

7 Ways to Feel More Courageous

By [Sherri Gordon](#) Updated on July 15, 2021
Medically reviewed by [Rachel Goldman, PhD, FTOS](#)

If you're like most people, you probably equate courage with fearlessness, but that's a faulty interpretation. In fact, courage is taking action in spite of the fear you feel. Courage is the willingness to respond fearlessly despite the [anxiety and worry](#) that might be tugging at you.

In fact, one of the best ways to be courageous is to understand what you're afraid of and then refuse to allow that fear to paralyze you. Because if you let it, fear has the power to stop you from moving forward, taking risks, and making the most of opportunities. Meanwhile, being courageous allows you to take chances, pursue your dreams, and get what you want out of life.

If you've been struggling with fear and want to feel more courageous in your life, there are a number of ways you can exercise your courage muscles and make the most out of every situation. Here's an overview of what you need to know about courage as well as tips on how to make sure you're living a life filled with bravery.

Benefits of Courage

Being more courageous in your life will help you respond appropriately to risks and accomplish positive things in your life. But it takes work to move beyond your fears. In fact, being courageous is about thinking things through, examining the risks and rewards, and acting in spite of the fear that inevitably sets in.

What's more, courage gives you the power to chase after things that are important to you. It also bolsters your [self-confidence](#) and allows you to believe in your abilities. Likewise, it's important that you realize that courage is not the absence of fear.

In fact, feeling fearful is healthy because it causes you to slow down and evaluate risks properly. Never beat yourself up or assume you are not courageous if you feel fearful. To be courageous means that you are able to act in spite of feeling fearful. Additionally, the more you are able to face your fears, the more you will replace your fear-based response with a courageous one. Here are some other benefits of courage:

- Being courageous in the midst of fear can build your self-confidence.
- Embracing courage allows you to see the world from a different perspective.
- Making courage a part of your life equips you with the ability to empower others to do the same.
- Choosing to step out of your comfort zone and be more courageous makes you a more well-rounded person and broadens the experiences you have in your life.
- Being courageous makes you a more successful person because you're more likely to pursue your dreams and seize opportunities as they present themselves.
- Embracing courage and incorporating it into your life will [increase your sense of happiness](#).

How to Feel More Courageous

Being fearful is a powerful force that can lead to stagnation. In fact, if fear is not viewed correctly it can prevent you from [achieving your goals](#) and pursuing opportunities. Consequently, many people allow fear to keep them stuck in their comfort zone rather than flexing their courage muscles and trying something new in spite of the risks.

If you find this scenario sounds an awful lot like your life, you may want to delve a little deeper and determine the areas in your life where you could be more courageous. For instance, do you need to go after that promotion at work rather than just hoping they notice your hard work? Or, do you feel like you should speak up the next time the [office bully](#) is putting someone down? There are probably countless areas in your life where you can be a little more courageous. Here are some ways to help you embrace courage and implement it into your life.

Maintain a Healthy Perspective

Too many times, people assume that you are either born courageous or you're not. And while it is true that some people could be more predisposed to displaying courage, that doesn't mean that all is lost for you.¹ In fact, it's best to view courage as a muscle. And while some people might be born with more defined muscles than others, everyone has the ability to improve their courage muscles with the right training and practice.

Likewise, it's important to recognize that fear is not a bad thing. In fact, in some ways fear is healthy. For instance, fear triggers your nervous system and your survival instincts that are designed to keep you safe. For this reason, you might feel fearful when approached by a stranger in a dark alley or you might feel fearful during a tornado.

Instead of assuming that being fearful is a bad thing, look at it as an opportunity to learn more about who you are and why you might be afraid or less than thrilled about stepping out of your comfort zone. You might find that if you take the time to name your fear and understand why it's there, that you will uncover a better idea of how to overcome it or be courageous in spite of it.

In fact, research shows that putting your feelings into words helps curb your negative responses to fear.² Plus, voicing your fears doesn't make you weak. Instead, it makes you brave. After all, it is not easy to acknowledge where you are vulnerable. So, if you are able to acknowledge your fears, you're one step closer to being courageous.

Consequently, rather than minimizing your fear or denying that it exists, recognize what is holding you back. By acknowledging your fear—either by writing it down or by sharing it with a supportive person—you are empowering yourself to be courageous in spite of feeling fearful.

Identify Your Strengths

When it comes to living a life filled with courage, it helps to begin by identifying what you're good at as well as where you have been successful. In fact, research shows that people who recognize and develop their strengths not only feel happier and less depressed but are also more [resilient](#).³

Additionally, knowing what you're good at helps boost your confidence, which makes it more likely you will take risks and be courageous. Likewise, when you're confident in your abilities, you're much more willing to go all-in when an opportunity presents itself.

What's more, when you are struggling with fear and want to incorporate more courage in your life, it's natural to focus on your shortcomings and your weaknesses. But, doing this just makes it less likely that you will feel courageous. For this reason, it's important to think about what you're good at as a way of building your confidence and your courage.

Examine Different Scenarios

When it comes to being courageous, it's helpful to imagine not only the worst thing that could happen if you take a risk but also what would happen if you didn't act at all. Many times, comparing the two extremes is all you need to move beyond your fears because most of the time, the worst thing that could happen is often minimal in comparison to what you could gain by acting. If you regularly use comparisons like these, you will build an immunity to letting your fears control you over time.

Additionally, you can create scenarios where you envision yourself doing something that you're afraid of. Imagine how you will handle each possible scenario including how you might respond or what you might say. These exercises are a way for you to practice being courageous without having to put yourself out there until you feel ready.

Practice Leaving Your Comfort Zone

When you let fear keep you from doing something fun, going after something you want, or expressing who you are at your core, it can result in a life that is not truly lived. And if you want to change that aspect of your life, it's going to take being intentional about your life.

Building your courage muscles requires that you push yourself to step outside of your comfort zone. Consequently, choose some scenarios that make you uncomfortable, but where the stakes are not as high.

In other words, practice being courageous by overcoming little fears like [meeting new people](#) or eating alone in a restaurant before you tackle something like taking the lead on a project or heading up your community's toy drive. By starting small, you can get used to being courageous without a lot of risks at first. Eventually, you will get to the point where you can take bigger risks.

Reduce Your Stress

Sometimes people experience fear or feel like they lack courage simply because they are exhausted and the thought of doing anything more just seems too overwhelming. If you find that you're feeling overwhelmed, frazzled, or bogged down, look for ways to relieve stress. It's hard to feel courageous when you are stressed out.

Consequently, look for ways to reduce the stress in your life. In addition to taking care of yourself, look for ways to unwind and decompress. In some instances, that might mean taking a short vacation or some much-needed time off work. Everyone needs a break now and then. So, if you feel too overwhelmed with the thought of trying to be more courageous, it could be that you first need to reduce the stress in your life.

Celebrate Courageous Actions

Every courageous act should be celebrated—especially if living courageously is something new for you. So, don't fail to acknowledge the times when you acted with courage despite feeling fearful. It's important to pat yourself on the back and recognize the effort it took to overcome your fear. In fact, experts acknowledge that those who celebrate small wins tend to be more successful in the long run.⁴

Of course, you don't have to shout it from the rooftops or blast it on social media, but make a mental note of what you accomplished and allow yourself to feel good about that. You may even want to keep a journal of these little acknowledgments to reflect on at times when you're feeling discouraged or like your life lacks courage. Doing so will keep you from engaging in [negative thoughts](#) or assuming that you will never be courageous.

Welcome Failure

Most people are afraid of failure, which often keeps them stagnate or stuck in the same place. In fact, the fear of failure can lead people to develop rigid standards and become [perfectionistic](#) in an effort not to experience embarrassment or shame that comes with failure.⁵

But failure is an experience that should be embraced. Remind yourself that failure is not a bad thing, especially if you took risks or stepped outside of your comfort zone.

After all, failure is an opportunity to grow as a person. It allows you to learn something new, change directions, and see what you're made of. And if viewed as a welcome experience instead of a worst-case scenario, it stretches you to try new things in spite of the risks involved.