Courage: Dare to Be Courageous

As Brene Brown writes in her book *The Gifts of Imperfection* (and as Aristotle saw it during the time of Ancient Greece), courage is a virtue, and virtues are developed as habits. If you are not as courageous as you wish, you need to start acting with courage to develop the habit (and the competency) of courage. This may mean a change for you. Everyone responds differently to change. Some get excited about it. Others dread it. And still others just go along with it. Think about what it would take for you to be more courageous. Identify what it means to you to be more courageous. Then identify a plan to make the change stick. Following are a few things you might consider.

- What does having courage mean to you? (Doing what’s right.)
- In what instances do you want to have more courage? (People or causes you support.)
- Why do you want to be more courageous? (Increased self-esteem, being helpful.)
- What are all the reasons not to be more courageous? (Easier, fear.)

You make the positive reasons to change stronger and you can make the negative reasons weaker. How?

Mark a date with yourself on the calendar. Begin your plan to have more courage today. Check in with yourself in five days. Then check in with yourself in ten days. How did you do? What did you learn about your courage? About change? About your courage to change?

Here are some things to help until courage is a habit.

- Notice your body reactions every time and say, oh, yeah! I knew that.
- Find role models.
- Don’t hesitate and give your brain an excuse to say “no.”
- Identify others to support you.
- Identify a “security blanket,” such as a charm or a friend’s backing, to get you through.
- Focus on the cause or the individuals you want to support.
- Focus on the positive and ignore the negative.

Brown, B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you’re supposed to be and embrace who you are.* Center City, MN: Hazelden.