

Tanja Peters

Courage Muscle Training

A little more courage each day

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Courage Muscle Training: From little steps to big leaps

Tanja Peters

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Sample translation by Rachel Hildebrandt

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Now YOU!

May I introduce your new companion?

#1 Reasonable boundary extensions - not just practicing courage

- Let's get started!
- Are you living with a full heart?
- Where do you stand right now...
- Professionally?
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Establishing a culture of mistakes - failures allowed

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Treating yourself and your development with love

- Activating resources
- Seeking supporters

At your own pace - in your own time



- Setting up your courage muscle training plan

Be your own brave model

- Celebrate your victories

Inspirations for when your courage goes AWOL

Whom do you want to cultivate?

This book and how to work with it

My hope is that this little book will make you courageous. Yes, that's right. I hope it will encourage you to do your own thing! Whatever that might be - for you specifically.

I want to support you in freeing yourself from leading a life based on the expectations and demands of other people. I want you to learn to set off on your own despite your fears, with courage and trust packed in your bags, confident in knowing that the path will spread out before you as you move forward.

After all, this is the only way it could possibly be if we want to try out things outside our comfort zone and take great risks. If this space wasn't new to us, we would already know the path. If we are only willing to set forth down paths we already know, guess what? We can never experience or learn anything new.

I am firmly convinced that the world belongs to the brave. However, I do not believe that we are simply born courageous or that we are taught to be brave from infancy on. Maybe that is the case for a very small number of us. These individuals are raised to trust in themselves and the world at large. They are encouraged to believe in themselves and to take great risks. They never encounter discouragement or are held back. They are never told to stop trusting or are instilled with doubt. For whom has this actually been a reality? For only very few of us!

For courage muscle training, it doesn't matter what happened to you in the past or from where you come. It is never too late to develop your own abilities and strengths. This is the reality: courage is a muscle, and it can be trained on a daily basis. Just like a marathon runner who follows a training plan at the end of which he or she can run the requisite 42.195 kilometers. Similarly, you can set up your own courage muscle training plan to become stronger and more independent with each passing day.

Small steps, reasonable goals and stopovers, good preparation, self-selected distances, supporters along the way, and then straight through the finish line and the victory celebration. Even this final step is dependent on you and your life. You pick what you want to celebrate:

- I made it without injury!

- I did it in the time I wanted!

- I was the fastest!

- Or I was the fattest, oldest, most unathletic person, but I still did it!



Living a courageous life doesn't mean that you jump off the highest mountain. Leading a brave life means living according to your own terms, following your own inner compass and refusing to let external factors dictate your path. You will use your own self-determined boundaries to their fullest possible extent and try out new things. Even if you fail, you will not give up trying to expand the boundaries that are limiting your life.

Waiting for you at the end of the path is the life you want to live, which you will acquire by maximizing your potential and using your talents to do exactly YOUR OWN THING, whether in your professional or private life.

This book can help you with the following:

- To understand the nature of courage
- To develop new, relevant ideas for yourself and your life
- To fail with optimism
- To treat yourself with love
- To become more courageous
- To finally do your own thing
- To become the boss of your own life
- To change your life

This book cannot:

- Quickly eliminate your fear
- Make you rich, thin and successful within 21 hours :)
- Reduce the training that is required
- ? Do magic!

Throughout this book, I will share my personal story with you. Perhaps you will be able to relate to parts of it. I had a long, scaredy-cat career behind me before I realized that there was a courage muscle and that, with some training, it was possible to lead a self-determined and liberated life.

I had to be hit hard with the stop sign before I finally accepted and understood this reality. Do you perhaps want to embrace this understanding at an earlier stage? Or has the stop sign already reached you, which is why you have picked up this book? Regardless, the two of us are now together on this journey, and through this book, I promise to be a good companion. If we are going to travel together, then it would make sense:

- To get to know each other better - which is why I will tell you my story
- To speak to each other casually, like good friends
- To remain curious, open and honest - because change and development require
- Openness, so that other perspectives can be considered
- Curiosity, so that something new can develop
- And honesty, because without it true growth is impossible.

This book is for reading, inspiration and application. You will find in it very concrete instructions for reflection and practice.

At the end of each chapter, you will be introduced to new people who have also trained their courage



muscles. Be inspired by everything that can happen if you just believe in yourself.

Above all, let yourself be surprised by how diverse fears and brave acts can be - some are small and quiet, while others are large and life-changing.

You can download the supplementary documents to this book and print out the relevant courage training plan. At the end of the training process, there is even a certificate for you. Woohoo!

Have a good read and an even better courage muscle training.

Yours,
Tanja

...]

[...]

What do you dream of?

You have now examined and reflected on several important life areas, but is there a wish, a dream, a great desire slumbering somewhere deep inside of you? Perhaps traveling around the world? Or learning a new language? Or finally taking a tango class? Or moving to another country? Or meeting one of your idols? Or performing on a major stage somewhere?

For many years, I have read and followed the work of Sabine Asgodom, a wonderful, successful colleague of mine. My wish list long held this dream: "I want to meet Sabine Asgodom and have an amazing conversation with her!" In the relatively early stages of my independence, I noticed on Facebook that someone in my network posted a picture of herself and Sabine. It looked like the two of them knew each other fairly well, and according to the post, they were planning to go out to eat together shortly. Without hesitation, I wrote the woman in question and simply asked if I could join them. I told her that I was a big fan of Sabine's and would do practically anything to spend an evening with her. For whatever reason, my attempt worked. A few days later, Ms. Asgodom, three other women, and I were sitting at a table in a hotel restaurant, eating and spending the evening together. It was completely worth it! I fulfilled one of my great wishes, and Sabine was every bit as friendly and authentic as she was in her talks. It pays to know your own wishes and dreams, and to take them seriously. There are often opportunities to actually live these dreams, if we only believe in ourselves.

Here are a few questions to encourage you along this path:

If there was no chance of anything going wrong, what would you like to do?

What would you do this instant if nobody had to know anything about it?

Let's assume that you were granted three wishes from your fairy godmother. You could only use them for



yourself. Global peace, ending worldwide hunger, and a new US President are out of the question. :) What would you wish for yourself?

Jot down a few notes and even include your “way out” dreams and desires, to help make them all visible. Living with all your heart means trusting yourself to dream big and risk a lot. This is one of the reasons we are on this planet. Not all dreams can come true, nor do all dreams prove, in the end, to be the right ones for us. We are also unable to fulfill all of our dreams and desires immediately. HOWEVER, it is worthwhile to pursue them and to move ourselves closer to them. If you are prepared to set off bravely, then your chance of finding happiness is much greater than if you simply never try.

Another possibility - the wheel of life

I would like to introduce you to another means of examining your life’s status quo. There are numerous formats through which you can gauge where you are in your life. For example, the wheel of life. Through eight different life areas, you can analyze your current status quo, develop new goals, ideas and possibilities for change, and explore the existing intersections.

I enjoy working with visualizations, and there is good reason for this. This process cultivates creativity, is fun, and inspires your gut and heart to get involved. Besides that, it helps to make connections and possibilities visible, which frequently remain hidden if you just make a list or think things through.

Get a large piece of paper and draw on it this “cake” divided into pieces. Of course, you can write straight into this book, but my experience is that many readers are reluctant to do so.

The Wheel of Life: The 8 Life Areas

- Health
- Partnership
- Family / Friends
- Personal Development
- Spirituality
- Hobbies / Leisure
- Finances
- Profession

Feel free to alter the cake pieces. Do you want to take other life spheres into consideration? Would you like to put family and friends into separate pieces? Do you want to make some of the pieces larger than others, because they are more important to you? Make it easy and use whatever approach suits you.

Pick out several different crayons or colored pencils, and shade in the separate pieces taking these two points into consideration:

Quality: How satisfied am I with the quality of, say, my leisure activities? Do I do things that I personally find fun and enjoyable? What percentage of my time do I pursue my leisure activities the way that I particularly want to?



Quantity: How much time do I devote to my hobbies? Would I like to allocate more time to this field? Or does the current time frame correspond with my needs?

When answering both sets of questions, you can either use percentages or a scale system of 1 to 10.

This is one way for you to consider your separate life spheres and to create a good picture of each field. You can take notes as you fill out the diagram.

What should the number be for this life area? Do you want it to be higher or lower? What would that specific number be? What do you need to affect change in this life sphere? More courage? More energy? Support? What might hinder the change from taking place?

These questions will help you work through this process:

What do you like about this wheel of life?

Can you see the connections and correlations?

What do you think would function as the greatest leverage to enable you to lead your life in a more self-determined, happier and freer fashion?

If you invest your energy into one specific cake piece, what will happen to the rest of them?

What would qualify as the smallest and easiest change? What effect would this have?

What would be the most logical change? What effect would this have? How much energy or courage would this change require? How realistic is the expectation that you could actually implement this change and remain committed to it for the long term? What could support you in this effort? What might hinder you in it?

If this wheel of life belonged to a good friend of yours, what would your reaction or advice be to her?

You should write down all the revelations and ideas that come to you, since some of these will definitely flow into your courage muscle training program, particularly those that would be relevant to a reasonable extension of your boundaries.

Your values

Besides the specific life areas, I believe there is one other fundamental basis for our unique composition as individuals - our values. We make decisions about our behavior and actions based on these. If we cannot live according to our values or if we must betray them - for example, to keep our jobs - then our lives become exceedingly difficult.

Values can function as strong motives for our actions. Values that are lived out can motivate us and ensure that we perceive our lives as sensible and valuable.



Leading a life with a full heart - being the true captain of my own life - also means that I know which values are the most important to me and how I can live them out. What are your most important values? Do you know them and can you write them down? Or do you need to think hard about this for a while before something occurs to you?

I suggest that you deliberately list out your values and perhaps even put them in some kind of logical order. If the word "value" is too intimidating, then simply think of them as the matters close to your heart.

For inspiration, I have pulled together a list of 100 concepts - this certainly isn't exhaustive - that my coaching and training clients have brought up in connection with the idea of values:

Adventure, acceptance, aesthetics, authenticity, attractiveness, communication, vocation, significance, awareness, modesty, balance, discipline, humility, gratitude, success, effectiveness, honesty, ambition, fairness, joy, friendships, celebrations, family, financial independence, emotional security, health, justice, faith, happiness, humor, harmony, helpfulness, idealism, intelligence, intimacy, integrity, individualism, competency, cooperativeness, creativity, cleverness, children, strength, facility, love, passion, vitality, joie de vivre, accomplishment, motivation, sympathy, power, courage, curiosity, emotional closeness, nature, order, objectivity, openness, optimism, partnership, productivity, punctuality, perfection, quality, respect, peacefulness, purity, self-determination, fun, beauty, safety, intellect, athleticism, sensuality, sexuality, spirituality, independence, loyalty, tolerance, diversity, vigor, civility, responsibility, advancement, growth, reliability.

Here's what to do next:

First, strike through all the concepts that do not apply to you.

Write the remaining ones down on a piece of paper and reduce the number further until you have a total of 10 left. Some values will resonate with you right away, and you will recognize that they are fundamental to who you are. Trust your gut feeling on this and react intuitively. For others, you might need to give them some thought. These questions could be helpful to you:

If I cannot live out this value, is there another value that might incorporate it? Is peacefulness important to me, or do I really need nature, where I can find both peacefulness and balance?

If I could not live out certain things in my workplace or private life, would I still be motivated to keep going as I am?

Now you will need to take a truly critical step for your self-determined life. Carefully go through these values and determine if they are actually issues that lie close to your heart. My questions below will support you as you do this:

Review your 10 values. Which of these are perhaps also your mother's values? Your father's? Your partner's? Or your boss's?

If all of your values fit into your environment and your family, then you are either quite congruent with the most important people and systems in your life, or you have adopted others' values in order to ease your



personal or professional relationships. If you suspect this to be the case with some of your values, then write each word on a piece of paper and set it down on the floor. Now stand on this so-called ground anchor. You can use your body as a feedback instrument.

Say the word out loud and observe how your body reacts. Think through the situations in your life in which this value influences your actions and your general space. Does this feel good? Happy? Energetic? Or actually stressful? Tough? Hard? Sooner an “I’ve got to!”?

This will give you the answer to the question of whether or not this value is truly yours. Values that suit us and motivate us feel good, approachable and happy, while the values that we have simply adopted and feel like we must fulfill feel hard or tough, and rob us of our energy. If you find yourself striking a few more concepts off your list, go back to the beginning of this section to the list of values.

At the end of this exercise, you should be left with 10 values that fit you.

Practicing courage or living courageously?

In my lectures, I often talk about the fact that life is too short for practicing courage and that we would be better off focusing on the sensible expansion of boundaries for a courageous life. I am convinced that many people misunderstand the nature of bravery and still think that they can prove their courage, to themselves and the world, through something like a bungee or a parachute jump. Of course, an experience like that can help us generate more courage for life itself if it is used wisely, such as when it is performed as a ritual and a person can mentally carry that experience into subsequent situations in which they have learned how to act bravely in their day-to-day lives.

However, very few people typically do this. The practicing of courage or adrenaline rush remains a distinct incident. “I was once really brave!” This meaningful, perhaps even strengthening exercise ends up not inspiring us to grapple in our daily lives with the issues that were relevant to the experience. We might leap off of tall cliffs, but we never address the topic of our long overdue raise. We might climb the highest mountain, but we drag our feet when it comes to shaping our relationship according to our own needs. We race into the deepest valley, but say no if asked if we learned anything from the experience. This is why I encourage others to tackle the boundaries in their daily lives which prevent them from leading the lives they truly desire. I prefer to grapple with the issues that are stopping you from doing YOUR thing.

If you diligently go through all the exercises, you will be armed with up to three things that you can pursue in each life area in order to bring your life into greater alignment with your dreams. Perhaps there are spheres of life in which you feel closely linked to yourself and your needs, but for most people, including myself, there is enough space for growth, development, change, and courage muscle training.

So, what comes next for you and your training?

Which boundaries would you like to expand?

Take your pages of notes and determine the issues for each life area that you would like to change. Would



you maybe like to pursue a raise? Go on a different kind of trip? Spend Christmas your way? Say no? Or fulfill a dream?

Formulate a goal for each of your issues in the various life areas. For example:

I would like to spend a few days in a city all by myself. To achieve that, I will need my husband's support in taking care of the kids.

It is important for you to verify why you want what you want. This is where you can consider your values. Sometimes we are mistaken, even in this, and we allow external factors to dictate what we want to do or stop doing.

To reach the example I gave above, you could ground your wish in the values of independence, balance and individualism. If you find nature included in your values, perhaps it would make for sense to spend time in a mountain cabin and not a city hotel. Verify what you really want.

If you are interested in tackling the issue of a raise, you might find the values of success, ambition and fairness on your list. The desire for a raise would remain the same, but your motivation would differ depending on if you are driven by personal success or by the wish for fair compensation for yourself and possibly others.

You need to be able to explain each goal and wish with one or more of your values. If that seems impossible, then examine everything more carefully. You might find that external, "foreign" values, old faith systems, and other issues are coloring your analysis. But you haven't bought this book to fulfill the dreams and goals of others. This is supposed to be about you!

Once you have written down your goals and explained the rationale (i.e., values) behind them, you should feel an inner YES when considering each wish. Yes, a little smile at the thought that you can achieve this. Feel free to use your body as a feedback provider again. Only use those issues in your courage muscle training that elicit a clear and powerful YES!!!

Congratulations! You have concluded the first important step in your courage muscle training. Please celebrate these first steps toward a brave life in your own way, because every beginning requires lots of energy. Once you are on your way, the journey will not always be easy, but it will be smoother now that you have taken off.

The following chapter will concentrate on the next steps. What will support you in implementing your plan? What are the potential hurdles you will face in the implementation process? Armed with the right attitude and culture of failure, you will be able to tackle the next steps.

Let's get going!