



iChoose XLR8

Module 2



Lesson 2: Courage

*“Courage is moving forward
in spite of fear.”*

JOHN C. MAXWELL



AT THE END OF THE RESPONSIBILITY LESSON, YOU WROTE AN ACTION STEP TO IMPROVE YOUR SELF-RATING.

Did you complete the action? ☐ Yes ☐ No Describe the results.

LEGEND:

Use the prompts throughout the lesson to guide you.



First person
read aloud.



Next person
read aloud.



Underline what's
important to you.



Share with
others.



Take
action.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE THIS LESSON EFFECTIVE FOR YOU AND OTHERS:

1. Form groups of 3-5 for a 30-45-minute time slot and 6-8 for an hour.
2. Respect and value each person in the group.
Encourage yourself and others as you share.
3. Take turns reading each section of the material out loud.
You may request to pass to the next reader.
4. Discuss openly. As you read, underline what is important to you.
5. Evaluate yourself. Review. Reflect. Apply. Have fun!

THE GOAL OF THIS LESSON:

**Choose courage as the cornerstone
in building your life.**



01

Courage is a Choice



A cornerstone is the chief foundation for a building. It is strategically placed and chosen by the builder. It is the most important stone in the building. Courage is the cornerstone in building your life. Maya Angelou wrote, “Courage is the most important of all the virtues consistently, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”⁶

EVERYDAY YOU NEED COURAGE TO...

- Seek the truth, even when you know it may be painful.
- Change, even when it’s easier to remain comfortable.
- Express convictions, even when others challenge you.
- Overcome obstacles, even when progress will come no other way.
- Learn and grow, even when it will display your weakness.
- Take the high road, even when others treat you badly.
- Lead, even when being in front makes you an easy target.



02

Cornerstones of Courage



1. Choose to be courageous.

Courage is the door that can only be opened by you from the inside. Courage is a choice. It is available to all of us, not just a select few. Courage begins with the desire to want something different in your life — something more. Courage often comes when we get tired of being beaten down and are ready to rise and claim the powerful being that we are.

In every moment, you have the right, the power, and the choice to be courageous or weak. Sometimes courage is not bold, loud, or executable. Sometimes courage is quiet, graceful, and still.

Life is difficult. Every day you will experience challenges. Open the door, hold your head high, look trouble in the eye, and say, “I choose to be bigger than you. You cannot defeat me.”



..... What did you underline that is important to you?

⁶ Wolfelt, Alan. *The Mourner’s Book of Courage: 30 Days of Encouragement*. Companion Press, 2012.

2. Face your fears.

Mark Twain said,



“*Courage is resistance to fear,
mastery of fear, not absence of fear.*”⁷

Courage is absolutely a choice. Fear does not have the power to rob you of your dreams, motivation, and strength unless you decide to let it. Remember, the only person with the power to hold you back, or move you forward, is YOU!

REFLECTION:

It is often helpful to write down the fears that cause you to hold back or hesitate from doing what you need to do. List your top two and discuss one of them with your group.



1. _____ 2. _____



⁷Twain, Mark. *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson; and, the Comedy – Those Extraordinary Twins*. Edited by Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Oxford University Press, 1996.



HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME THE FEARS YOU JUST LISTED?



1. Acknowledge that you will always have some fear. Adversity and problems will always be with you. Remember, a plane takes off against the wind, not with it.
2. Identify your good fears and bad ones. Good fear causes us to prepare and then act. Bad fear causes us to avoid. Fear is a reflex — courage is a choice!
3. Reduce your fear by preparing yourself for possible outcomes to your action. Then initiate your courageous action. Courage is like a muscle. It grows and gains strength by overcoming resistance.



REFLECTION:

Which of the three remedies for fear do I need to practice?





Today I will strengthen my courage muscle.



Cornerstones of Courage (Continued)



3. Focus on what you will gain.

Fear causes you to focus on what you will lose. Courage helps you focus on what you will gain.

Learning to shift our focus away from what we stand to lose, and toward what we stand to gain will completely change our perception of the situation. This simple shift can quickly leave us feeling more courageous and eager to take action!

Optimism is the foundation of courage.



03 Benefits of Courage



1. *Courage gives you energy.*

Courage has a tangible quality. You can't touch it, but you can feel it. It feels like positive acceleration. Courage sends a rush of energy through your body. It makes you wake up in the morning with a feeling of wanting to wrap your hands around the day.



2. *Courage gives you confidence.*

Courage is what you do. Confidence is how you feel. What you do determines how you feel.

3. *Courage always gives you a win.*

When you have the courage to speak up or stand up for what is right, you win... even if you lose! How did you win? You gained the respect of others. That's a big win.

4. *Courage gives others courage.*

Courage is contagious! Your visual expression of courage will encourage others to do the right thing also.

REFLECTION:

Check the statements that appeal to you.

- ☐ Courage gives you energy.
- ☐ Courage gives you confidence.
- ☐ Courage always gives you a win.
- ☐ Courage gives others courage.

Which of the four Benefits of Courage do you like the best? Why?





04

Review Cornerstones of Courage



- 1. CHOOSE TO BE COURAGEOUS.**
- 2. FACE YOUR FEARS.**
- 3. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WILL GAIN.**
- 4. TAKE ACTION!**

Courage is not something you already have that makes you brave when the tough times start. Courage is what you earn because you have taken action to do the right thing.

There are two ways you can use your strength. You can push people down or you can pull people up.

In life, when you begin to push someone down, you do not better yourself—you lessen yourself. Likewise, if you are trying to pull someone up, you are also improving yourself. What you do to others will have its effect, good or bad, on you as well.

You have a choice! Do you want to be a push down person or a pull up person?



When we value ourselves and others, we are more likely to be a pull up person who takes courageous actions. Dealing with bullying is one example where courage is needed. We get to choose how we will react. Will we choose to be bystanders who allow bullying as long as it is not happening to us? Or will we value others by bravely reporting it to a trusted adult or teacher? Do we choose to value ourselves when we feel we are being bullied by telling a trusted adult or teacher, or do we allow bullying to continue without consequences? We pull ourselves and each other up through the courageous actions we choose to take. Valuing ourselves and others helps us to be courageous, to say, something is wrong it cannot be, and we must change it somehow.

Malala Yousafzai says,

“There’s a moment when you have to choose whether to be silent or to stand up.”⁸



How do we get the courage to stand up?

Identification: Who am I?

I am a person of worth attempting to do something worthwhile.

Action: What will I do?

Take action and do the right thing regardless of feelings.

Emotion: How will I proceed?

I will allow my actions to shape my feelings.

My discovery? Each time I acted with courage and did what was right rather than giving in to what I felt, my will overcame my fears. A strong person stands up for themselves. A stronger person stands up for others.



REFLECTION:

The decision to act with courage is one you must make for yourself. Courage isn't the absence of fear, but rather the willingness to face it. Using your strength to pull people up instead of pushing them down requires courage.

Am I a “push down” or a “pull up” person? Share with others.



⁸ *He Named Me Malala*. Directed by Davis Guggenheim, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2015.

Today I will “pull up” someone who is down.

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**EVALUATE YOURSELF ON HOW WELL YOU DEMONSTRATE SHOWING COURAGE ON A SCALE
OF 1 TO 5:** Select your answer. (1 is weak, 5 is strong)

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this rating?



ACTION STEP:

What specific action can you take immediately that will improve your rating?





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