

Courage is most famously represented by people in the army, conquering some foe, or in a Rocky movie, by beating the big bad guy. The idea of courage, as Rocky Balboa said, "...it ain't about how hard you can hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward." This is the stereotypical example of courage, but it does lend itself to everyday life. Courage is a much broader concept, and being courageous can extend to simply being able to get out of bed in the morning. There are many people that can be considered courageous, even though they lead normal lives. In the early days, we were much more concerned with simply surviving than with any philosophical discussion. It has taken years upon years of courageous people, doing something extraordinary, to get to this point now. Courage is a form of progress, whether it is just trying new things, or standing up for yourself and your beliefs.

Magellan, the first man to circumnavigate the globe, is one of the more famous examples of courage. The predominant thought, in that time, was that the world was a flat square, and that if you sailed far enough, you would drop off the face of the earth or get attacked by some sea monster. Even though Magellan probably consciously believed that he wouldn't fall off the edge the earth, it must have taken some courage to go out to what most of his contemporaries believed would be his death. Without pioneers like this, we wouldn't be living the way we are today. This act of courage by one man impacted the lives of millions of people and changed the way people lived for thousands of years to come. Slowly the world became a more complete place and the fear of going across the world that had haunted us for thousands of years before vanished in a matter of years, as word travelled about.

Martin Luther King was courageous. He stood up for what he believed in, and ultimately, even though he never saw his vision come to life, changed the world. It took a whole lot more courage for him to try passively to get his point across, than if he took up arms and directly fought for his freedom. While the other side of the race riots responded to his pacifism with violence and oppression, Martin kept his calm and kept spreading his word even in the face of numerous death threats, ones that later became a reality. He shaped the world we live in today.

My mom was courageous; she divorced my dad and moved to upstate New York. My dad had cancelled all of the credit cards and frozen all bank accounts. She moved despite the only thing to support us was her student loans and a series of odd jobs. I remember being carted all around town, to various jobs as well as meetings, as she couldn't afford a baby sitter. Fast forward about 17 years and here she still is, except now she has a good job, and now she can afford a babysitter.

Courage is a matter of perspective. To be courageous, you don't have to save the world from bad guys. Many people who are considered courageous have never even fought the bad guys, but simply fought the demons within. Everybody is scared of something. Maybe travelling to the edge of the world scares you. Maybe standing up to oppression scares you. Sometimes, just getting out of bed and putting your life back together scares you. Whatever it is that scares you, overcome it and you can either call it courage, or you can call it progress.