

Courage

(Adapted from a 1971 speech by William Penn Patrick, CEO of Holiday Magic)

Why is it that most lives are controlled by small and petty circumstances? I am saddened as I watch people lose the good and the great things that are within their reach, that could be theirs with but a little act of courage. Mediocre, average people are the ones I speak of here.

These are the people who have so little self-esteem that they cannot trust their own thoughts and judgments, and who, in the final analysis, must rely on outside sources for their decisions.

These are the people who are ruled by the mob, or who accept all that they read as the truth, and finally become like the mob.

These are the people who have some degree of success, only when caught upon the crest of a wave that was generated by one of the few, exceptional self-directed individuals.

These are the people who have a positive attitude for that moment they are in the presence of positive individuals, but when left alone, fall to their negative knees.

These are the people who sell their birthright - the commitment to their own thoughts - for fear of what they think their neighbor might think.

These are the people who stand tall as they are prompted by the actions of the mob, but are terrified of the silence of their own presence.

These are the people who follow and fear to lead.

These are the people who hide their deeds in the cloak of nobility, since their dishonesty prevents them from dealing with truth and reality.

These are the people who cry “foul” when life has passed them by.

These are the people who are ruled by circumstances.

Strong people create circumstances that serve their needs and desires. If you are a person of circumstance, the cure for this disease is courage. Courage is the most beautiful of all human expressions. Courage, as I see it, is an act in the face of fear. We only need courage when we are afraid, which means that we need courage almost all of the time because we are afraid of something almost all of the time.

I have discovered that fear becomes a coward when faced with but a small act of courage, and further, that the muscle of courage will grow stronger with continued use. My advice to myself is – Do those things which you fear and keep doing them until you are no longer afraid. Then you will become the master of your fate.

I have studied the deeds of people both great and small. In this study there appear to be many differences. But all the differences that count have one single thing at their base – Courage.

Courage is that one ingredient that separates the strong from the weak, the successful from the unsuccessful, and the great from the average. All the things you desire in life have one common handle that is made for the hand of the person of courage.

To be afraid is to be alive. To act against that fear is to be a Leader!

Someone once said, “I’d rather die on my feet than live on my knees!”