



Showing Courage

Materials:

- Worksheet

Brainstorm: What do you think it takes to be courageous?

Discuss: The dictionary defines **courage** as the ability to do something difficult or dangerous. But that seems a bit too simple, doesn't it. It seems to skip the emotions that usually go hand in hand with doing something difficult or dangerous, right? Would you say that someone is courageous if they didn't feel any emotion about the task or situation? For example, if you were not worried in the slightest about skydiving, would you consider yourself courageous? Probably not. So, then, part of the definition must be some element of emotion. What sort of emotion words might be included in the definition of courage? Accept suggestions and write them down on the board.

Dive in! Right, so probably the strongest instance of emotion we could think of that might be part of courage would be fear. Have you ever heard either of these phrases, "feel the fear and do it anyway" or "what would you do if you weren't afraid?". Both phrases imply that the instance of fear is preventing you from doing something.

But there are other emotions that drive us to do things that are difficult or dangerous. Passion is another instance of emotion that can push us forward to achieve things that others would not dare to do. Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple said "And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.

Everything else is secondary." —Steve Jobs, Stanford commencement speech, June 2005.

Perseverance is another instance of emotion that pushes us to do difficult or dangerous things.

Mark Twain said, "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog."



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The feeling of righteousness can also motivate us to be courageous. When we see injustice, that can motivate us to do something to make a difference. And the desire to experience novelty - new experiences- can also move us to take action.

So how can we become more courageous? Harvard Business Review suggests that courage is a learned skill and that really it is a “special kind of calculated risk taking” that they call the “Courage Calculation”.

1. Set goals - What does success look like in this situation? Is it attainable?
2. Goal Importance - How important is it to achieve this goal? If you don't take the risk, what is the downside? Will you be able to look at yourself in the mirror? Is there a way to achieve some success with less risk?
3. Power - how much do you have? Are there those who have more power than you that might help?
4. Risks vs Reward - Who might win? Who might lose? Or What might you gain? What might you lose?
5. Timing is everything! - in emergency situations, brave people don't hesitate to act, but for every other situation, rushing to action is often fool-hardy. Why should I do this now? Am I prepared or should I take a bit more time? Pro/Con list for waiting.
6. Have a back-up plan - most people only make one attempt. Those that succeed have a backup plan in case their first attempt fails (or more than one backup plan).

Courage might just actually be “the person that plans the best is the bravest”!

Activity: Distribute the worksheets. Students can work individually or in pairs to complete the activity. When everyone has completed the activity, ask for volunteers to share their plans.

Reflect: Before the activity on Courageous Calculations, how were you feeling about the thing you wanted to do/experience? _____

After the Courageous Calculations activity, how were you feeling about taking on the challenge?



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Extend and Enrich

Look for a mentor or inspiration.

TEDWomen 2019 The beautiful balance between courage and fear - Cara E. Yar Khan

https://www.ted.com/talks/cara_e_yar_khan_the_beautiful_balance_between_courage_and_fear

How does courage relate to bullying? <https://www.standforcourage.org/>

For Further Study

How can we see courage depicted in our daily lives?

<https://www.psu.edu/news/research/story/meaning-courage/>

Professional Development: Who do you look up to for inspiration and guidance? What challenge do you want to overcome or take on that requires courage? Use the Courage Calculation to decide if the time is right for you to be courageous.