



# OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD!

ExecuCoach360 Newsletter

*"Finding Your Direction is Only the Beginning"*

## Courage: The Heart of Leadership

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Webster defines Courage as; "the state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes with self-possession, confidence, and resolution; bravery ." The word courage comes from the French word for heart which is *Coeur*.

From the above definition the part that moves me the most is "quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear." To lead through challenging and difficult times it requires courage; especially when leaders must inspire themselves as well as others towards a courageous action. Courageous leadership takes place in various forms and requires an individual to move outside of his/her comfort zone. For example, situations that would require one to be courageous are; making hard decisions; speaking and hearing the truth when an assignment is at risk; stretching yourself to do things you have never dreamed possible and moving ahead when you are scared to death. Ask yourself, "Can I fail?" If the answer is "Yes" then go for it and don't question it.

Courageous leaders possess these characteristics. They are: (1) risk-takers, (2) decisive, (3) willing to change, (4) willing to be wrong and (5) gamblers who trust their initial instincts and follow them. Many leaders have shown courage through many kinds of acts:

- Bill Gates left Harvard to create Microsoft in 1975
- Vince Lombardi, Pat Summit and Eddie Robinson led great sports teams to victory

- Fred Smith, former U.S. Marine built Federal Express even though his Harvard professor criticized his entrepreneurial idea
- George Washington and Golda Meier created nations
- Napoleon and Joan of Arc lead conquering armies
- Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi advocated peace against political and social odds, knowing that their lives might be the price of their advocacy

Being a courageous leader means that you have to be honest with yourself and you need to know how to balance the "toughening- up" and the "asking for help" when you need it. On a daily basis we encounter circumstances that are new and fear-provoking, but we move forward and overcome those challenges. In the end we are stronger and more confident. I once heard someone say that life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. That is a strong and powerful statement. Don't be afraid to push yourself past your comfort zone; you will never know what is on the other side, you will always wonder "what if".

Brian Tracy sums it up in one phrase from his book "The Power of Self-Discipline". "Don't wait until you feel confident; do the thing you fear. The courage comes afterwards." As I wrap up this newsletter, I leave you with this final question. What would you do if you knew you could not fail? Imagine the possibilities!

### August Thought Provoking Question:

"If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one ability or quality, what would it be?"

(Source: The Book of Questions, By Gregory Stock, PHD)

### Quote of the Month -

"Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway."

- John Wayne

### Did you know?

That this newsletter has 553 words and should take 3 minutes or less to read? A small price for knowledge.