

Fold me

“If you have the courage
to begin, you have the
courage to succeed.”

- Harry Hoover

**Identify Fears, Build
Courage**



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In June, the Positivity Project talked about expectations and how to handle disappointment when our expectations aren't met. In July, we offered coping strategies to help you move past the disappointment or negative emotions you might be experiencing. For August, we're offering tips to move from coping into courage: ways you can step outside your comfort zone and keep going when you may feel afraid too or feel like you don't know how.

The Oxford dictionary offers two definitions of courage: the ability to do something that frightens one and strength in the face of pain or grief. Courage is also the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear. Courage is a personality trait that we all have, but it looks different in all of us based on our experiences or memories. Having courage is necessary to face situations in work and in life. By understanding where your fear comes from and actively changing your thoughts and behaviors, you can build courage in your life.

Identify Your Fears

1. Determine your specific fears - When you are aware of something you are avoiding or is making you fearful, write it down. This may be a painful step but in order to build courage, you have to be able to name your fears.
2. Figure out the cause of your fears – What specific experiences led to this fear? What was the source of the fear? Is it something from the past? Is it an outdated story from your memory that you still believe to be true? Acknowledging your fears may be all you need to do to start to overcome them.
3. Recognize your courage – Take time to recognize when you have been courageous in your life. Look at the times you showed strength and bravery.
4. Develop a plan to build your courage – Identify a fear you want to get over and develop a plan writing out the steps you'll take to build your courage. For example, if you are afraid of driving alone on a highway, you can develop a plan to help you get used to it until you have the courage to take on the task. Your plan might include the items "ride in the passenger seat on the highway, drive with a friend or family member on major roads, drive alone on major roads, drive with a friend or family member on a highway, drive alone on the highway."

Developing Behaviors that Build Courage

1. Script situations that elicit your fears – Write down what you'll say. If you're going to have a difficult conversation, write down the points you want to make. Think about what the other person might say and have responses written down like a contingency plan.
2. Frame what you fear in simpler terms – This can help you shape how you think and feel about specific situations by making them seem commonplace or banal. If you're afraid of swimming in the ocean, tell yourself you're just swimming in a very large pool and you'll stay within this specific area.
3. Avoid comparing yourself to others – Every person is different and focusing on what someone else can do undermines your self-confidence. Focus on yourself and what you are able to do.
4. Embrace the positive and avoid the negative - Negative thoughts and attitudes are draining and if you give in to them, they will become stronger and undermine your confidence and courage. Pay attention to the moments you do show courage and appreciate each step you take that moves you forward.
5. Have confidence and believe in your ability to be courageous - Two characteristics of a courageous person is that they have confidence in themselves, and they believe in their ability to succeed and overcome fears.
6. Take risks and accept failure – Be willing to step outside of your comfort zone. It's important to be realistic and there may be times you fail, but often those moments help us learn and grow the most. "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Wayne Gretzky
7. Use obstacles to your benefit - Take obstacles that present themselves in your life and turn them into assets.
8. Take the road less travelled – Be willing to do something different than others. Stand by your values and convictions.
9. Relax and have as much fun as possible – Don't take yourself too seriously. Not focusing on the potential for failure and staying positive can help you be successful in any situation, which may lead to greater confidence and courage.
10. Keep moving forward!

*Source: <https://www.wikihow.com/Build-Courage>