

COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP



An INside Job!

What is Courageous Leadership?

Taking action is a critical part of courage. Below are a collection of examples of courageous leadership that move you closer to the bull's-eye. Hitting the bull's-eye means you're coming from your "heart and spirit," the etymology of the word which is Old French, *corage*.



- Courageous leadership is confronting an uncomfortable truth/issue such as admitting you made a bad hire.
- Courageous leadership is not being afraid to take negative action when necessary.
- Courageous leadership is seeing you as a leader, no matter what your role or position.
- Courageous leadership is confronting or stopping any type of bullying or toxic behaviors.
- Courageous leadership is not letting a worn-out script define you.
- Courageous leadership is releasing the attachment to an outcome, knowing you can handle whatever comes next.
- Courageous leadership is not letting a disability define you.
- Courageous leadership is sharing a part of you that you are not so proud of—in an effort to grow or help another grow.
- Courageous leadership is letting go of a relationship or client that is familiar but not healthy.
- Courageous leadership is trusting the process.
- Courageous leadership is moving from your false self to your True Self.
- Courageous leadership is a state of mind.

***Courageous leadership
is a state of mind.***

Important: There is a direct correlation between your courage quotient and success.

How to Recognize the Hindrances to Everyday Courage and Courageous Leadership

- The media seeks headlines. Courage is not about being loud, such as to rise in protest, but your daily journey.
- Courage is a BIG word! You have a mindset about what it means. What is your definition of courage? This definition will be the assessment you hold.
- Most people think of courage to be physical courage, such as saving a drowning child.
- Our culture prefers knee-jerk reactions rather than discernment.
- The concept of courage I offer is simple, but the ego prefers to create complex and complicated matrixes or difficulties.
- We go through life expecting certainty.



- Many people prefer to stay stuck in their scripts like *Groundhog Day*—creating the same old experiences and perpetuating the same suffering rather than utilize courage consciousness. This cycle is called StuckThinking™. Examples include conformity and complacency, and these behaviors keep you on automatic—keep you from hitting the mark of the bull’s-eye target. Missing the mark means living unskillfully or blindly perpetuating suffering. Suffering is a choice that secures the False Self/ego.

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- Many of us prefer a courage pill saying, “Give me the damn pill!” rather than integrating self-discipline.
- Most people think courage only has to do with fear or being foolhardy, being desperate or responding physically in split-second situations, rather than being heart-centered.
- Hindrances of courageous leadership require that you learn how to manage paradoxes that show up at work by applying your everyday courage. For example, if people are empowered with courage how do I control them or if you are given an assignment that doesn’t make sense, what do you do?
- Courage is caged in the workplace, such as not finding value in mistakes or not nurturing employees’ gifts and ideas. Can you imagine if the man sitting in front of the radar screen directing the landing of the space shuttle was one degree off course? You don’t want someone screaming “Houston, we have a problem!”



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“Houston, we have a problem.”

How to Notice Behaviors of Lost Courage

- Notice how long you stay stuck on the step of the ladder and observe your justifications (old scripts).
- How often do you sell your soul, such as staying on a job too long?
- What obstacles keep you stuck such as apathy, intimidation or manipulation?
- When do you swallow your voice? Swallowing your voice allows elements of deceit to penetrate your spirit.
- What makes you turn a blind eye keeping you in denial (denial is saying “no” to courage)?
- How many bulls-eyes in a month do you hit? These can be recognized by defining moments.
- How often do you confess your missteps?
- How often do you use the word courage to identify everyday circumstances?



- What are you addicted to? Busy has become a status symbol. Newfield Network founder Julio Olalla said, “We have fallen into the awe of technology. We see an iPhone and we drool. We see an orange and we don’t. And an orange is a completely bigger mystery than an iPhone.”
- Taking too long to take the next step up the ladder. The rungs of a ladder are not a place for complacency—complacency is a courage killer.

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How to Detect Red Flags that Restrict Courageous Leadership

- New ideas are overlooked (reactive)
- Wrong person in wrong job
- Leadership by control; culture demands unquestioning obedience to authority (most people will follow)
- Stagnant business model (“band aide syndrome”)
- Breakdowns are covered up (stakes are too high)
- Politics run the organization
- Stubborn refusal to admit mistakes and express any misgivings



*Breakdowns are covered up
(the stakes are too high).*

How Can You Keep Stepping Up?

Everything I have shared to access courageous leadership into your lives and your work environment cost nothing—zero!!

Only if YOU choose to declare your courageous intention can you change your environment, and there will be a learning curve! Pick just one item below and try it for the rest of the week?

- Start using the word! Say, “Yes!” Rather than yes-no; most of us did not grow up using the word much less applying it to everyday actions.
- Stop for 3 minutes (5 minutes if you have courage) before a meeting to reflect. This is what I call courage-centeredness. Don’t confuse reflection with meditation or prayer. This practice calms us to create a different mood before we interact—it gets you out of automatic.
- Be honest about where you’re stuck—like *Groundhog Day*, we keep doing the same thing over and over—the automatic gear; yet, in our heart of hearts, we all know where we’re stuck.
- At your next meeting or in a personal relationship have what I call a “courageous conversation” (put the elephant in the room).



- Go back to work and ask: “What would we/I do differently if I had unlimited courage?”
- Become a model of courage—demonstrate your courage and use the word. This gives others permission to claim their everyday courage; in other words, en-courage.
- Take time to celebrate those small step accomplishments—not just the double steps—some small steps are like a mountain!

12 Things to Love about Courage

Courage can't see around corners, but goes around them anyway.
Mignon McLaughlin, *The Neurotic's Notebook*, 1960

Everyone can learn to practice courage regardless of career or position. It does not matter if you are a sales associate, graphic designer, project manager, photographer, accountant, administrative assistant, CEO, entrepreneur, journalist, construction worker, electrician, mechanic or stockbroker, you can learn to manifest courage in your work. What can you do?

To manifest courage at work, first you need to know the actions of courage; only then can you apply them and transform your work. Once you begin exhibiting courage at work, you will discover a direct correlation between your courage quotient and your success quotient. What would motivate you to explore where the components of this ancient virtue fit in your work life today? Review the list of "12 Things to Love about Courage" and assess whether you come from a reservoir of courage in your work and personal life.

1. **I love that my courage allows me to spread my wings and be all I can be.** I am driven by an internal courage-fueled energy field that magnifies my spirit's fulfillment. My courage is my antitoxin that I apply to setbacks, hurts or duties. How did I start this process? I gave myself permission to express my individuality! Did someone clip your wings?
2. **I love that my courage supports me to exit bad situations quickly.** Knowing my personal courage mindset allows me to embrace the courage opportunities I face on my journey. I am no stranger to my courage. I also know that I may feel unjustly punished when I stand in my courage, but courage provides the inner strength to rise above the "victim" mindset. Are you a stranger to your courage? My actions become consistently balanced with my courage consciousness. I love my courage!

To manifest courage at work, first you need to know the actions of courage.

3. **I love that my courage sustains me to design a life diminished of regrets.** My courage centeredness defines my intentions. Each step (large or small) is an achievement. When my time comes to leave this life, I want to be able to say and feel in my heart, "I have no regrets. I did it my way." Do you remain deeply consistent with your intentions? If so, reach for the rainbow!
4. **I love that my courage requires me to hold myself one hundred percent accountable for my life's experiences.** I knowingly design those happenings each moment. Courage consciousness supports me as I strive to live in the vibration of my true Self. What life mosaic are you designing? With courage, humility and gratitude merge to dissipate all illusions of self-importance.
5. **I love that my courage competencies expand as I step up the ladder called life.** Stepping up reinforces my reservoir of courage, which sustains me until I am ready to take the next exciting step. That next step may be asking for a tough project or changing my hair color. Is your range of courage expanding? I focus on the ancient Chinese proverb: "He who hesitates before each step spends his life on one leg." Living in courage is economical—it cuts out a myriad of missteps.
6. **I love that my courage self-differentiates me, defining my "brand value."** The driver behind courage is the meaningfulness of *my* life. These qualities are portrayed through my convictions. My courage allows me to reflect. Choosing some form of reflection, I can learn to be more present to the truth of my personal branding distinction. What is your brand value? Herein lies the courage paradox: stay present, and you will do what is best for you!
7. **I love that my courage guides me to focus on best results.** Combining intention with action, courage arms me for success. The power of my spirit illuminates the steps that correlate my success quotient with my courage quotient. Are you willing to sacrifice the external world to find your internal world? It takes courage to design *your* personal blueprint.

Everyday courage has few witnesses.

It is no less noble because no drum beats and no crowds shout your name.

— Robert Louis Stevenson

8. **I love that my courage is a friend during times of uncertainty or difficult transitions.** There is no need for me to run from myself. My courage permits me to be innately motivated. In courage, my life expresses my heart's core, reflecting the root meaning of the word courage: "heart and spirit." Does your life express your heart, your core, your courage? With courage, you can say an absolute "yes" to whatever happens in your life.

9. **I love that my courage develops my success.** I develop my success by declaring my intent. My self-esteem supports me during demanding times. I know that hard decisions come alive in the questions, not the answers. Questions inspire actions. I see events as opportunities rather than sources of anxiety. Wisdom often dawns in the midst of pain, providing words of *encouragement* that should be shared with others. Success is not elusive, and courage is not a barrier to a happy life. Both are venues for *your* light to shine. What is your definition of success?
10. **I love that my courage self-propels me.** I am able to reinvent myself as often as needed. I know that conformity is a courage killer. I focus on my accomplishments and maintain a tough measure of accountability. Self-discipline thwarts any mediocrity that might keep me stuck or in anguish. Are you powerfully passionate about who you are? Nothing is more valuable than deepening your sense of who you are. Self-reflection is the key to self-fulfillment.
11. **I love that my courage allows me to stand in my dignity.** I do not need to manipulate situations. I know storms will enter my life. They offer opportunities for an honest assessment of my vulnerabilities. How frequently do you witness a *mea culpa*? Courage supports me to delve beyond my ego's old behavioral scripts to uncover emotional pain and rewrite those scripts. Only I can choose to stop my suffering created by my ego.
12. **I love that my courage advances my voice.** When I confront an uncomfortable truth, the essence of my authentic courage comes to light, and I claim this energy. In Latin, "virtue" means "energy." Is courage your unsung hero? Are you willing to fall in love with your courage? Courage is the gift that lifts your spirit.

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Sandra Ford Walston

Global speaker [Sandra Ford Walston](#), known as The Courage Expert is a human potential consultant who studies courage.

Sandra is an international [speaker](#) and [author](#), corporate trainer and behavioral [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 sparked positive change in 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., AGN, Institute of Internal Auditors, Hensel Phelps, Wide Open West, Agrium, Inc., Virginia Commonwealth University, Xanterra Parks & Resorts®, Procter and Gamble, Hitachi Consulting, US Bank, Healthcare Association of New York State, Institute of Management Accountants, QBE, and Delta Kappa Gamma International Society.



The internationally published author of bestseller [COURAGE The Heart and Spirit of Every Woman](#) 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.

[The COURAGE Difference at Work: A Unique Success Guide for Women](#), 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 Courageous Actions that Bring Success at Work and Beyond](#) 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](#), [Accelerate](#), Malaysia, [Real Simple](#), [Maria Shiver Blog](#), and [Strategic Finance](#).

She is a certified Newfield life [coach](#) and certified to administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® and the Enneagram. At times, she instructs at the University of Denver. Please review her [Testimonials](#) and connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#).

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“Courage will never be an app—it’s an INside job.” — Sandra Ford Walston

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