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A Positive Character Trait: What is Courage?

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Many people have considerable qualities, but not many have courage. Courage, by definition, is the ability to do something that frightens one. It is a trait that everyone desires – an attribute of good character that makes us worthy of respect. It is what makes us different from others. The courageous act saves lives, gives hope, and ultimately is a rare act of self-sacrifice not only for you, but for the good of *others*.



We are told from a young age, "be courageous." But that isn't always trouble-free, is it? For decades, Civil

Rights activists fought the laws and social customs in attempt to secure equality for *all* Americans. "I have a Dream" speech, Rosa Parks, an African American woman, refused to vacate her seat in the middle of a bus for a white man and was arrested for "civil disobedience." Parks was soon chose by King as the face for his campaign, and she was able to help contribute to the image that he wanted to show the world. King became a core organizer of the 1963 March on Washington by drawing nation-wide attention to the issue of segregation. The March on Washington by drawing nation-wide attention to the issue of segregation. The march not only allowed for the passage of the Civil Rights legislation, but also allowed King to advocate for other human rights issues, such as poverty and workers' rights. This is an example of the honest embodiment of courage.

While there are many great leaders who showed what it meant to face their own fears for the greater good of the people, possessing courage can mean being a hero in your own life. Courage is the ability to face fear and embrace uncertainty. Stop waiting for the fear to fade, because truthfully, you'll be waiting indefinitely. The key to courage is to feel the fear and *to it anyway*.

(Each month, one of the five Chapin schools will select a student to provide the community with his or her interpretation of a selected positive character trait. This is being sponsored by the Chapin Woman's Club.)