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*Courage; The Greatest Gift Ever Given*

When God created us, he made us out of thousands of cells that worked together to form a human being. But when he created us, he added a very special ingredient: this ingredient is the difference between the weak and the strong. It is the difference between the bold and the timid. It is sacrificing your self for the good of others. It is what allows us to face our most difficult trials, pains and dangers. It is the resistance to fear. It is deep within the heart and soul of you and me. It is waiting to break free and perform wonders. It is the greatest virtue anyone can have. This virtue is courage.

To fully understand what courage means today, we must look into the unconditional deeds of bravery preformed by the people who have cemented their greatness in this world. Gandhi is one of those historical people. Gandhi sacrificed his own reputation and well being for others. He preached rebellion through non-violence, and in 1919 the Amritsar Massacre took place. In the massacre, the oppressive British Troops killed millions of Indians. The British deprived the Indians of their rights and religious practices. Gandhi led the Indian people and kept them strong during this massacre; he told them, "I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your heads before any one even at the cost of your life." Not one punch was thrown by the oppressed Indian citizens due to Gandhi's bravery. Gandhi stood for what was just and remained faithful to his beliefs, this is true courage.

Jackie Robinson had courage that was greatly admirable. He was a man with heart, perseverance and determination. He was the first African American to play in the major league baseball association. In a time of civil rights movement, Jackie was hated by millions of Caucasians around the world. Jackie was spat on, cussed at, threatened, and insulted in ways that were absolutely brutal; but Jackie didn't surrender. He was tested numerous times and had incredible courage to prevail. He once said, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." He said this because he knew he couldn't concede defeat for the sake of the millions of other African Americans who were going through his same struggle. Jackie Robinson had true courage.

There may be no harder test of will, or trial of toughness than that which what William Patrick Hogarty did. In 1862, at the battle of Antietam, shots were flying in all different directions, the sky was consumed with fire and the earth was thunderous. The Confederate army was charging at Hogarty and many of his men had already retreated. Hogarty, a lowly infantry soldier of the Union Army saw that there was an unmanned cannon. He immediately took to it; he stuffed the cannon with whatever he could find. He single handedly repelled the charging Confederates and thus created a turning point in the battle. The union won the battle, which was a turning point in the war. Many argue that Hogarty's audacity and courage saved the union. Hogarty knew he might be killed, but he sacrificed himself for his beliefs and became a hero.

The category of courage I have discussed comes in large packages and is certainly worthy of notability. But not all courage comes in such great steps. Courage in modern society can be anything. It can be giving a dollar to charity. It can be standing up for the kid who is picked on every day. It can be walking someone home. It can be helping someone with their homework. Courage can be "just being there." Courage is clinging to what you believe despite the beliefs of others.

Courage; it is the abolition of your fearfulness and obstacles. Courage comes in both big and small packages. In the absence of courage, we are irrelevant. So I ask you, how much are *you* willing to suffer for the good of others? How will *you* conquer your trepidation? How will *you* use this beautiful gift that God has so gratefully given us?