

Courage as Daily Practice

The embodiment of what compassion and curiosity make possible

Courage is what becomes possible when you have sat with discomfort, stayed genuinely curious, and used this insight to act. Courage is what compassion and curiosity make possible. And in workplaces shaped by hierarchy, harmful norms, and the pressure to conform, courage is not an occasional act. It is a daily practice, fueled by small and large acts of principled disobedience.

WHAT COURAGE LOOKS LIKE

Courage is speaking up

Even when your voice shakes. Even when the room goes quiet. Even when you are the only one who does.

Courage is doing what is right for the community

Not what is easiest, most convenient, or most likely to protect your position. What is right — for the people who depend on your leadership.

Courage is setting healthy boundaries

Knowing where you end and others begin. Saying no when no is the most caring answer. Protecting your integrity so you can protect others.

Courage is resisting the harm of hierarchy

Recognising when power is being used to silence, diminish, or exclude — and refusing to participate in it, even when participation would be easier.

Courage is an act of disobedience

Every time you tell the truth in a culture of silence, centre people in a culture of process, or choose the long right over the short easy — you are being disobedient. That is what courage looks like.

“One isn’t necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practise any other virtue with consistency.

— Maya Angelou

BUILDING COURAGE AS A DAILY PRACTICE

01

Build the habit of honesty in small moments

Every time you name what you actually think in a low-stakes conversation, you are training the muscle. Don’t wait for the big moment to practise telling the truth. Do it today, in the meeting, in the corridor, in the small exchange that no one else will remember but you will.

02

Get comfortable with discomfort daily

Choose one small act each day that edges you toward discomfort — a boundary you hold, a question you ask that challenges the room, a silence you don’t rush to fill. The daily practice of sitting with unease is what makes it bearable when the stakes are high.

03

Reflect on what you almost did

At the end of each day, notice the moments where you pulled back. Not to judge yourself, but to understand the pattern. What stopped you? What would it have taken? That reflection is the training ground. Next time, the gap between knowing and doing gets a little smaller.

REFLECTION PROMPTS

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1. Where in your work are you complying when you know something needs to be said or changed?
2. What would a small act of principled disobedience look like for you this week?
3. Where are you allowing hierarchy or harmful norms to shape your decisions? What would it cost you to resist?
4. What does courage make possible for the people you lead — and what does its absence cost them?