

COUNSELING CORNER

Monthly School Newsletter from Lutheran Counseling Services

Car Conversations

In the car, classroom or dinner table, try some of these ideas to build this trait in yourself, your family or your class.



- Talk with kids about the Comfort Zone versus the Courage Zone. Identify an area of the classroom or home to stand for each zone (two hula hoops, different couches, chalk circles). Take turns talking about how you know when you are in each of the zones. Share examples of life events in both zones, moving between them to share. Talk about building new skills in a new sport, new class, or different phase of life, and what result came from being in the courage zone.



Courage

Defined as **the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. despite anxiety or fear** by Stanley Rachman in his book Fear and Courage. What is noteworthy about this perspective is that fear or anxiety are present when someone displays courage. It could be said that without that fear or anxiety, there was no courage shown as the situation was easy to handle.

We may find ourselves in situations where we may feel anxious or fearful as teachers and parents and need to build the courage to manage these situations. To help, we turn to James Neil Hollingworth who said:

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than [the] fear.”

As we identify something more important than our fear, we can mobilize ourselves to action. Think of what motivates you to summon courage: Focusing on children’s needs, performing job duties, standing up for what is right, protecting others, working toward an accomplishment, or focusing on an important end result. When we learn of a story of someone demonstrating great courage, we can often see that in the face of great fear was something (or someone) more important than that fear.

Demonstrating our courage to the kids in our lives can also be a big motivator to build their courage. Dr. Tali Shenfield helps promote this trait further with 8 tips for building

- As we think of building courage, we remember that sometimes focusing on something more important than fear helps to build courage. As a family or class, discuss what is important to you. With middle and high school students, use a value sort activity that is [printable](#) or [online](#). Discuss the top values each person has and any examples of how they have given that person courage to act in the face of difficulty.

- With younger children, discuss a relevant fear they have. Using blocks or Legos, stack up several layers to represent the fear while discussing it. In a separate column, stack up layers to represent building courage. While building upward, discuss courage building strategies, such as noting who can help, positive self-talk messages to say, focus on the result of overcoming the fear, or other ways to make their courage bigger (taller) than their fear.

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courage in kids. See how many you have in place already at home or in your classroom:

1. Explain that being brave doesn't always come with feelings of courage or bravery. Kids need to know that feelings of fear can go along with acting brave.
2. Acknowledge & praise examples of bravery in your children, when you notice they are pushing through fear in new or difficult situations.
3. Make space for "mess ups" or pauses before bravery.
4. Encourage new experiences and different thoughts as a family.
5. Share your own examples of courage & bravery.
6. Allow children to make their own decisions & guide them on decision making, such as following safety & other rules.
7. Promote positive self-talk to help encourage bravery.
8. Help children learn that building bravery is a process and can be built upon.

With a focus this month on building courage by consciously directing our lives in a way that is true to ourselves, we can help our kids (and ourselves) to tackle the challenges we all face with greater ease. (Read the [entire article here](#).)

Use the month to focus on ways to make yours and your children's/students' courage bigger than the fears.

References:

Rachman, S. (1990) [Fear and Courage](#). W.H. Freeman.

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