

## Courageous Leadership Skills: Busters and Backers

Courage is often considered as taking bold life or death actions: someone who runs into a burning building to save a child or lands a plane on the Hudson with no deaths as Captain Sully Sullenberger did. But, there are every day examples that demonstrate courage actions—the actions that reveal our heart and spirit (the original definition of courage) such as eliminating the busters called conformity and complacency. Check off the behaviors you, your team, or your organization demonstrate and note where you're weighted in your courage branding value.

### Courage Backers—Ways Leaders Construct Courage

- Being an advocate for continued learning
- Admitting mistakes (holding oneself 100% accountable)
- Listening for intent
- Keeping promises and stating them clearly (applying sophisticated linguistic skills)
- Asking a lot of “you questions” versus “I” statements
- Revealing vulnerability such as admitting when you don't know anything about the topic
- Demonstrating positive actions (saying, “Why not!”) versus being a naysayer
- Seeking feedback
- Sustaining rapport with employees at all levels (equal playing field)
- Implementing collaboration (versus consensus)
- Eliminating courage killers such as conformity and complacency
- Reflecting before responding (rediscover silence)

### Courage Busters—Ways Leaders Corrode Courage

- Favoritism versus treating people equally
- Focused on their own advancement/posturing
- Afraid to take risks such as asking for the tough project no one wants
- Disengaged from staff members
- Not keeping people informed (hoarding data)
- Unhealthy ego that bullies, both overt and covert such as “them versus us”
- Lack of transparent communication
- Not organized (more reactive—“last person in wins”)
- Unable to be reflective before responding (“I am so busy” mantra)
- Incapable to admit errors and take responsibility
- Minimal insight to understand the human condition based on personality tools
- Unable to acknowledge a problem exists (denial—denial is saying “no” to courage)
- Powerless to respond to “first red flags”
- Perpetuates a culture of corruption: “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil”

## Outcome of Busters:

- Higher potential for employees to exit the organization
- Demoralized employees who feel discouraged and unfulfilled
- Unproductive employees (expect to be paid 100% but give 75%)
- High level of complacency (resignation to living)
- Lower levels of courage consciousness prevail
- Undetected application of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) such as spirit contracting (spiritual bankruptcy) versus spirit expanding
- Low trust levels exist
- Lack of civility (and a clear understanding civility: Free Dictionary Online definition of civility as “polite or courteous behavior” or “the act of showing regard for others”)
- Racquet of hypocrisy

**You cannot learn courage by doing something you already know!**

### About the Author:

Sandra Ford Walston, known as The Courage Expert and innovator of StuckThinking™, is a learning consultant, corporate trainer and courage coach. Sandra’s expertise allows her to focus on the tricks and traps of the human condition through recognizing and interpreting courage behaviors and courageous leadership styles.

Featured on the speaker circuit as witty, provocative, concrete and insightful, she has changed the lives of thousands of leaders each year. Sandra also provides skills-based programs for some of the most respected public and private blue-chip businesses and organizations in the world such as IBM, Caterpillar, Inc., Institute of Internal Auditors, Hensel Phelps, Wide Open West, Agrium, Inc., Virginia Commonwealth University, Procter and Gamble, City of Englewood, Colorado Healthcare Association of HR Management, and Institute of Management Accountants.

The internationally published author of bestseller *COURAGE* and an honored author selected for Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, Sandra facilitates individuals and groups to discover the power and inspiration of their everyday courage.



*STUCK 12 Steps Up the Leadership Ladder*, Sandra’s follow-up book to *COURAGE*, is directed at any woman, regardless of title or credentials, who wishes to grow professionally by introducing courage actions at work. Her third book, *FACE IT! 12 Obstacles that Hold You Back on the Job* confirms that what holds you back on the job is the same as what hinders achievement—the reluctance to face and live a courageous life. Sandra is published in magazines such as *Chief Learning Officer*, *Training & Development*, *HR Matters*, *Malaysia*, and *Strategic Finance*.

Sandra is qualified to administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, is a certified Enneagram teacher, and an instructor at the University of Denver. She can be reached at [www.sandrawalston.com](http://www.sandrawalston.com) where she posts a courage blog and courage newsletter.

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