

# 7 Days Of Courage

finding brave in your  
everyday life



DAISY S. ROSALES

*A ship* is safe  
in harbor,  
but that's *not*  
what ships  
are for.

- William G.T. Shedd

# Hello, fellow brave soul.

Let me share a secret with you.

I don't have the right to write a book on courage. I'm just another young woman on a journey. I've lived almost 25 years of the "good life": surrounded with family, friends, opportunities, and worldly provisions.

But I know I need courage.

I need to break free of my insecurities and place myself in new contexts. I need courage in order to make a real difference in this world: courage not only to *acknowledge* its problems but to *touch* its problems. I need courage not only to make things *right*, but to make things *personal*. If I am to leave a legacy of hope to my family, my children, and my community, I'm going to need a whole lot of courage. And I'm starting now.

So I invite you to join this challenge with me.

Let's talk about courage. Let's talk about how we desire to be brave together. Let's expand our definitions of courage to grow our souls.

This is a 7-day, go-at-your-own-pace workbook. Take your time and complete the challenges. Tell your friends that you're doing this.

And at any point in the book, feel free to share your thoughts with me. You can write me an email at [simplicityrelished@gmail.com](mailto:simplicityrelished@gmail.com). I'd love to hear from you. Let's get started!

# Day One

## The Courage to Acknowledge

Have you ever been told, before doing something that felt dangerous, to not be afraid? How did that make you feel?

It can be tempting to deny our fears. We can try to drown them in recklessness, muddle them in stoicism, or explain them away with feigned rationality.

But the truth is, fear is part of being human. So the choices we have are to allow our fears to take over, or to acknowledge them and move forward.

It sounds easy, doesn't it?

Let me tell you something about fear:  
the more you feed it, the bigger it grows.

Let that sink in for a minute.

What are your biggest fears? Let me tell you mine.

I am afraid to fail. I'm afraid that failing at my current endeavors will make me look like an idiot. I'm afraid that people will say I wasted the opportunity to do something else with my time and my young adult life. I'm afraid to look back in 5 years and feel that I accomplished nothing of value.

I am afraid of physical pain. When a child trips and falls on her knees, I can feel the sting of the pavement on my own knees. I am afraid when I drive in Los Angeles that a reckless driver will hit me and injure me forever. I'm afraid of childbirth.

I am afraid of being alone—completely alone. I am afraid of living a life that is misunderstood. I am afraid of losing my husband. I am afraid of navigating life without people who love me. I fear loneliness, perhaps above all else.

There, I did it. I shared with you some of my deepest fears. Now, I want you to write down yours. Perhaps you'll be brave enough to share them with me (I promise I won't share them with anyone).

How does it feel to acknowledge your deepest fears?

Doing so can sometimes give us the insight we need to make a big decision. Should we be motivated by these fears?

Perhaps you wrote down your fears and realized that they're not ridiculous. And maybe you also realized that they're not formidable, and they don't have to inform your life.

## Day One Challenge:

For every fear you listed, write down a truth that overcomes it.

Example: I fear failing and disappointing people in my life.

Truth: The people who care for me understand and have experienced failure, and will empathize instead of judge.

If you get stuck, ask a friend for help! You can also feel free to email me, and I will try to help you out.

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Two

## The Courage to Confess

If you've ever confessed something "terrible" about yourself to a friend, then I applaud you.

If you used that confession to take steps towards permanent change, then I admire you.

This is what we're talking about today: the courage to divulge to a trusted companion about a struggle you currently face alone.

Confession itself doesn't always change reality, but it still requires courage. You see, there is a lot of risk in confession. No matter how unconditional the friend promises to be, our confessions change the way they see us, even if it simply means that they better understand our hurts and weaknesses.

This is the truth about confession: if the idea of confessing something is terrifying, then you probably need to do it.

Catch your breath for a minute.

Let's talk about why confession is useful. I've compiled a few reasons, but I bet you can think of more.

- 1) It's the first step to getting over a major hindrance in your personal or professional life.
- 2) You're allowing somebody into your struggle. Two people vs. one struggle—who's going to win?
- 3) You might realize the struggle does *not* identify you anymore. No more hiding means less agonizing over it.
- 4) It's one way of accepting your own imperfections, and learning to hold yourself to the *right* standards, not *impossible* ones.

Are you ready to confess something yet?

All right, I'll go first.

I used to spend a lot of time fishing for compliments. Whatever residual insecurity I had about my appearance, my work, or my personality, I'd try to assuage by convincing other people to make me feel better about them. This could come out in manners of false humility, or praising someone else to bring attention to myself. And while I've started recovering from that, it still tempts me.

To combat this, I've shrunk my closet, limited the time I spend getting ready in the morning, and forced myself to take an active and intentional interest in other people. I focus on them more than I focus on myself.

What advice do you have for me?

There, I did it. Now it's your turn.

## Day Two Challenge:

Write down a confession about something you struggle with personally or professionally. Then, share it with a close friend or spouse.

Next, ask this person to give you some food for thought. Have they observed this in you? What do they see in it that you don't?

Finally, delineate a plan of attack. Devise a way in which you can slowly overcome this struggle, and ask this person to keep you accountable. Feel free to send me your confessions and resolutions!

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Three

## The Courage to Learn

The word “learn” has a very positive connotation in the English language. We like to think that we enjoy learning, that we desire to be lifelong learners, and that learning doesn’t end when formal schooling does.

But do we really *enjoy* learning?

Learning is hard work. In order for information—or habits, skills, etc.—to become second nature to us, we have to practice.

I started piano lessons at the age of 5. Nowadays when I rattle off songs on the piano that I’ve only heard once or twice, people are amazed. I share this because you and I both know that it took me hours and days and years to get to where I am. And most of it, I’ll admit, was not fun.

**The courage to learn is the courage to be 5-year-old me, at the piano bench, fingers sliding around all over the keys.** There’s nothing glamorous about learning or training for something new. It’s all humility, all the time.

Why do we need to talk about learning in a book on courage?

Because the act of learning redeems the act of failing.

This is why we need to keep learning: it redeems our past failures and allows us another chance.

So what are some of the things we can learn as adults? Think outside the traditional classroom. Think about what you *wish* you could do better.

Do you wish you were better at keeping in touch with faraway friends? Or better at using time and money wisely? Or better at meeting new people? Or better at controlling your anger?



Have you identified something that you would like to actively learn to do better? Write it down here:

Now, we need to figure out who can teach us.

Think about the skill or habit you want to learn. Who in your life does this well? Where did you get the idea from, and why is it something you desire to learn?

If someone comes to mind, they might just be your teacher. If no one does, then perhaps you need to do some research.

### Day Three Challenge:

Determine what you want to learn, and set a practical, measurable goal. This means that you know what it might look like to successfully develop this skill or habit.

Next, figure out who can teach you. If your immediately family and friends can't help, then try the library, professional development resources, or experts who write about the topic.

Finally, share your learning journey with someone. Tell them what your goal is and how they can support you. And tell me, too!

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Four

## The Courage to Try Again

If you thought that acknowledging your fears, confessing your weaknesses, and learning new skills were humbling, then this one might just trump them all.

“Try again”—do we love or do we hate that phrase?

We love it when it means that we get another shot at something before it's somebody else's turn: a round of mini-golf or juggling oranges, perhaps.

But we hate it when it means that we will likely face yet another failure—and another, and another, and another. We don't always *want* to try again.

Trying again can be painful; for me, it's particularly painful when I don't know whether this outcome will be any different from the last.

Are you a one-time try-er? I certainly used to be. I would often dismiss something if I had a less-than-average experience with it the first time: *I tried it, didn't like it, and now I'm done.*

But how often do we miss something wonderful with this attitude?

Think of somebody you now love and admire who was hard to get to know at first. Aren't you glad you didn't quit after first try?

The decision to try again is the decision to **acknowledge** your fears, **confess** your wrongdoing, and **learn** from your mistakes—all wrapped up into one.

Clever, right?

And since you've made it this far in the book, you have what it takes to try again—and to try better.

I'm usually quite sparing with inspirational quotes, but I'd like to share this one with you:

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying,  
"I will try again tomorrow."  
– Mary Anne Radmacher

## Day Four Challenge:

- 1) Think about a time when you failed at something at first, tried again, and eventually succeeded. Write down a key word from that experience on a sticky note and put it somewhere you'll see it.

For example: In college, I had to rewrite an entire chapter of my senior thesis. I was hard-pressed to make it absolutely excellent and totally different from the first iteration. I cried a lot. In the end, I had written a successful, respectable piece.

I'm glad I tried again.

**Keyword: rewrite.**

- 2) Go back to Days One through Three and ask yourself whether you'd like to try one of the challenges again. Perhaps you want to talk over your confession, or push yourself to learn more. Once you find something that needs a little more perseverance, send it to me or a friend!

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Five

## The Courage to Step Aside

Being brave doesn't mean having the confidence to do everything; it means having courage to do the *right* things.

This means that we need to have the wisdom to designate which roles are ours to play, and which roles belong to other people.

You might be thinking: *Great! Less work for me, right?*

But let's be honest. Sometimes nothing is scarier than handing off a responsibility to somebody else—even if we know that she's the right person for the job.

Furthermore, it's terrifying to realize that someone else does something better than we do—especially if we're supposed to be more experienced. **Our temptation might be to fight them for the spotlight, or to insist on sharing the responsibility so that we can shine too.**

Today is all about learning to let others shine. It takes courage to relinquish an opportunity and open it up for someone else.

When we step aside for someone else to fill in, we can become better at what we're already good at.

Think about it for a minute.

Why do tech companies hire tech professionals? Doesn't each of the employees know *something* about computers? They probably do—but they're *better* at something else.

So, let the tech pro do *her* thing, and let everyone else do *their* thing.

You might be wondering at this point whether I'm contradicting the previous day's lesson. But I think both lessons are valuable.

Sometimes the courage we need is that which will help us persevere with something new and difficult. Other times the courage we need is to relinquish an opportunity for someone else who needs it (and is ultimately better fit for it).

More importantly, this is also the courage to glorify someone else.

That's right, I used the word "glorify." It's sort of an awkward word, isn't it? It's almost too heavy for a mere human.

But the truth is, we seek our own glory all the time; we just don't like to call it that. We desire to look good, feel good, and do well in front of others.

So the challenge today is this: do we have the courage to offer opportunities to others, so that they can shine brighter?

## Day Five Challenge:

Is there a responsibility you currently hold that should really belong to someone else? Perhaps you're too busy to give it 100%, or you've honestly lost interest. Start looking for a replacement, and invest some time and kindness in that new person. She/he will appreciate it.

Or, is there someone you know who does an amazing job in a role she's playing? Watch her, observe her, and find an opportunity to encourage her—preferably in front of somebody else.

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Six

## The Courage to Influence

Anyone who can be a good friend has the power to influence people.

Do you recognize that? If there are people in this world who trust you, care for you, believe in you, and admire you, then **you have the power to influence people.**

Let that sink in for a minute.

Today's topic is the courage to be bold with our knowledge, our resources and our capacities. Leaving all of the *influence* to those who have accomplished more than you, robs many of those who have accomplished less than you.

In other words, you and I have some influencing to do.

Why do we need courage to influence? Isn't this all we've ever wanted?

Think about someone who wielded a lot of power, but did not use her influence well. Either this person caved to her own ego, or this person was too fearful to effectively benefit anyone.

Oh, but we tell ourselves that when *we* reach that position of influence, we'll be sure to give lots of advice and be generous.

The only problem is, we are *already* influential, and the time to make the most of that influence is now.

Once you realize that you already have influence—your resources, connections, experience—you begin to see the people around you differently.

Are your friends and coworkers really better off for knowing you? Is their life enhanced by your presence, even in small ways?

Ask yourself what you have to offer.

You and I need to take a little inventory of everything we can offer someone. Can we teach them a new skill? Bring them soup when they're sick? Encourage them with words of wisdom? Connect them with someone who can help them?

You may be surprised at how much you can offer to someone else during this season of life. We don't have to be CEOs, scholars, celebrities, or even published authors to influence. We simply need genuine relationships.

### Day Six Challenge:

- 1) Make a list of your current resources and how you can use them to help someone or to enhance someone's life.
- 2) Think about your closest friends and family members. What are their needs, and how can you be there for them? For the more courageous, ask these individuals how you can better support them.
- 3) Has somebody asked you advice in the past? How did you respond? If you wish you'd taken the opportunity to be more generous with your time and attention, you can still do that now.

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

# Day Seven

## The Courage to Rest

Ours is not a culture that likes to rest.

In fact, those of us all too familiar with the work-hard-play-hard mentality understand that life is often measured by intensity.

We are comfortable on either end of the spectrum— intense work or intense play— but there is an ominous gap in the middle that we find terrifying.

This is the place where neither work nor play happen: the place of rest.

In addition to being countercultural, rest demands faith. We resign from our activities—or managing our little domain in the world—and let the world run as it will.

For some of us, it's almost embarrassing to say that we need rest. I think it somehow indicates that we are weak, that we somehow have less energy than everyone else, and that we're not interesting people.

It certainly takes courage to rest.

It takes courage to acknowledge our limits and live by them,  
so that we can thrive in the right ways.

There's enough research out there that not only confirms the importance of physical sleep, but of mental and emotional rest as well.

If we desire to pursue our dreams, and to continue to choose courage, we need to take rest seriously.

We need to overcome our fear of what people will think when we choose rest over activity. And we need to overcome our insecurities about leaving the world to run itself.



Resting is not the antithesis to ambitious; in fact, it's wise ambition.

So how do we rest well?

I've written on my blog, *Simplicity Relished*, about doing social media detoxes, spending time in silence, and the importance of unstructured free time.

But here are some practical approaches to resting well:

- Getting enough sleep: 6-8 hours every night.
- Doing something creative: acrylic painting, crafting, photography
- Journaling: take out that pen and paper!
- Catching up with old friends over coffee
- Reading: for me, the Bible or another life-giving book
- Exercise: a stroll through the park, a hike nearby, or a run around the block

## Day Seven Challenge:

Take a real Sabbath this week. This could mean choosing not to work on one day of the weekend, or letting hours go by before you check your phone. Do something productive in the meantime to refresh your body and mind. Get some fresh air and reflect over the week.

Once you've done this, schedule "rest time" into your calendar. It can take a while to get used to this non-work non-play segment of your week, so be patient with yourself.

Tell your friends about your intentional rest, and tell me how it goes!

Good luck with this challenge!

Notes & Thoughts:

Welcome to the end of this courage workbook!

Remember that these challenges can be repeated over and over, as needed. It takes time (days, months and years) to cultivate a habit, and courage is no different.

I hope and pray that as we practice courage together, we'll become braver in small ways.

And when we've become brave in small ways, we can become brave in big ways.

Thanks for reading.

If you enjoyed this book, have any questions, or want to share your thoughts, I would be love to hear from you! Please send me an email at [simplicityrelished@gmail.com](mailto:simplicityrelished@gmail.com), or get in touch with me through my blog social media profiles, listed at [www.simplicityrelished.com](http://www.simplicityrelished.com).