

Mindsets for Happiness and Success



COURAGE

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the decision that something else is more important.

LET'S TALK about LIFE

The single most important thing we can do for our children is talk to them about life. At dinner, at breakfast, eating burgers in the car, or sipping hot cocoa before bed. Decades of research has shown that children who eat 3 to 4 times a week with their parents are 3 times less likely to get involved with drugs, alcohol, or smoking. They do better in school, have higher self-esteem, and stronger relationships with their parents. With the little time busy parents have, we might as well talk about what's important. All it takes is 10 minutes a day.

LET'S TALK conversation starters have been strategically designed in a specific sequence to help children (and parents) learn the

Happiness and Success

twelve most important mindsets that lead to happiness and success. They are based on decades of research and the literature from hundreds of experts who study happiness and success. In the same way that we learn to walk, play a musical instrument, speak a new language, or dance the salsa, we also build mindsets through repetition. By repeating new, similar thought patterns over and over again during a 30-day period, we actually rewire certain ways of thinking into our brains. Eventually it becomes a habit that we continue without any effort. LET'S TALK is designed for ages five and up. Feel free to adapt the questions to what you know your children are able to understand and can relate to.

COURAGE Intro - 1

We live in a much safer world today than our ancestors did thousands of years ago, but our brains have not evolved as quickly as the world has changed. Except in rare situations that are truly dangerous, fear is not only useless but detrimental to our success and happiness in three ways. Due to constant stress and anxiety, we, as a society, have become exhausted, unfocused, and risk-averse.

1. Our bodies react daily to situations that aren't really dangerous (rejection, loss, humiliation, etc.), and that fear creates stress, which drains energy, makes us sick and leads to burnout and depression.

Introduction for Parents

COURAGE Intro - 2

2. Fear takes us out of the moment, making us focus on something negative that MIGHT happen - instead of the situation itself.

3. Fear discourages us from taking the risks needed to be successful. When we feel fear, we back off.

According to Tony Robbins, "fear is just an energy," a biochemical reaction to something we perceive as a threat. Since our bodies do not know the difference between a tiger racing towards us or the upcoming presentation at work, we feel the same paralyzing, weak-at-the-knees-can't-hardly-breathe sensation for both. But whether it is fear of rejection, failure, loss,

Introduction for Parents

COURAGE Intro - 3

shame, pain, hurt, being humiliated or being alone, all fears - or stress - hold us back from what we are truly capable of."

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the decision that something else is more important. It is the harnessing of that energy to take action and move forward.

"The fastest way to deal with fear is to FACE it and move FORWARD anyway! What I have learned is that the most successful people on this planet leverage their fear. They don't pretend it's not there and they don't fight it either. They use their fear to take action."

Introduction for Parents

The TRUTH about COURAGE

1. Our brains have not evolved as quickly as the world has changed.

We live in a much safer world today than our ancestors did thousands of years ago, but our brains have not evolved as quickly as the world has changed. They react to any kind of threat - fear of rejection, failure, loss, shame, pain, hurt, being humiliated or being alone - in the same way by sending messages to the body to prepare for fight, flight, or freeze.

Our bodies don't know the difference between a tiger racing towards us or the upcoming presentation at work, so we experience the same paralyzing, weak-at-the-knees-can't-hardly-breathe sensation for both. And since our lives have become complicated and very stressful, on a daily basis, this constant state of fear or anxiety is not healthy for us and more importantly, it prevents us from learning, growing, changing, and creating a happy, successful life.

2. Those who appear "fearless" to us are not fearless at all. Most of us believe that people who do courageous things are not afraid. That is simply not true. Those who appear "fearless" to us are not fearless at all. They are simply doing what they want to do - despite the fear."

Dar Robinson, one of the greatest modern-day daredevils, was terrified - practically scared to death - with each and every stunt. His heart leaped from his chest; he had to consciously control his rapid breathing; he sweated, he trembled, just like the rest of us - then he did what he had set out to do." - Dan Millman, author of *Everyday Enlightenment*.

3. Fear is like a muscle that gets stronger with use. Successful people are people who can adapt, improvise, and handle competently whatever comes their way. They tend to experience less fear and take bigger risks in life. The more you face your fears in scary situations, the less fearful you will feel. It's like a muscle that gets stronger with use.

It's important to recognize that we all have fears, but we are very different in terms of what actually frightens us. For some, the scariest thing is performing in front of an audience. For others it might be physical risks (like bungee jumping) or emotional conflict. You will

The TRUTH about COURAGE (cont.)

notice, as you talk about, and rank, the situations presented on days 7 through 30, that family members will disagree on how scary something is.

4. In our culture, we are much too focused on trying to get rid of the fear and too little focused on learning to live with the fear and incorporating it into our daily lives and actions. That's one of the secrets of people who take big risks and who make changes quickly; they have the same amount of fear as anyone else, but for them, it's not an unfamiliar, threatening emotion. It's something they have encountered before. They are not paralyzed by it; in fact, they expect it. They know that fear will come, but they also know that they have made it through change and fear countless times before." Mel Robbins.

5. If you want to expand your comfort zone you have to do something that feels uncomfortable every day. By the time we are adults, we have established a personal comfort zone, which strongly influences the actions we take and the decisions we make every day. If you want to expand your comfort zone you have to do something that feels uncomfortable every day. For example, at the next event or party you attend, try talking to someone you've never met before. Try volunteering for something at school or at work that you are afraid you aren't good at. The more you do it, the easier it gets. As your comfort zone grows, you feel more confident and powerful. Over time, you get used to the fear and realize that you can control how it affects you. It's not going to stop you from living life.

6. Taking deep breaths will transform fear into a calmer sensation. More than ever we can benefit from learning techniques for calming ourselves down in moments of fear or anxiety. Taking deep breaths will transform your fear into a calmer sensation because the change in breathing signals your body to relax. Practice breathing in for a count of four, holding your breath for a count of four and then exhaling for a count of four. Practice this breathing technique a few minutes each day for 25 days, (plus any time you feel the need to calm yourself down), and your brain will begin to form a habit that becomes automatic whenever you start to feel fearful or anxious.

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 1

Read the 1st section on the cards titled "The TRUTH about COURAGE" and talk about how much our lives have changed - in terms of actual dangers and real fears - in the last thousand years.



Day 1

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 2

Read the 2nd paragraph on the card titled "The TRUTH about COURAGE" and talk about what you have learned that might be different from what you previously thought about fearless people.



Day 2

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 3

Read the 3rd paragraph on "The TRUTH about COURAGE" card and talk about how courage is like a muscle that gets stronger the more you use it. Is that different from what you have always thought about courage?



Day 3

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 4

Read the 4th paragraph on "The TRUTH about COURAGE" card. What do you think about the idea of "learning to live with fear" instead of running away from it? How might each of those strategies affect your life?



Day 4

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 5

Read the 5th paragraph on "The TRUTH about COURAGE" card and talk about what little things you could do in your life that would help you get used to fear and make your "courage muscle" stronger.



Day 5

The TRUTH about COURAGE - 6

Read the 6th paragraph on "The TRUTH about COURAGE" card and practice the breathing technique several times. It can help you take control of fear and calm your body's reaction in times of stress and anxiety.



Day 6

Everyone is watching you...

It takes courage to perform in front of an audience. You're the goalie that's supposed to block a penalty kick in a soccer final. Everyone is watching. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most?



Day 7

You challenge a teacher's grade...

It takes courage to speak up. You think your teacher graded your essay unfairly and you want to talk to him about it. But you worry you might be wrong. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most?



Day 8

You can protect a guilty friend or...

It takes courage to be honest. You are asked about a situation you witnessed that would get one student (a friend) into trouble but protect another (not a friend) who did nothing wrong. Have you experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 9

Your friend is taking advantage...

It takes courage to say no. A friend is taking advantage of your offer to help with homework and is now expecting you to do it for him every day. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 10

You were very wrong...

It takes courage to admit you are wrong. You misjudged a situation and made a decision that wasted everyone's time. You need to admit you were wrong. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 11

It's time to end things...

It takes courage to have difficult conversations. You decided you don't want to be friends (or romantic partners) with someone anymore, and it's time to say so. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 12

You want to try out for the play...

It takes courage to try new things. You want to try out for the school play, but you've never done anything like this before. You're afraid you'll make a fool out of yourself. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 13

You like someone...

It takes courage to be vulnerable. You like someone but have no idea if they like you. Do you say something or just wait and see if they make the first move? Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 14

You want to quit your new job...

It takes courage to fulfil commitments. You started a new job and the boss is really awful. You want to quit, but a friend's dad went to a lot of trouble to help you get the position. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 15

You're selected to give a speech...

It takes courage to perform in front of an audience. You have been selected to give a ten-minute speech to the entire school and you are very nervous. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 16

Your opinion isn't the popular one...

It takes courage to speak up. You have an opinion that is different from most of the students in your class or group and you're afraid they will make fun of you. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 17

You regret what you said...

It takes courage to say you're sorry. You said some really mean things to your dad because he wouldn't let you go play with friends until you finished your homework. Now you have to say sorry. Have you experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 18

You moved to a new school...

It takes courage to meet new people. You just moved to a new school and need to make new friends. It's very difficult and you feel all alone. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 19

You feel like a fake ...

It takes courage to be yourself. You are hanging around with the rich, popular girls, pretending you are like them, but you feel like a fake. It's not who you are. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 20

You lost, but your friend won...

It takes courage to swallow your pride. You should congratulate your friend who made the team even though you did not. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 21

You play a piano solo for 150...

It takes courage to perform in front of an audience. You are only seven years old and you're playing a piano solo in front of 150 students and parents. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 22

You don't want to cut class...

It takes courage to say no. The kids in your group decide to cut class and do something fun, but you don't want to join them, knowing the consequences. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 23

You feel like quitting the team...

It takes courage to fulfil commitments. You signed up for football, and although you are good at it, you don't really like it and want to quit mid-season. But the coach really needs you. Have you experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 24

You disagree on political issues...

It takes courage to open your mind and try to understand another person's perspective. Your good friend strongly disagrees with you on a political issue. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 25

You don't want to be seen as uncool...

It takes courage to say no. You want to say no to alcohol and drugs that everyone is passing around at a party, but don't want to appear uncool. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 26

Your teacher is trying to help...

It takes courage to be vulnerable. The teacher is giving you some constructive criticism on your presentation, but you're feeling more and more defensive. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 27

Your friend has bad breath...

It takes courage to have one of those difficult conversations we all avoid. You need to tell a friend that he/she has bad breath, but you don't want to hurt your friend's feelings. Have you experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 28

Bad choices got you into trouble...

It takes courage to take responsibility for your behavior. You made choices that got you into trouble hanging around with the wrong kids. It would be easy to blame others. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 29

You want to protect the bullied...

It takes courage to speak up. You see someone being bullied but are afraid to say something because you might be bullied too. Have you, or someone you know, experienced a similar situation? How scary is that - on a scale of 1 to 5?



Day 30