

COURAGE

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Dear friend,

I was philosophizing about life, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking with my sister ANNETTE KIM, and I asked her-- what keeps potential artists from continuing what they do? Annette told me -- perhaps because people lose encouragement? Or they become discouraged?

But what does it really mean to be discouraged? What does it mean to be 'encouraged'? And what does the root word, 'courage' even mean anyways?

According to [wiktionary](#), the word 'COURAGE' comes from the Latin 'cor' which literally means "heart"-- similar to the word 'cardiac'.

Even more interesting, the word 'cor' (which means heart) actually figuratively means "soul" or mind.

Generally the word 'courage' comes from French-- from cœur + -age. Cœur means heart. Often the French will say "bon courage!" to mean "good luck!" but it actually means more like, "Have a stout heart, and be brave!" (which is to me, a better saying than simply than to have good 'luck'. Luck isn't something you can control. Courage, or boldness of heart is something we can control-- or at least put in effort towards!)

Anyways, going deeper into the Greek, ([kardia](#)), which pertains to the heart, it referred to the following:

1. Heart (as the source of emotion, love, etc)
2. Mind

3. Stomach
4. Any hollow vessel
5. Center or inner part (of wood, or depth of the sea)

To me this is fascinating, because in modern times, we always say that intelligence comes from the head, or the brain. In ancient times, they thought intelligence, the mind, and the soul was in the heart. I would actually argue that our intelligence is equally distributed throughout our entire body (perhaps a great deal of intelligence actually being in our stomach-- thus the saying, 'follow your gut'). I think our intelligence is equally in our hands (thus this is why hand-writing notes seems to be better for our intelligence), as well as our feet/legs (Nietzsche once said, 'all great thoughts arrive to us while walking').

But all this etymology aside, courage should be seen as having boldness, a stout heart, and the guts to do something that might be unpopular-- but something that you truly believe in.

In other words,

*Courage is taking a **risk** for something (greater than yourself) that you believe in.*

Courage is something that will of course benefit you-- but also will help benefit humanity as a whole.

Encourage

To 'en'-courage means to add or give courage.

So some people need "encouragement"-- for an external person to give them boldness, or a reminder that:

"What you are doing, attempting, or risking is important-- thus you should continue doing it!"

But the problem on becoming dependent on encouragement from others is this:

What if you no longer get encouragement from external sources or others?

Generally speaking, I am very fortunate that I get encouragement from my close friends, family, and of course-- Cindy. But there are times that I literally get 0 encouragement from others. Everyone else thinks I'm being foolish or crazy. Then what do I do in those situations?

I give myself encouragement-- I tell myself like Odysseus in the Odyssey:

Have courage, my sweet soul. You've endured more difficult things than this in the past.

Also what I do is this -- I ask myself:

"Is this thing that I am attempting really that important to me -- do I care enough to take this risk for creating it, sharing it, or attempting it?"

If something is important enough to you, it is worth you attempting to do it! Never look at others for approval before you attempt something a bit crazy or foolish; of course everyone is going to try to discourage you (try to take away your heart/soul for doing something).

And that is what "discouragement" is -- the dis (taking away) of your courage (your heart, and soul)!

Why do some people try to discourage you?

To be honest, I don't think anyone tries to discourage you out of a sense of malice, or a sense of hatred towards you. I think most discouragement comes from our close friends, family, and partners-- because they genuinely care for you, and they don't want to see you hurt yourself, get hurt by others, to "fail", or to see you in pain/suffering.

In other words, your loved ones mean you well-- but sometimes they hold you back.

So my very practical advice is this (this is what I do):

*Don't ask others for their opinion before you attempt something-- ask others for their opinion **after** you do it!*

Or even more robust,

Don't ask others for their opinion (either before or afterwards).

I encourage for you to be more independent. If you do something, and you're proud of it-- you can be your own ultimate judge (without needing the applause, head-nods, or the approval from others). If you do something, attempt something, and it pleases you-- isn't that enough?

To conclude this essay, I want to encourage you my friend. For you to continue to pursue your own inner-truth, no matter what.

Your life is short. Your time on planet earth is short. Why waste it living a timid life? Wouldn't you prefer to live a bold, and brazen life?

Nobody would watch a movie in which the protagonist simply commutes everyday to the office, has lunch at his desk, then commutes home to simply play video games or watch Netflix. Wouldn't you prefer to watch a movie where the hero takes risks, fights fearsome and fierce bad guys, and sacrifices himself for the greater good?

Life ain't a movie-- but I will always encourage you to take the more brazen path in life!

BE BOLD and never lose the encouragement of your own heart and soul! ERIC