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America the Brave

Courage has been a major factor in shaping what America is today. What would the United States be without the courageous men that first ventured over vast seas to establish what we now call home? What would the United States be without the courageous men of our time who stand up and fight so that we may live with freedom and prosperity? The different types of courage go back long before our country was even established, and have been admired for longer than can be remembered. To show our own admirable courage, we must first look within ourselves and find our own brave core that is woven into our American way of thinking.

Standing up when everyone sits still and silent. Speaking the truth when the lies are easier to handle. Fighting for someone else's life. Accepting the consequences for your own actions. It takes courage. Despite what people may think, however, courage is more complex than it first appears. There is more than one type of courage, for example. One type of courage is moral courage, and it may be the hardest of all. This type of courage or bravery involves going against the grain. It involves, perhaps, putting aside what people will think of you and simply doing what you believe is right. When a Catholic is asked, "Do you believe in God?" the automatic response is, "I do." But how would that answer differ if you were asked in a room full of atheists the same question? It takes courage and deep passion to be able to stand against others. It also takes courage to tell the truth, which is sometimes harder to manage than a lie. The truth is a powerful thing, and it takes great bravery and morality to do what is right when what is wrong is so much easier. Another type of courage would be physical courage, such as in the face of danger or hardship. Firefighters, policemen, the military; all these people show great physical courage when faced with great danger, and as Americans we tend to take these people for granted. On September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center in New York City was attacked by terrorists. Upon hearing the news, the NYPD assembled 200 units, which were supplemented by off-duty workers. The courage that it must have taken to get up and go to the site that appeared so hopeless is simply astounding. To summon the courage to search through piles upon piles of the burning, ready-to-collapse structures in hopes of finding and saving someone completely unrelated to you is amazing in itself. The people that died trying to save others, however, should receive the most praise. They not only had the courage to go looking, but had the courage to keep going into the extremely dangerous conditions until they found someone, or died trying. Courage; Bravery; Loyalty; Fortitude; whatever you call it, they had it. It was something deep within that kept them going, and it's something that we all have inside us, if we look hard enough. Everyone has the drive to do what is good and right, we just have to find it.

Courage is a noun. It is daring. It is valor. It is the strength to do what is right in the face of danger or ridicule. It is what we as Americans must possess in order to live where we do, because without it, we will never achieve anything worth achieving. Courage is stepping out of our box, into an unknown land, and exploring the possibilities of what comes out of looking deep within your heart. As Americans, we are expected to act as our forefathers did and put ourselves out there for the greater good.