

# October Theme

## Courage: The Practice of Daring

### FOR MORE EXPLORATION

#### Books & Articles

- 'Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead', by Brené Brown
- 'To Wake, To Rise: Meditations on Justice and Resilience', edited by William G. Sinkford
- 'Out Stealing Horses', by Per Petterson
- 'The Courage to Speak the Truth, but Not to Punish', by James Hoggan with Thich Nhat Hanh, [www.utne.com/community/speak-the-truth-but-not-to-punish-zm0z17szsel?pageid=1#PageContent1](http://www.utne.com/community/speak-the-truth-but-not-to-punish-zm0z17szsel?pageid=1#PageContent1)

#### Podcasts

- 'Heretics', from This American Life – <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/304/heretics/> -- The story of a Christian pastor who set aside the idea of Hell. This church eventually merged with the UU church in Tulsa, OK.
- 'On Being Wrong', TED Talk with Wrongologist Kathryn Schulz -- [https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn\\_schulz\\_on\\_being\\_wrong](https://www.ted.com/talks/kathryn_schulz_on_being_wrong)

#### Movies

- 'They Will Have to Kill Us First', a story about music and resistance in Mali.
- 'In This World', about migration from Pakistan to the U.K.

### QUOTES FOR CONTEMPLATION

"Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace."

~ **Amelia Earhart**

If we must both be right, we will lose each other.

~ **Nayirah Waheed**

#### Fear

Barnabus Browning  
Was scared of drowning,  
So he never would swim  
Or get into a boat  
Or take a bath  
Or cross a moat.  
He just sat day and night  
With his door locked tight

And the windows nailed down,  
Shaking with fear  
That a wave might appear,  
And cried so many tears  
That they filled up the room

And he drowned.

~ **Shel Silverstein**

"A hero is no braver than an ordinary person, but they are braver five minutes longer."

~ **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

"The reward for conformity was that everyone liked you except yourself."

~ **Rita Mae Brown**

"Courage is acting out of self respect for doing the right thing. To not act, or to do something different other than the right thing, is soul murder. Not being true to oneself and others leaves one diminished and in some ways less than human."

~ **Harry Holleywood**

"Softness is not weakness. It takes courage to stay delicate in a world so cruel."

~ **Beau Taplin**

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"

~ **Mary Anne Radmacher**

"I want to learn how to hold the paradoxical poles of my identity together, to embrace the profoundly opposite truths that my sense of self is deeply dependent on others dancing with me and that I still have a sense of self when no one wants to dance."

~ **Parker Palmer**



"Our word 'courage' comes from the French word coeur, 'heart'. Courage is a willingness to act from the heart, to let your heart lead the way, not knowing what will be required of you next, and if you can do it."

~ **Jean Shinoda Bolen**

"Create dangerously, for people who read dangerously. ... Writing, knowing in part that no matter how trivial your words may seem, someday, somewhere, someone may risk his or her life to read them."

~ **Edwidge Danticat**



## What Does It Mean to Be a People of Courage?

“Courage doesn’t always roar.”

- Mary Anne Radmacher

*The bravery that makes it into the history books may save the world, but our ordinary courage keeps each other going.*



Courageous people change the world. There are so many examples of that this month. October is LGBTQ history month and reminds us of the many who bravely moved (and continue to move) our world toward greater acceptance and affirmation. The revolutionary prophet of peace, Mohandas Gandhi, was born on October 2. Our Christian friends celebrate Reformation Day and Martin Luther’s courage that changed how we all think about religious authority. We rightly honor such giants. The problem is most of us aren’t that tall.

Or are we? Here’s what we have to help each other remember: In addition to the heroic acts that alter history, there are also the daily choices that prevent history from altering us. Battling evil and bending the arc of the universe toward justice deserves praise, but there’s also the ordinary work of integrity and not allowing yourself to be bent. This needs to be noticed as well. There’s the bravery of embracing your beauty even when it doesn’t fit the air-brushed images surrounding you. There’s the courage of calling out the micro-aggressions that happen almost every day at work. And what about resisting the persistent seduction of status and stuff? The list is long: Turning down that drink one day at a time. Making yourself get out of bed when the depression tells you to stay there. Holding your partner’s hand in public. Make no mistake, there are dozens of ordinary acts of bravery we rise up to everyday!

Or maybe we should say there are dozens of ordinary acts of bravery we help each other rise up to every day. Courage is not only noble; it’s contagious. The bravery that makes it into the history books may save the world, but our ordinary courage keeps each other going. Watching someone else make it through another day helps us endure. Witnessing someone else confront bigotry allows us to bravely be more open about who we are. They say that courage is found by digging deep, but most often it is passed on.

So don’t worry so much if you haven’t changed the world yet. And certainly let’s stop comparing ourselves with those giants. Our work rests less in looking up to them and more in looking over at and gaining strength from each other. And remembering that others are looking over at and needing strength from us.



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## KIDS' CORNER

What is a part of your life where you feel some fear? You're afraid or scared about something? What helps you to feel more brave when you're feeling scared? Who is someone you think has a lot of courage? How can you be more like them?

Use this space to make yourself a Badge of Courage. For example, if a friend is lost in the woods and feeling afraid, what kind of badge would you give them to feel less afraid? What words and picture would be on it?

Draw one here for one of the areas where you're feeling afraid.

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## STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

We rarely give ordinary courage the honor it is due. On a daily basis, the threats we face are not the dramatic dangers of burning buildings but the insidious hazards of our comfort zones. This reminds us that the enemy of courage is often not fear but safety and routine. Sometimes those routines support and structure our lives; sometimes they stifle and shrink them. So this month, you are invited to pursue the practice of ordinary risk and adventure. Your instructions are simple: Pick an activity that pulls you out of your comfort zone.



Here's some inspiration and guidance:

- <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/step-out-of-the-comfort-zone.html>
- <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/how-to-move-out-of-your-comfort-zone.html>

Either journal about these questions or find someone you can share about them with:

1. Why you did this activity - share a bit about how your comfort zone had become "dangerous."
2. How your activity emboldened you, and hopefully changed you.
3. How you plan to stick with it - what skills or new ways of thinking did you learn that will keep you from falling back into your rut.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the single question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of courage means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?

1. Is it time to bravely start trusting people again?
2. Is it time to tell someone how scared you really are?
3. Is it time to bravely admit, "I was wrong"?
4. Is safely tiptoeing around "it" making you ill?
5. Where are you saying "yes" when you need to courageously say "no"?
6. Have you mistakenly convinced yourself that courage can come without sacrifice?
7. Who says it's always courageous to never give up? How might life be calling you to bravely let it go and walk away?
8. How might your life change if you saw optimism as our time's most courageous act?
9. Has your courage been bought off by money and status? Has comfort led you to forgetting what courage feels like?
10. Does your faith make you dangerous? Has your religion or your God become small and tame?
11. Instead of standing up and speaking out, is courage now asking you to sit down and listen?
12. Who in your life needs their courage affirmed and celebrated? Who needs to be told that their courage is contagious and helping you be more brave?
13. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

*All contents adapted from the Soul Matters Sharing Circle resource materials for October 2017.*

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## JUSTICE CORNER

**Here's one way you can more boldly get involved. Join us for a panel:**

**"Call To Action on Immigration: How To Get Involved" on Sunday, Oct. 15 at 12:30 pm**, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno. Guest panelists from various local organizations working with immigrants and the undocumented community will share updates on immigration issues in Fresno, DACA, and the many ways you can get involved to make a difference.

Hosted by Rev. Tim Kutzmark.

A light lunch and childcare will be provided. Invite a friend to join you.