

FINALIST

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Courage

Courage, a simple word, just seven letters. Yet the meaning of the word is immense. I don't have courage, rather than face my problems I cower away from them. The biggest lie to ever tell is that I am courageous.

My mom however, she is the perfect example of courage. Despite her horrid experiences, she has yet to give up. Her childhood was excruciating. Her father died when she was just thirteen, and her brother shortly after. She was forced not only to help maintain her house but also to work and bring money in. School wasn't my grandma's biggest priority, for my mother however it was just as important. She being the amazing person she is managed to do it. Unfortunately she didn't have a chance to finish school past the ninth grade. She was forced to marry a man she didn't love. She says the only good thing she got from him was us, her six children. My mother stayed with that despicable, poor excuse of a man known as 'my father' for eighteen years. She stayed in an abusive and unloving relationship for one reason only. She didn't want us to grow without a father, a male figure for us to look up to. He had a very crass behavior, which you could say was from all alcohol and lack of education.

When that monster decided that he was done making our life a living hell, and abandoned us she had the courage to face the world alone. She didn't care about people's animadversion. She got two jobs to support us. She didn't quit or run and hide. She proudly and strongly faced the world. Never letting people see her weak and vulnerable. She made it. We don't have everything we want, but we have a roof over our heads, clothes on our backs, and food on our plate. She raised us on her own. We aren't perfect kids, everyone has flaws. She has made mistakes, for she is human. Thanks to her I know right from wrong, thanks to her what I know what it's like to have a mom and dad, even if physically I only have a mother.

She has never let us face a problem alone. She is an amazing person. Words cannot describe how much love, respect and admiration I have towards her. She is in my eyes the most courageous women I have ever met. When life kicks us to the ground and we are at our lowest point, she gets up and screams "Is that all?" She challenges life.

Today she is fighting an illness, despite that she is going to school again. Her optimism for life hasn't stopped. She is what gives me hope and strength to keep fighting. She is what has made me understand that you must have courage, for you will someday have to face the world alone.

So what again is courage? Courage is the face I kiss every morning and every night. Courage is to whom I come home to everyday. Courage is one I tell all my worries and troubles to. Courage is the

one who wipes my tears. Courage is the one who loves me. I could care less what the dictionary definition of courage is, because it is being demonstrated to me day in and day out by the most important person in the world to me. She has animated my life.

Courage is my mom, my mom is courage.