

Megan Wilson
The Meaning of Courage Today

The meaning of courage today is the ability to plunge from the nest and soar in the infinite sky and fly forever onward into that of which we are all capable. Courage today is to take chances and to proceed with them despite the obstacles that lie before us. It is to go after one's dreams and strive for them without the fear of what will happen tomorrow. We might fail in our attempts, but we will be able to sleep with the knowledge that we tried our hardest to make our dreams happen and that tomorrow we will try even harder. Courage is the ability to accept change from these risks and succeed without changing who we are.

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference,” says the *Serenity Prayer*. With taking chances comes change, whether we had expected its company or not. Courage is the ability to jump without knowing that when we land, the ground will be beneath us -- or even be the ground we were expecting. We must all know that change is good and it exists so things and people may transform and become more magnificent than their former selves. If the change is positive, God grant us the courage to accept it without taking it for granted. If it is negative, God grant us the courage to change it and know with time that things will change to help individuals grow. Courage lies inside all of us like an uncut gem. We either tend to forget we have it, believe it was never there at all, or have it cut just so, so that it shines brightly. The truth is, as the lion learns in the end of *The Wizard of Oz* that courage has been inside us all along and it shall never leave us, we just have to look for it and know that we will always find it.

Courage is also the ability to be oneself. In today's society, it seems that insecurity and self-doubt are associated with teenagers, but the truth is that we all face this doubt throughout our lives. Adults are just better at hiding it. The trick I have found through discovering my self-love and courage is that courage was always there and much easier find than we think. Though gaining courage was so easy, it took me years to find. Like a dragon clawing at my insides, my insecurity bubbles to the surface to say, “You can't do this; don't even try.” The resilient light even deeper inside, however, responds, “Watch me!” We must all say to ourselves throughout our lives, “I am this person. I am proud of who this person was, is, and will continue to be, and I will continue to love myself always.” Thus we develop our own courage.

Courage is the ability to succeed in today's world without changing who we are as a person or what we believe in. Some roads may be easier to follow, but the road with the potholes makes a better story. Sometimes courage take us places we had no desire of visiting, but true courage is dusting ourselves off, getting back up again, and trying twice as hard to get where we wanted to be in the first place. People usually place money and success together, but true success is accomplishing the goal you had dreamed of in the first place. Life is too short to live for the acceptance of others.

We are eagles trapped within cages of self-doubt and fear, yet with the ability to soar among the heavens. We forget the true meanings of “courage,” “dream,” and “live.” We have forgotten how to truly be alive and how to take courage to get there. People must take the courage not for anyone else but for themselves, to chase their dreams no matter how far away

they are. Courage in today's society is to take life in the direction a person wants, accept the change from the risks he or she takes, and turn any change into success. As the writer Alan Cohen said, "It takes a lot of courage to release the familiar and seemingly secure, to embrace the new. But there is no real security in what is no longer meaningful. There is more security in the adventurous and exciting, for in movement there is life, and in change there is power."