

Sandra Ford Walston, The Courage Expert, innovator of STUCKThinking™, is an organizational effectiveness/learning consultant, speaker, corporate trainer and courage coach. 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

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