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The Virtue of Courage

How many people in your life do you know are courageous? I will bet there are many but you do not hear too much about them. Most courageous people are quiet about what they accomplish. They remain silent about their achievements because they excel for a greater good.

A perfect example comes to my mind. A member of Al Qaeda throws a hand grenade into a group of United States soldiers. One soldier, eighteen years of age, without any hesitation dives on the grenade. He gives up his life so his fellow soldiers can live. This courageous act is a dramatic one but it is a testimony to the training and the character of our men and women in the military. How many times do these courageous acts occur and we never hear of them? Instead, we hear of the occasional mistakes and the “not-so-good-things” our military does. They are far outnumbered by the valor and the selflessness of their behavior on and off the battlefield. We can learn a great deal from them.

Hollywood has embraced an anti-military posture and relishes in the negatives of military service, playing up the “despair” of the men and women in uniform. I bring this up because I had the great honor recently of going to a banquet that had in attendance a number of Wounded Warriors from Bethesda Naval Hospital. There were men and women attendees who were amputees, had lost their sight, and had other serious injuries that they received on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. There was not one Warrior, whom I met, who was not ready to go back into battle if they were physically able. There was not one complaint or one bad word about our government, our civilian leaders, or their medical care. In fact, to the contrary, they minimized their plight and because of their ability to suffer in silence, they touched my heart.

Other forms of courage do not require a person to join the military. A good example of this is the Little Leaguer who was born with only one leg and chooses to compete with “normal” kids his age (Check out YouTube- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4LMBEBM1qc> - Adam Bender). Perhaps it is the husband who swallows his pride and apologizes to his stressed wife

for something he did not do and goes the extra mile to make her happy. It may even be the person who controls his anger while driving and permits someone to cut him off without making a big deal of it. It may be forgiving a brother who did something to offend you or someone you love. Mother Therese of Calcutta often said, "We are called to do ordinary things in extraordinary ways." That is courage- to be ordinary, to stay in the background, and to avoid the accolades that so many people covet.

Life coaching is a process in which courage is necessary. The client must make the first step to invest in changing his or her life. Congratulations! She must put herself second and maybe even last in order to cultivate the virtue of courage. It is a virtue that is rooted in humility and something that people can be taught. It starts with baby steps and is often accompanied by fear.

There are very few courageous people who do not experience fear. Fear is normal for human beings. It triggers the flight or fight response. Life coaching can teach you how to control that fear through humility and selflessness. By giving yourself over to a greater good, you will still be afraid, but you will be able to overcome it because you know that it is in giving that you will benefit the most people and, in return, you will receive the gift of peace and success. You may not wind up on the first page of your local newspaper but you will know in your heart that you have done the right thing. This is an important virtue to develop.

When you are courageous, the world wins, you win, and your coach wins- the Duffy Triple Win Philosophy at work. You have the ability to be a hero. Work on it.

Keep on trying.

The Duffy Achievement Group