

# Living Creatively: Courage

Let me ask you this question: If you could put your fears aside, what would you be doing differently right now in your life? Would it be a new career path, a change in how or with whom you spend your time, a new routine for starting each day, or would you learn a new skill set? Whatever comes up, that thing that popped into your head before you quickly discounted it for being ridiculous or impossible is probably exactly what you need to take note of.

You know deep in your heart that you were born with a unique gift and it may just be possible that you haven't allowed yourself to deliver it completely. What prevents this from happening for most of us is **fear**. Our voice of fear can quickly and easily drown out any whisper of courage, but that's not how it has to be.

When we operate out of a place of fear, rather than living courageously, there will always be a reason to withhold our gift. Nelson Mandela, one of the most courageous figures of my lifetime once said, "*I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.*" Trust me on this. If you are waiting around for the fear to go away, it won't. What we all must learn to do is push through our discomfort and take action.



This applies to the big things in our lives for sure, but also

to the everyday opportunities that allow us to practice courage. Standing up for someone being ridiculed, offering help to a stranger, choosing not to spend our time socializing with people who do not align with our values. These are simple but profound acts of courage.

I am so fortunate in my work to interact with individuals who have chosen to turn down the volume of their fears and work from a place of courage. With that effort, they are able to live life creatively, fulfilling their dreams and eventually delivering their unique gift to the world.

Let me share a few stories of individuals who have chosen to triumph over their fear.

- A bright young female executive has dedicated her time and efforts to the success of the startup she is employed by. From her growing exhaustion, she becomes aware of the lack of respect and recognition for her contributions by her male superiors. As she gains clarity, she chooses to resign, take a year off to travel, and returns to start her own company.
- A middle aged man walks away from the pace and pressure of the tech world to create a more meaningful life. Along the way he rediscovers his passion for woodworking, studies to become a health coach, and falls in love.
- A young mother, fed up with a lifetime of battling chronic illness, completely revamps the eating habits of her family of seven. In the process she discovers her own courage and determination and turns around her health as well as the health and well being of her whole family
- Two Hispanic middle aged sisters decide there is a better path to health than they witness from their peers. They shed the cultural norms they were raised with, fully embraced a plant-based diet, commit to daily exercise and meditation, and look younger each time I

see them!

These individuals are on their way. They have dialed down the volume of their fears and tapped into courage. They were willing, for one reason or another, to listen to their inner calling and, because of their courage, they are living creatively. That my friends is what we all must do. Some days are a little easier than others, but courage prevails.

*"Creative Living is a path for the brave."*

-Elizabeth Gilbert