

Obstacle 5

Intimidation—Take on the Tough Project

*Courage is not simply one of the virtues,
but the form of every virtue at the testing point.*

— C.S. Lewis

History has frequently glorified the wrong people. Using intimidation as a way to control perceptions, social, political and religious powerbrokers perpetuate the stories that serve their agendas.

A Celtic warrior queen named Boudicca has suffered the neglect of the history (written by her Roman persecutors), but her life exemplified deep-rooted courage in the face of extreme obstacles, especially **intimidation**. “As she stood in her war chariot facing the Roman army of Gaius Suetonius Paulinus ... she had her two young teenage daughters by her side. ‘This is the first time Britons have been led to battle by a woman.’... Boudicca, the ‘Victorious,’ went on her way to meet her fate and take her place in the history books.”¹ But many times, historians (in this case, the Romans) doubted or discounted a woman’s contribution, thereby delegating her actions to the realm of folktale and mythology. For centuries, women’s stories and what it means to be a woman have been lost or misrepresented through intimidation.

The Romans invaded southern England in 43 AD when Boudicca’s husband was king. When he died around 60 AD, Boudicca discovered that her husband had betrayed her, leaving half his kingdom to their two daughters and the other half to Rome. Boudicca feared that her people would lose not only their land but also their language and traditions under Roman rule.² “The Iceni kingdom was ravaged and looted. When she protested, Boudicca was stripped and whipped in public while her young teenage daughters, Epona and Drieda, were raped in front of her.”³ History is unclear about how the destitute Boudicca was able to pull the other tribes and small kingdoms together for an uprising, but she did just that. Her goal was clear: to free Britain from Roman plundering, taxes and slavery. Instead of bowing to intimidation, she exercised her courage to

Take on the tough project.

Boudicca’s name came to mean “Woman of the Sword,’... for she raised an army of 230,000 British men and women to defy the mighty power of Rome.”⁴ Eventually, the Roman army crushed Boudicca’s rebellion, and her story of feminine courage was buried for centuries. Much later, in the late 1800s, Queen Victoria enjoyed traveling the countryside and reflecting on the glories of Britain’s past. Graham Webster writes, “On her exciting tour of northern Scotland in 1872, she found many roads decked with triumphal arches bearing messages in Gaelic... ‘To Victoria, our gratitude.’... The name

of the famous queen of the Iceni was actually Boudicca, which meant precisely 'Victoria.'... The name is the only link between these two great women, both enshrined in British history but separated by almost two millennia."⁵ On the Thames River, opposite of Big Ben, is a massive bronze statue with Boudicca standing on a chariot being pulled by roaring horses. The statue honors how she led one of the bloodiest English revolts.

Climbing the Ladder

Learning to observe how intimidation has you stuck and applying the appropriate courage actions offers an opportunity to awaken and master the internal competencies of courage. One of my favorite analogies for claiming your courage is climbing a stepladder. The lowest, easiest step on the ladder represents giving yourself permission to claim your courage (Obstacle 1). Each consecutive step becomes higher and narrower, but each step also takes you closer to your calling and empowers you to create your unique career path. Near the top of the ladder, the ascent can get a little shaky, but each step prepares you and invites you to take the next step. Soon, you learn, "Not *what* you do, but *how* you do what you do determines whether you are fulfilling your destiny. And how you do what you do is determined by your state of consciousness."⁶ Are you frozen on the ladder of your life?

The founder and director of a prestigious international education program encountered the most intimidating situation she had ever faced. In the year the program was to receive its accreditation recertification, Ms. Hildebrand learned that she would have to perform all of her work on a PC using Windows instead of her accustomed Mac. Precious time sifted through the hourglass as she not only learned the new software, but also converted over 4,000 documents to a new format. Budget cuts meant no clerical or technical help. She was on her own. Feeling overwhelmed and abandoned, Ms. Hildebrand found herself in an unaccustomed position of feeling intimidated by something as simple as a desktop computer.

*Obstacles will look large or small to you according
to whether you are large or small.⁷*

When you are honest about your shortcomings, you earn the understanding and respect of others. Piero Ferrucci writes in *Inevitable Grace*, "We go through life constantly looking for guarantees, endeavoring to control people and circumstances, striving to conform the world to our plans... What if we fully surrendered? Such an attitude entails courage, generosity, and the truthfulness that enables us to call ourselves into question, risking everything we are."⁸ When facing intimidation, courageous people step up. Ms. Hildebrand accepted her shortcomings yet acted effectively to overcome this obstacle: she relied on students to train her and parent volunteers to convert the data. In spite of the obstacles, she took on the tough project and overcame intimidation.

George Buckley, an electrical engineer and CEO of 3M Corporation, offered these words during an interview: "I think, actually, of the seven or eight qualities of leadership—we could list qualities of leadership—I actually think courage is the highest

among them because we are always faced by risk and by uncertainty, and you can't always forecast everything... So courage is necessary for a person to get off the dime and make the right kind of decision, a courageous decision, in order to make a company grow and improve on where it is today."⁹

The King and the Pawn

The courage of a CEO like Buckley may influence a wider realm than the arc of your courage, but courage behaviors are learned in everyday decisions. Just focus on the moment, make courageous adjustments, step up and remember:

*Once the game is over, the king and the pawn go back in the same box.*¹⁰

Andrea Jung, CEO of Avon and one of ten *Fortune 500* female CEOs said, "Statistics show that it's still a story when women reach the very top of the ladder, and we have a responsibility to create paths for women to succeed."¹¹ People applying the essence of courage seek out difficult tasks and take risks that force them to perform above their usual skill and knowledge levels. Yet, even the most courageous women I interviewed experienced periods of self-doubt (See Obstacle 9) when preparing to take the next step up the ladder. "At the time, I was not sure that I was the right person for the job," said CEO of Time Warner Telecom Larissa Herda. "Most of the jobs I have taken I have had doubts about, because I have taken such big jumps."¹² This type of intimidation undermines courage at work and helps explain why, "Three decades after droves of women started business careers, and at a time when 50.3 percent of all managers and professionals are female, women still comprise fewer than 2 percent of *Fortune 1000* CEOs and just 7.9 percent of *Fortune 500* top earners."¹³

A woman who noticed that a high-ranking position would soon be vacated said, "I thought about it and thought about it. So I did the somewhat brazen thing and went over and asked, "Can I have Vicki's job?"¹⁴ What's wrong with asking, and why is it "brazen" to ask? Why would this be viewed as an obstacle called intimidation? If you're too intimidated to ask, you don't get the opportunity to step up! Perceiving her action as brazen versus courageous exemplifies a feminine need to rework our inner dialogue. Do you see yourself as brazen, bold, brash, blatant or forward at work? Or are you a courageous woman overcoming intimidation to achieve success intertwined with happiness in your job? To overcome the obstacles of the mind, it helps if you find the love in your heart that represents your passion.

Recognize the difference between your potential and your experience. For example, if you move to another division, can you gain experience, develop new skills and broaden your business horizons? Try not to match your style or skills to fit a "perfect" checklist. Do not be intimidated by perfection, but express your expectations and cultivate new abilities. Like any other ability, we all have courage to varying degrees, but to exercise it requires conscious choice.

*The shrewd guess, the fertile hypothesis, the courageous leap to a tentative conclusion — these are the most valuable coin of the thinker at work.*¹⁵

Expanding your reservoir of courage to encompass coercion takes practice and commitment. Human Resource Director Denise wrote, “I think women sometimes don’t recognize their courage because they just think it’s what women do.” Denise believes women do not claim their courage at work because perceived intimidating barriers such as labels and blame overshadow the benefits. For example, “Fear of being labeled a bitch keeps women from claiming their courage at work. Uncertainty within the workforce can also keep women from claiming their courage, especially if they are working in traditional male fields.”

Charlene Begley, CEO of GE Transportation Rail, said in an interview, “Anybody can go to a job with a high-growth business and do well. That’s easy. Go to a really broken business and make your mark. Those are the most rewarding.”¹⁶ The size of the project, your position, title or industry does not matter. The tough project could be anything that challenges you to reach out. “True leadership is not easy. That may be why leadership is not widespread. The world in which we live encourages ‘boutique’ leadership—where we find comfortable niches in which to become involved but rarely take on the tough work that comes with making fundamental and needed change... Leadership springs from simple and often small acts of courage, where doing the right thing becomes more important than personal security or gain.”¹⁷ But be alert, the concepts presented here are deceptively simple. The ego will want to undermine (or obliterate) them. After all, how could something so easy work and be filled with joy?

Happy Conduit

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, observed that “people reported the greatest sense of well-being while pursuing challenging activities, sometimes even at work, and often while immersed in a hobby. In a “flow state”, Csikszentmihalyi found, people engage so completely in what they are doing that they lose track of time. Hours pass in minutes. All sense of self recedes. At the same time, they are pushing beyond their limits and developing new abilities. Indeed, the best moments usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to capacity...They become more self-confident, capable, and sensitive.”¹⁸ To circumvent intimidation, when was the last time you sought out a difficult task that forced you to perform above your usual skill and knowledge levels?

To diminish dispiritedness and accentuate the joy of being in the flow, find the project that will focus you on a positive state of mind. The experience is waiting for you. Then you will live through and know the truth of Dr. Hawkins’ words.

*That a verifiable truth about everything and anything
anywhere in the universe is accessible for the mere asking
is so astonishing that it challenges every basic human assumption.*¹⁹

You know the saying: “If you don’t ask, you don’t get.” To turn your work into joy, you must act on your own truth. Courageous women have found they can hurdle the consequence of staying stuck by asking for the tough project—not asking for high

levels of stress or even more money, but utilizing the energy of courage to combine purpose with spiritual growth.

“Recent research into happiness demonstrates that the happiest people aren’t those with the most money but those with a sense of purpose—a sense that they are contributing to something bigger than themselves... People want to believe they’re part of something meaningful,”²⁰ wrote Margaret Heffernan. Ask yourself when you last felt like you were performing your best at work. Are you a happy conduit enhancing the flow of success in your company? If not, all you have to do is change the direction in which you are looking for happiness—“to take stock of our emotional programs for happiness based on instinctual needs and to change them.”²¹ What next resume star are your passions pursuing? If you have reached a professional dead-end or there is a project you have always wanted to take on, maybe you need to examine intimidation and add the courage action: “*Take on the tough project*” to your DCI.

Betsy Bernard left a *Fortune 500* company as the highest-ranking female executive to become President of AT&T Business. Bernard said of the job that put her in position to build and run a *Fortune 500* company: “It was a job no one wanted.”²² Bernard initiated her success when she stepped up to take on the tough project—the job that intimidated everybody else. Volunteering for a project that nobody wants could be just the thing to propel your career to the next step, especially if you have a tendency toward self-intimidation. Remember that the power and range of your courage expands the higher you climb on your ladder of success. Imagine that, as you step onto the first rung of our metaphorical leadership ladder, you are allowing the light of your courage to shine. As you step higher on the ladder, the glow of your courage grows stronger as the heights of your success also raise the visibility of your light. This radiance is your life! Find ways to step up and enlighten your environment. Ask to join a more challenging project team. Move to another division. Intensify your networking efforts. To feel accomplished or fulfilled, you must consciously do the kind of work that makes you happy. Don’t over identify with your role because soon you will be lost in the script. “Think of your consciousness in terms of physical light. That light shines, but a brighter light shines over a wider range, and a dimmer light shines on a smaller range.”²³

Rung of the Ladder

Using the standard ladder metaphor again to demonstrate stepping up in courageous leadership creates a simple yet powerful visual when I speak or conduct Courage Centering training. When I climb the ladder, attendees easily recognize which rung of the ladder they are on and how long they have been precariously perched on that step. Standing on a step with one leg dangling, I ask the members of the audience to think if intimidation might be the obstacle they are facing (or avoiding). Then I say, “This reminds me of an ancient Chinese proverb: “He who hesitates before each step spends his life on one leg.” Invariably, people know why they are stuck and what it will take to overcome the obstacle they face. One moment of courageous clarity can work miracles in your career advancement. What has to happen to motivate you to confront intimidation? In the words of Sir Edmund Hillary: “It is not the mountain we conquer, but

ourselves."²⁴ And the only way to conquer ourselves is through the internal work of our contemplative practice. Connecting with your courageous heart and spirit is the path to your true Self.

For courageous leaders like Hillary, settling is never acceptable. Business owner Donna Cameron knows about courage. "Courage is accepting change in the workplace, whether it's a change in job description or being required to learn something new or simply saying 'yes' when asked to do something that takes you out of your comfort zone [taking on the tough project]. With each change that is incorporated or accepted, your courage increases to take on the next one. Some people seem to thrive on these kinds of changes, while others put all their energy into resistance."

Donna's insights resonate with the teachings of Eckhart Tolle. "Nonresistance is the key to the greatest power in the universe. Through it, consciousness (spirit) is freed from its imprisonment in form... Resistance makes the world and the things of the world appear more real, more solid, and more lasting than they are, including your own form identity, the ego... The play of form is then misinterpreted as a struggle for survival, and when that is your perception, it becomes your reality."²⁵

*As you go along your road in life, you will, if you aim high enough,
also meet resistance ... but no matter how tough the opposition
may seem, have courage still—and persevere.*²⁶

Rest assured the true you will prevail despite outside pressures. Simply progressing up the steps one after the other will brighten the light of courage and deepen your internal courage reserves.

Shift of One Degree

In their own rights, Queen Boudicca and Queen Victoria were rulers of their people and accepted as war leaders. Ensclosed in the traditional male leadership roles, these two women conveyed spiritual will and accepted the tough assignments. Ferrucci writes, "An act of will is not effort alone; it is choice—the choice of one belief over another belief... With will we are able to model what we wish to become; without will we are modeled by events, carried at random by the stream of life."²⁷

Overcoming the obstacles women face on the corporate ladder requires you to become more assertive and less risk averse. "The research study identifies striking behavioral differences between senior female executives and their male counterparts... Senior executive women become increasingly less assertive, more formal and more risk-averse."²⁸ Peter Bernstein writes that "the word 'risk' derives from the early-Italian *risicare*, which means 'to dare.' Thought of this way, risk is not a fate but a choice—something that we choose to assume in our work, in our careers, and in our companies."²⁹ Applying courageous will to take on the tough project is not about being foolhardy or defiant.

What is your courage tolerance level and how comfortable are you with the prospect of *failing*? How much does intimidation differentiate your career? In *Truth vs Falsehood*, Dr. Hawkins writes,

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The steps out of failure, unhappiness, frustration, lack, want, anger, and depression are deceptively simple. Life is a voyage comparable to being out at sea in which a shift of one degree on the ship's compass will determine by the end of the trip whether or not one is hundreds of miles off course. The strongest tool, which already exists within, is the spiritual will itself, which, when firmly set, will face and take on any obstacle. It is the spiritual will that determines the success of the venture.³⁰

Donna Cameron spotted women's courage when she was a little girl.

My father took me to the library every Saturday morning and I remember taking out dozens of biographies of women. So, Harriet Tubman, Nelly Bly, Molly Pitcher, Clara Barton, Florence Nightingale, Dolly Madison and Sacagawea all influenced me. Rather than say any one woman influenced the direction of my life, I would say that I was influenced as a child by the multitude and diversity of courageous women I encountered between the pages of books. The cumulative message being that I could do or be anything I wanted to be, and that I could also forge my own path and be absolutely unique and individual.

Donna continued, "Courage is so much more than feats of derring-do. Courage can be 'soft' as well as 'hard.' Courage can be an act of kindness as well as an assertive action. Courage is living one's values and being authentic. Courage may be showing emotion or asking for help. Courage is honesty and integrity." She shared an excerpt from German poet, Rainier Maria Rilke (1872-1926):

*We have no reason to mistrust our world, for it is not against us.
Has it terrors, they are our terrors; has it abysses, those abysses belong
to us; are dangers at hand, we must try to love them... Perhaps all
the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave.
Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest
being something helpless that wants help from us.*³¹

Everyday women, like Donna (and you), display courage all the time, even when they appear to be hopelessly stuck.

Cold Feet

The perception of security can be the proverbial albatross hanging around your neck making it difficult to take a step anywhere, much less up. Ferrucci continues, "In the long run, security—if we ever think we have it—kills curiosity and wonder. Risk, on the other hand, has a spiritual value... Only by taking risks can we truly be... By challenging our most ingrained personality structures, we earn a salutary shake-up. It is impossible to take risks and remain what we were."³² Are you willing to bet the farm? Many entrepreneurs ask, "What do I have to lose?" If you have consciously nurtured your courage throughout your career(s), the transition to entrepreneurialism is easier.

How many old scripts in your head prevent you from avoiding intimidation? When was the last time you felt excited and curious about what was coming next? Remember our theme:

*Flush out a deeper awareness of your heart and spirit by learning
to stop and embrace some form of stillness that allows reflection.*

Be more present to your heart's intentions.

Self-improvement separates courage-centered people from the pack. Ask these questions: "Why does it take me so long to make a change?" "How do I use my downtime?" Would I prefer to believe that my company will take care of me?" Hindu sage Paramahansa Yogananda says, "Often we continue to suffer without making an effort to change; that is why we don't find lasting peace and contentment. If we would persevere, we would certainly be able to conquer all difficulties. We must make the effort, that we may go from misery to happiness, from despondency to courage."³³ Again, we touch upon one of our four themes:

Teach yourself to confront obstacles by applying a specific courage action.

Changing the direction in which you look for happiness takes enormous courage. Do you wish to control your career or have your ego control it for you? The false self (ego) does not want you to find the limitless joy available through the truth of your own identity; yet, it is deceptively simple to find! Morris L West said,

It takes so much to be a full human being that there are very few who have the enlightenment or the courage to pay the price... One has to abandon altogether the search for security, and reach out to the risk of living with both arms. One has to embrace the world like a lover. One has to accept pain as a condition of existence. One has to court doubt and darkness as the cost of knowing. One needs a will stubborn in conflict, but apt always to total acceptance of every consequence of living and dying.³⁴

"In a society that seems to value only work, it requires a strong sense of security to stop working and engage other parts of the brain, but the benefits of doing so pay significant dividends."³⁵ Is it difficult for you to risk your security? Too worried that a risk might backfire, most people wait and wait, caught up in self-intimidating scripts that prevent them from mustering the courage and to take the plunge. It is your courage that supports your ability to let go of deadly attitudes, change the way you organize your time, change your relationships and change who and what you are. Marianne Williamson writes, "If we want our lives to change, it does little good to simply move from town to town, job to job, or relationship to relationship. Wherever we go, as they say, we take ourselves with us. We manifest not so much according to geography as according to consciousness... For our lives to change, we must travel deep."³⁶

Risk-taking in motion is not about the situation you are facing, such as taking on the tough project or starting your own business, but about the internal process you use to examine the risk at hand. "It is from inner space, the unconditioned consciousness itself, that true happiness, the joy of Being, emanates."³⁷ Review your dreams, study the behavioral patterns that keep you stuck, and uncover your voice as it relates to risk-taking, spontaneity and making mistakes. You learn on the job, and you learn from

financial success or financial failure. Risk-taking includes making mistakes, but you recover from your mistakes and step up. That's a part of self-realization!

Composure is a Cousin

Donna's courage learning comes from two perspectives. "I often hear people say that they move forward through their fears by asking, 'What's the worst that could happen?' If this works for them, that's great. But it troubles me, because that's only *half* the question. There's another question to ask: 'what's the *best* that could happen?' That's where we should be focusing our attention. Instead of moving forward through our fears, always conscious of that 'worst' that we want to avoid, we should move forward with our eyes firmly fixed on the 'best' that we want to manifest." Manifesting the "best" requires a certain amount of composure which is why composure is a cousin to courage.

Donna observes courage in many ways in women she works with. "When someone comes to me and admits an error as soon as she realizes it's been made, that takes courage. It's hard to admit mistakes, but there are very few errors that cannot be fixed if brought to light as soon as they are discovered. And often, creative thinking can turn the error into an opportunity." Are you possessed by the voice in your head that says "errors are bad, therefore I am bad?" Echart Tolle asks, "Can you take the thinking out of the perceiving? Can you look without the voice in your head commenting, drawing conclusions, comparing, or trying to figure something out?"³⁸

Taking risks and hurdling obstacles, courageous people choose to forgo immediate satisfaction. When an obstacle requires them to step up to a new challenge, they do! Changing their lives, they realize (and adjust) their truthfulness.

*We must have courage to bet on our ideals, to take calculated risk, and act. Everyday living requires courage if life is to be effective and bring happiness.*³⁹

If you want to change your life, you have to change your stories and remove the obstacles that prevent you from transcending the false self-story. "We don't have to conquer our false self; we only have to observe it. And through observing it, by being aware of it, we transcend its grip on us and move toward our own transformation into love and compassion... It is essentially through contemplation or meditation practice that a salutary self-knowledge dawns in us."⁴⁰ Eliminating the stories starts with silence, where we learn to stop thinking and start listening. "Thinking without awareness is the main dilemma of human existence."⁴¹ Sitting in silence before deciding about any important matter is a good idea when feeling intimidated.

Chances Gone By

Leslie Charles credits her success to her early risk-taking years as "rebelliousness."

Two months after my sixteenth birthday I became a high school dropout, teen bride and mother (first at 16, second at 17, third at 20). When I was

23, I went back to high school and dropped out a second time. When I was 26, my husband walked out on my kids and me. I was terrified. With no formal work skills and an incomplete education, I found a low-paying secretarial job where I worked for two and a half years, feeling angry and resentful over how hard life was.

I was waiting for someone to come along and rescue my kids and me. I had not yet made the critical connection between cause and effect. At that point, lonely, miserable and desperate, I had a moment of revelation. It finally occurred to me that I alone would be responsible for the course of my life. I completed a GED and quit my job when I discovered that I could attend community college on a public assistance grant. I became a welfare mom for three years and completed my associate degree. That was the springboard for transforming my life and my outlook.

Leslie perceived that going on welfare was the best choice at the time. She knew that this decision would make her subject to judgment and that her ex-husband (along with many others) would show disapproval, but Leslie refused to allow this type of intimidation to control her destiny. In reflecting on her choice, she discovered three critical insights that helped propel her through this transition.

1. I am responsible for the choices I make. (This inspired me to give up blaming people and circumstances for the messes I found myself in; up to this point, blame had become a way of life.)
2. I have choices. (Even if they are difficult, we always have some kind of choice in a given situation, even if the choice is acceptance. I also learned that taking the easy way out can make for hard times down the road).
3. I need to take action. (Finding myself in a quandary or unhappy situation means that I must do something to change the circumstances and not just sit around and complain, blame or get angry).

“In looking back, I slowly got it. A few years after my ‘transformation’ began, I realized that these three critical steps were the core of my metamorphosis from victim to victor. Sometimes you don’t completely know what you want but you are clear on what you don’t want. People ask me what motivated me in the beginning to make such drastic changes in my life. My first motivator was misery. I knew, very clearly, that I didn’t want to feel so miserable for the rest of my life. The only thing I knew I wanted was an education.”

Often, if you are living a hit-and-miss life, you will miss the defining moments. Misses are chances gone by, never to be reclaimed. “Risks feel riskier the older you get. When you’re young you have nothing to lose. Now I have kids in high school going to college. I have a mortgage. The riskiest thing is being at the top and staying authentic.... We are so driven as women to have this certain profile, but you really have to let people

know who you are.”⁴² In other words, “Living up to an image that you have of yourself or that other people have of you is inauthentic living—another unconscious role the ego plays.”⁴³ Your courage and authenticity are not “somewhere over the rainbow;” they are merely hidden beneath the scripts and images generated by the false self, waiting for you to step into the deep levels of your true Self—beneath the ego’s shallow false identity.

Everyday Courage and Authenticity

I am authentic when I speak my beliefs.

It takes courage to face self-deception.

I am authentic when I realistically look myself in the mirror.

It takes courage to change my reflection.

I am authentic when I practice my spirituality.

It takes courage to honor all people as God’s divine children.

I am authentic when I stand alone in disapproval.

It takes courage to be vulnerable.

I am authentic when I live by the rules I know to be right.

It takes courage to subscribe to the “Golden Rule.”

I am authentic when I expose my prejudice.

It takes courage to face hypocrisy.

I am authentic when I demonstrate my expertise.

It takes courage to continue learning.

I am authentic when I leave behind those who have hurt me.

It takes courage to rise above past wounds.

I am authentic when I decide to divulge my views.

It takes courage to invite feedback.

I am authentic when I stand tall in my convictions.

It takes courage to respect doubt.

I am authentic when I choose to share what I am feeling.

It takes courage to show who I am.

I am authentic when I take on new challenges.

It takes courage to risk disappointment.

I am authentic when I position myself in a group.

It takes courage to weigh the consequences of what I say.

I am authentic when I extend compassion to a loved one.

It takes courage to leave a legacy that touches community.

I am authentic when I embrace my passion.
It takes courage to be fully alive.

I am authentic when I am happy.
It takes courage to seize each moment as a blessing.

I am authentic when I am genuine.
It takes courage to be authentic.

For all the readers who dream about leaving the dog-eat-dog world to pursue their life-long passion avoid intimidation brought on by complacency, and start now! Finding the time to craft the almighty business plan or drumming up financial backing, you run the risk of fumbling the passion. So, if you're bored, burned out or frustrated in your day job, find your passion, and you will see that your courage resides there. If intimidation is holding you back, look for a tough project to tackle, but remember: Start by stopping! The commitment to reflection will provide a clearer picture of what you need to do to get where you need to be.

Courage Development Questions to Ponder

- How have I allowed people to intimidate me on the job?
- How have I allowed my own preconceived ideas to intimidate me?
- When was the last time I took on a project that no one else wanted?
- Have I taken the time to reach out? To go the extra mile?
- Have I taken the risk to try something new? Did I make the mark, how did I fall short?
- What commitment can I make today to align my actions more closely with my highest intentions?
- What one step can I take to overcome barriers and make risk less risky?
- If the worst happens, how do I usually react? If the best happens, how will you react?
- How do I view setbacks? What can I learn from my setbacks?
- What might I learn about myself if I start a diary to record positive experiences?
- How often do you take action to adjust your life's course?
- Looking at any particular circumstance, what is the worst thing that can happen?

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