

IDEAS 14

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



CONTENTS

THE 14TH INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

Courage Courage – A Worthy Pursuit Marian Baltazar 2
Courage Political Cowardice---No Heroics Here Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 3
Courage In Serenity, There Is Courage Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 4
Courage The Sum Of All Fears Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 5
Courage What It Means To Be Courageous Marian Baltazar 6
Courage Occupy Everything-With Courage Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 7
Courage I Wanna Be A Superhero Kathlyn Q. Barrozo 8



COURAGE – A WORTHY PURSUIT

Marian Baltazar
Class of 1980, University of the Philippines College of Manila'
AB Political Science

All individuals have their own way of life, own way of thinking, own way of dreaming, own way of perceiving things in life, own way of making decisions, own way of dealing with life and a thousand and one ways of achieving whatever you long for and what you want to pursue in your life. As we go along the journey of life and single out what we really aspire to do while facing life's intricacies, we grope our way to withstand the pressures of the varied circumstances that surround us. We are definitely aiming to live a successful, meaningful life and be good citizens of the society.

Practicing courage is a worthy pursuit and necessary to live a meaningful and fulfilling life and contributing to the community where we belong. Therefore, honing on this virtue is very crucial. It takes a lifetime to live with courage because it is a way of life. According to Napoleon Bonaparte, "Courage is like love, it must have hope to nourish it." It is contagious, but not all persons have it. We need to have courage to endure in our struggle against the adversities of life. It is a fierce determination.

Courage takes many forms. Examples include the courage to do what is right, the courage to accept unpopularity, the courage of facing a personal fear, the courage to endure physical or mental pain for the sake of self-improvement, the courage to move forward through a frustration, the courage to tell the truth, to change, to trust, to act, to love, to commit and many more. Mortimer Adler interprets Aristotle's definition of courage as a habitual disposition to take whatever pains may be involved in doing what we ought to do for the sake of a good life. It simply means doing what we know we need to do however challenging or difficult and whatever the cost may be. As the saying goes, "No pain, no gain. We have to stand up for what is right even when we stand alone. We have got to do what is right despite disapproval or negative peer pressure.

We have to advance bravely and have courage to pursue our dreams no matter how arduous the road to its realization is. Thus, we have to believe that it is a worthy pursuit to practice courage. If this will be developed, it will allow us to be more in control of our life instead of letting the outside circumstances dictate our actions. An individual should be persistent in the face of failure and so let us set our goals for us to achieve courage. Regardless of your gender, as James Allen puts it, "Whether you are a man or woman, we can never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor." Therefore, let courage live in our hearts for it is a gift from God. In our quest to achieve what is important, let us have courage, for without it, we go nowhere, accomplish little, lack meaning and regret much. After all, COURAGE IS A WORTHY PURSUIT.

Question for discussion:

- 1.How can you practice courage amidst all the turmoil of life?
- 2.Can one face fear without having courage? Why is it so?
- 3.How can you say that courage is a worthy pursuit?
- 4.In your life, is having courage a hard choice for you? Justify your answer.
- 5.What do you think of when you hear the word courage?



POLITICAL COWARDICE---NO HEROICS HERE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

What everyone says about heroism being dead may be a little true, considering how people seem to easily change sides and perspectives so often. With turncoatism being the name of the game in politics and most everywhere, those who used to be staunch supporters of a certain individual will just as easily hurl stones at the same individual when the supporters feel the heat under their collars. Nothing is ever permanent, everyone turns oh-so-suddenly fickle, and the one initially supported gets caught holding the bag. Such is the way things happen nowadays, with no let-up apparent in the horizon.

No one wants to suffer humiliation or censure—reputation is something to be protected with your life. Priorities change just as easily as politicians change parties, so the confused public is left with little or no choice but to look elsewhere as well. And yet, for those who value the relationships that they have formed, for those who still believe that there's more to living than mere protection of the family name, for those who believe that the world is not so jaded after all, there's hope yet. That hope will shine like a beacon for them, that the one prosecuted will one day find what is lost, regain what has been unwittingly let go, get back what has been taken away.

It is perfectly fine to feel fear or uncertainty. What is not okay is to let go of a sense of decency and humanity just to pander to public clamor. What is popular might not always be morally upright nor humane, for sometimes, going against the grain woven by humanity may just be the only human thing to do. Those who take to the streets to show their disapproval and criticism against certain policies are to be commended. They risk life and limb just being out there. When asked what they are fighting for, they give a really strong answer: this is for my children, my children's children. What they are clamoring for may be too remote for the viewing public to actually sympathize with, but come to think of it, isn't that what everyone wants, as well? A life that's free of discrimination and injustice, a life that everyone in a democratic country deserves?

For these people, the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. Edmund Burke had it down pat. Of course, this is not to say that at every little chance we get, we should all take to the streets. We may not be as radical as they are, but at least, we should be brave enough to offer a prayer for them, that whatever it is they are fighting for will benefit all of society. In the end, this is something that won't take a great ounce of courage to do.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. They say that politics makes for strange bedfellows. Find the meaning of this idiom and be able to explain what it means in your own words.
2. Why do you think it's so easy to change political affiliations in government?
3. If you were a government official and one of your party mates was under investigation, would you stand up for him?
4. How have political protests affected the world? Are they always effective?
5. Have you ever joined a protest or demonstration against an issue in school/government? Be able to describe that event and how it has affected your political views.



IN SERENITY, THERE IS COURAGE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

How do you teach a child courage? Basically, the same way you teach a child about success. They say that the best way to teach a child the sweetness of success is to guide him during an experience of defeat or failure. This way, he gets to savor success in all its full-bodied glory. There are many of us who fear failure. Failure is something we try to avoid at all costs. It takes a special man to admit he has failed. But what makes that man more special is how he stands up after he falls. A man of sufficient courage will get up, salvage what life has dealt him with, and move on using the lessons he has learned as guiding beacons.

A man of sufficient courage will not dwell too long on the past, for the past is over. He will not go looking too far into the future, only occasionally to check his course, for the future has not arrived yet. He will focus his energies and capabilities on the present, because the present is here and now. Teaching a child courage can be tricky. It takes judgment and perseverance to be consistently courageous. There will always be situations where mere courage is not enough. Teach a child the Serenity Prayer written by Reinhold Niebuhr instead. It is probably the most effective prayer one can utter in times when courage is needed, but serenity and wisdom will do just as nicely:

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.
Amen.

Teach a child that there will be times when he is utterly defenseless and helpless, but that he should not feel that the entire world has come to an end. Teach him about how the world can be a bitter place, but that doesn't mean he has to become bitter, too. Teach him that life is inherently beautiful, and the ugliness that it occasionally shows may rob him of all reason and courage, but he should never stop living. Teach him to be independent, for there will be times when you cannot be beside him anymore. Teach him to choose his battles, for you cannot always do that for him. Teach him to be responsible for his actions, and only then will you have taught him COURAGE.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In these uncertain times, is it ever easy to teach a child about courage? Why or why not?
2. Do you sometimes feel helpless and weak of heart? What particular situations make you fearful?
3. Do you believe that life is inherently beautiful? What are the things that make life ugly and scary?
4. Do you firmly believe that change is possible? How can an ordinary person change the world?
5. Can you be bold enough to change the world? In what way?



THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

What scares you? This question will easily elicit a multitude of answers, some being concrete, and some simply unexplainable. Fear is known by many names. All of them end with –phobia. A few common—and not so common—phobias are: acrophobia, the fear of heights; algophobia, the fear of pain; androphobia, the fear of men; arachnophobia, the fear of spiders; bibliophobia, the fear of books (common among some students but quickly and strangely dissipates on or around major exam periods, and then they become instant bibliophiles or lovers of books); claustrophobia, the fear of confined spaces (won't do for frequent elevator users); dentophobia, the fear of dentists (normal, right?); and many others from A thru Z.

According to Wikipedia, a phobia is a category for an anxiety disorder that affects an individual, whereby the individual tries to stay away at great and sometimes exaggerated lengths from the thing or event that causes his irrational fear. There are typically two classifications of phobia. A social phobia is apparent in social events or situations; agoraphobia is an example. A specific phobia is derived from a physical being, object or thing; arachnophobia is an example.

Studies show that a phobia usually originates from an experience early on in an individual's life that caused trauma and eventually leads to avoidance of whatever it was that had caused that trauma. Treatments are varied. Desensitization has been proven to show sufficient effectiveness, while hypnotherapy and neuro-linguistic programming have not really been proven as effective phobia treatment methodologies just yet.

What causes irrational fear in certain people can sometimes be a form of entertainment for some inconsiderate people. Fear should never be used as a weapon against any one—it should be understood and treated. However, there are phobias which do not relate to any form of fear. Such phobias are mere discriminatory or prejudicial attitudes. Xenophobic people dislike strangers or the unknown. Homophobic people dislike other people with different gender orientations. Such individuals suffer from bigotry, which has nothing at all to do with fear.

If you suffer from any of the known phobias, you can seek help. There's hope for you. But if you suffer from plain and simple bigotry, you need to take a good, hard look at yourself. We must not stay away from things or people because we hate them, and then justify such an action as fear. Real courage is being able to accept your incapacity, and doing something about it. Denial is cowardice personified. It shows a selfishly weak individual who has no guts to face his fears. Admission is the primary, and probably most important step to take. Then and only then can your fears be positively addressed. Mind you, that takes a lot of courage.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Are you or anyone you know affected by any form of anxiety or phobia? How did that fear or anxiety start?
2. How can a person with this type of disorder seek treatment?
3. Denial is easier than direct admission. How does continuous denial affect self-esteem and personal relationships?
4. If one of your children/future children had an apparent form of anxiety, how would you as a parent help your child?
5. Is it ever easy to face your fears? Be able to elaborate on your answer.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE COURAGEOUS

Marian Baltazar
Class of 1980, University of the Philippines College of Manila
AB Political Science

Does being courageous imply being fearless? Oftentimes we can hear statements like, "He's so brave and fearless!" First and foremost these two words have different meanings and it holds true if we will define courageous too. Fear is the acceptance of potential danger and the motivation to take action for protection. Meanwhile courage is the ability to persist with your objectives and take action even in the face of fear. Therefore, courage is not the absence of fear. Being courageous forces you to pursue your objectives despite fear. Being courageous is taking action despite of being fearful.

There are a number of times that an individual experiences fear, that is, being afraid of something that has happened, is happening, will happen or has been happening. Is it fear of the problems and difficulties that a person face, fear of what to come, fear of the unexpected or the fear of what will happen in the future? We are never free of all these anxieties and apprehensions because we experience them daily. A lot of phobias can be spelled out but the fact should remain..."Do not be afraid to be afraid." Fear will always be hanging around in this world we live in wherein we experience survival of the fittest! Fear and courage go hand in hand. One cannot do without the other. Fear is necessary for survival whereas courage is required to succeed. There can never be courage unless you get scared.

Be courageous in spite of the circumstances that surround us and regardless of the consequences that we face. Let us not berserk ourselves with the innuendoes of life. Being courageous is looking past our personal goals and dedicating our life for the betterment of mankind. To be courageous is doing the right thing when the wrong thing seems to produce better results. Being courageous is taking the initiative to try to succeed when no one else will. It is the willingness to take risks when the outcome is uncertain. Let us be like fire-fighters saving people entrapped within the fire, risking their lives to save a stranger's life, or maybe like soldiers who are always ready to battle and defend their country not thinking if they can even return or not to their families. To be courageous is to stand up every time we fall, let not failures disappoint us. Be brave enough to face the difficulties and odds of life. Yes that burning passion of making the right decisions amidst the turmoil that every human being experiences makes us courageous enough to withstand the pains and pressures of life.

What it means to be courageous may have a lot of meanings, connotations, interpretations and whatever it may be. We will experience growth in being courageous whereas fear will lead us to be stagnant. But on top of them all, we should remember the saying, "No guts, no glory. So, keep on pushing the bush, stand up and take courage as your battle shield to combat the extremities of life!

Questions for discussion:

- 1.What comes to your mind when we hear the word courage? Why is it so?
- 2.Can intentions without actions be courageous?
- 3.Have you reached the realization that good effects of being a courageous person can make you accomplish more things in life? In what means?
- 4.What are the circumstances in your life that can best describe you as being a courageous person?
- 5.Do you agree that being courageous is being fearless? Explain further.



OCCUPY EVERYTHING-WITH COURAGE

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

It all began with Occupy Wall Street and Occupy San Francisco. Both were protest movements mounted last September against social and economic disparities. Then, many Occupy movements were mounted worldwide. All of them aimed to “....protest corporate influence on democracy, address a growing disparity in wealth, and the absence of legal repercussions behind the recent global financial crisis.” (Wikipedia). My initial reaction was disgust. The world has been in enough pandemonium as it is, and people trying to “occupy everything” will just be adding to all the confusion. And then again, their objective got me thinking: Isn’t this what everyone wants? Social equality? Economic democracy? Weren’t these protesters clamoring for something that nobody, till that time, has had the courage to speak out for?

The planet has undoubtedly been run by the rich since time immemorial. The haves and have nots have never been more sharply delineated than in the present time. The middle class, which have been getting their feet wet doing the nitty-gritty, have been stuck in the middle, eking out a daily living. The lower classes have lost all hope of ever escaping from their lot. The upper class, despite making up the least composite group, may occasionally suffer setbacks, but still have their million-dollar mansions and their high-class yachts and their really fast cars. And no one has been courageous enough to protest all the apparent disproportions till now.

Courage to stand up for what you believe in is probably the greatest display of braveness one can show. In a world where the moneyed remain moneyed and the poor remain so, the courage to protest the status quo can be difficult to summon. And yet, here we are, at the crossroads of a global financial crisis where even the world’s most powerful nation has been severely affected. We can only sit in awe as these protests are mounted. Although they have seemingly died down, let us not forget the very essence of their being mounted---to uphold equality. We need not be heroes to sympathize with their efforts.

In our own little ways, let us be courageous heroes. Let us be considerate about how we use our resources, for there may not be enough left for the next generations to come. Let us be orderly citizens of our country, for we have been blest with a single one. Let us have understanding for one another, for such will promote peace. Let us be responsible in our roles, for the roles that we play have been gifted to us by a Higher Power. Let us be ablaze with passion for what we do everyday, for that brings us ever closer to our personal goals. Let us be generous in time, talent and treasure, for that fosters good relationships that are meant to last. Let us remain ever-loving, for that makes us a genuine treasure to everyone we know and love. Now, your homework is to string together the first letters of those qualities mentioned in the previous paragraph. See what you come up with.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do some research on the Occupy Movement. Be able to talk about what you’ve read on it in class.
2. Do you think that the world has become only a place for the rich? Share your thoughts and elaborate on them.
3. Will the poor ever rise up from their poverty? Do you think the Occupy Movement has been effective in making governments see the plight of the poor?
4. Why is courage needed to mount a protest as far-reaching as the Occupy Movement? Do you think that those who organize such movements are brave enough to sustain those protests?
5. Take the letters from the word COURAGE and be able to come up with your own set of adjectives/nouns/adverbs for each letter. Explain your word choices in detail.



I WANNA BE A SUPERHERO

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Long before this generation's Transformers came into being, our generation had its own heroes. Danguard Ace, Mazing Z, Astro Boy, Star Rangers, Jak-Q, etc. ran the gamut of adventures on TV from animation to live action. Okay, so now you know approximately how old I am. Big deal! Anyway, Sentinel Prime had probably been still in diapers when Voltes V first aired. Our superheroes were Wonder Woman, Superman, Batman and the rest of the Justice Leaguers. We took great delight in knowing that these superheroes had all the problems in the world in their very capable hands, and the planet was safe.

Unfortunately, this wasn't and still isn't so. The world needs real heroes who can face real problems. Poverty, education, inequality, wars, famine, calamities. These are very real, non-imaginary world problems. There happen to be a lot more of troubles coming as the Earth continuously rotates on its axis. And there are no superheroes in sight. Don't you sometimes wish that the likes of Aung San Suu Kyi, she with the ageless Burmese elegance and the General Secretary for the National League for Democracy, would increase in number? That the tribes of people like the late Mother Teresa of Calcutta, India would grow in number? That the number of charismatic people like the late Pope John Paul II would swell?

Such people are worthy of emulation, for they have shown great courage despite the harshness that characterizes human life. They have shown exemplary courage to rise above the confines of their human frailty to let their love for humanity and society shine through. In their humanness, they have shown that it doesn't take a gun and a sword to show genuine affection for the world in general. All it takes is a heart filled with genuine love of fellowmen and a spirit of service, even when the spirit is down and the flesh is weak. These are flesh-and-blood heroes, with no superpowers and no mind-boggling abilities. There are many others like them in all of us.

Among us, there are fathers working for the family to survive. There are mothers holding up half of hearth and home. Children staying disciplined both in school and at home. Students burning the midnight oil because they believe they can be much more than what they are now. Teachers doing their best to mold the minds of those entrusted to them. There are doctors and nurses and allied health professionals working out ways to treat and help their patients. There are accountants trying to do their jobs well so the companies they work for stay afloat in good and bad times.

All of us are heroes. We may not show the patent courage of superheroes nor their seeming ability to use their superpowers. But we face life every day, despite the fact that life sometimes shows its ugly face. And that takes an immeasurable amount of courage.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Who's your favorite superhero? Why do you like him/her?
2. Do you have any real-life hero/es? Be able to elaborate on why you've chosen him/her/them.
3. How does having a superhero make children understand the concept of courage?
4. How can we as ordinary mortals show courage in certain situations?
5. Think of other real-life people (in your country) who have shown infinite courage in times of need/trials. Talk about them in class.



International Online Teachers Society(IOTS) is an independent non profit international organization committed to improving the state of online and offline education in the world by engaging all kinds of language teachers with fluent English speaking skill in the world to shape global, regional and education agendas.
www.iotsonline.com