

# Conscious Courage

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I've found myself adrift in modern times; the future looks bleak. While being a focused person of good intention, I've looked around the world and thought, "What could possibly save us?" This serious pondering has given birth to a concept, as well as a plan for my own course of action, which I call Conscious Courage.

I've come to trust the nature of all things, of which I am a manifestation. When I consciously make loving space for whatever inner conflicts or pains I experience, I trust that a transformation occurs and a more expansive experience is on the other side of those unpleasant feelings. Conscious Courage is a state of BE-ing; it is a coming into our self through our heart and life-force allowing us to face danger, difficulty and fear, instead of withdrawing from it. With all the energy and somatic psychologies that are available to us now, this type of mindful courage is additionally required if we are to face the personal and global challenges ahead to heal our world.

My re-acquaintance and fascination with courage came two years ago when I attended a Connecting event in New York City sponsored by the Institute for Noetic Sciences. There were more than 500 of us there to hear visionaries Deepak Chopra, Alex Grey, and Andrew Cohen lead a panel discussion called, "Passion to Connect," in effect; we were exploring the qualities necessary to affect a paradigm shift of consciousness. The event incorporated World Café methodology, allowing us all to become part of the energetic discussion.

During the last hour of this stimulating dialogue, Deepak told a story about himself and the courage he feels continuously called to generate. That inspired Alex and Andrew and in a quick-shift, courage became the lively subtext of the gathering. Many shared a new awareness of the courage it takes them just to be on a personal and global healing path. Their stories reflected the difficulty to step out of the mainstream media-driven world and look within for answers. Even those who recognize that tuning into the nature (or spirit)

within us always provides a wiser perspective for graceful and effective movements, courage must often be called upon to fuel our intentions.

I left that event with an awareness of my own courage that I had not noticed in the same way before. While it has always been there (I am a multiple survivor who's had a very challenging life), I previously hadn't seen courage as an option, or opportunity; for me it was a survival necessity. However, in re-examining courage as a conscious choice worlds of possibility began to emerge. Rather than have courage only surface in the midst of a personal catastrophe, I could choose it to explore more deeply within myself, and I could rely on it to uncover what I am discovering through the investigation and to manifest transformation. My new-found awareness of conscious courage has become an enjoyable and enlivening process.

I am reminded of an article written a long time ago by Jean Houston, about geniuses from a variety of fields. At the end of the piece she spoke of a glaring similarity they all shared; they each seemed to have, "a sense that they were dancing on the fulcrum of evolution." That phrase has come to have great personal resonance. In fact, aren't we all *really* on the fulcrum of evolution? And if that is so, why aren't we dancing? This is where conscious courage comes in. When we consciously choose to be with our challenges, we can dance with possibilities and discoveries rather than recoil from them. This kind of courage, with a heart and spirit to it, makes the experience of dancing (even metaphorically) come quite naturally.

Courage, as it's generally known, is when we *must* rise to the occasion of facing something considered fearful. Conscious courage drops the *must*, bringing the spirit and phenomena of courage to the level of choice. It is almost always also a choice to heal: personally, culturally and globally. When I call on conscious courage to face things that my conditioned thinking wants to avoid, out of fear or what people will think of me, it always leads me to a new awareness that is meaningful. I recently recovered from a year of anxiety and poor sleep. My conditioned thinking wanted to push it aside, take sleeping pills, and constantly complain that I was not in a peaceful state. Instead of choosing the habitual pathway of my conditioned

thinking, I invoked conscious courage. This led to working with a seasoned practitioner using some of my own Focalizing techniques, in combination with Somatic Experiencing and Bert Hellinger's intergenerational healing. As soon as the process began, my pain became worse; synchronicities presented themselves having to do with new awareness of my birth parents and my lineage. The psychic pain I was in was constant, yet having a sense that there was a new light on the other side of it, allowed me to give it space in my BE-ing. Through the process of discovering the fortress I had built around my heart, the pain gradually dissolved. I was left feeling even more present, with my heart softer. The transformation of that anxious discomfort has untangled me from some of my own tortured legacy, has opened me to a strengthened compassion for our species, and empowers me to share it with you now.

My own deeper explorations, and those I observe in my clients, have materialized a new matrix of energy and somatic psychologies that I refer to as *Focalizing*. The process includes ancient and modern wisdoms that can guide us to deeper truths inside. I am astonished at the amount of conscious courage it takes to engage in this fruitful inner-process within our normally outer-directed world. We must look inwardly, letting nature guide our course through the felt senses of our bodies, through imagery, and by listening to our soft, inner-directive voice that always feels right. We cannot look toward the physical world for answers to save our species and our planet

By observing some of my clients who have adopted an approach of conscious courage, I recognize that I am not alone in this inner resource mining. One client, I'll call Paul, invited me to the opening of his new art exhibit at a prestigious gallery in New York City. It was glorious; the client was radiant in the center of his own being, surrounded by his beautiful work. It was not long before that Paul had lost everything (success, wealth, prestige) due to a serious illness from which he was not expected to live. After a miraculous recovery, he invited me to support him in his efforts to bring his art, and his community, to a better place than it had ever been. Using his conscious courage, and an emerging new self to face challenges that had previously confounded him, he made room for his own fear. Embracing that fear, with an open heart, allowed for his gradual transformation to occur. Paul

experienced that the seat of consciousness is always stronger than the energy that is pulling it down; he just had to be willing to exercise his will and see that it's not a fight or struggle. The energy pulling him down is not who he is; he is the one who is watching, and that one is pure consciousness. At Paul's gallery opening I witnessed a tangible outer manifestation of his willingness to be consciously courageous.

Sandra (not real name), another client, is in her thirties and has a history of post traumatic stress syndrome. The severity of what had been recently triggered by the time she came to see me was immobilizing her. While she cared for her two children (as a single mom), it was done in a state of dissociation. Her conscious courage was subsequently revealed in a series of our Focalizing sessions, and even though it wavered between fear and the possibility of light on the other side, it was appreciated. Sandra continued to willfully choose courage to face her thoughts, fears and anxieties. She came to recognize and feel that she was larger than her fears and the conditioned thinking that was freezing her in terror. She came to sense that as the observer of her fears, they were not her, and that with support, she could experience herself as larger than her fears. As Sandra's blocked trauma energies were organically released, she enrolled in a yoga institute to become certified as an instructor. Though she had only seen me a few times, this was an amazing demonstration of courage on her part. In what seemed like no time at all, she completed her certification and began teaching yoga to children. Later, went on to develop a full yoga practice and community. Before getting in touch with her conscious courage, this accomplishment would have been beyond her wildest dreams.

The nature of the awareness shown with both of these clients is beautifully articulated in a new book by Michael Singer called, "The Untethered Soul" (recipient of the prestigious 2008 Nautilus Book Award recognizing world-changing books that contribute to positive social change, spiritual growth, conscious living, high-level wellness, and responsible leadership).

In addition to realizing our strengths and vulnerabilities as we move through the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must move beyond our limiting modes of consciousness and let go of

our illusions to discover who we really are. Buckminster Fuller referred to this as our “final evolutionary exam.” He believed that with a new awareness of consciousness humanity now has the option to become enduringly successful.

Joseph Campbell, one of the most influential cultural anthropologists of the last century, also predicted that the new mythologies of the 21st century would involve consciousness - the witness to our conditioned thinking and feeling. The wealth of new rituals that unleash new energies bringing us peace and equanimity are like the grounding mythologies of the past. Knowing one’s self with conscious courage will illuminate how we learn who we are in a swiftly changing spiritual, material and scientifically manipulated world.

These new awareness’s must start with each individual and can then be brought to community and societal levels, as is being done at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by senior faculty member, C. Otto Scharmer. Working with students, colleagues, major corporations, and varied communities, his findings echo the roots of conscious courage in his latest book: *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*. In it, he refers to *Presencing* as being a social technology for collectively leading profound change. Presencing was seminal in inspiring my work in creating Focalizing, and has as its focus the same social changes Otto is expressing. Scharmer’s book illuminates a blind spot in leadership and social experience: the source of the innerplace from which leaders and systems operate. “The crisis of our time isn’t just a crisis of a single leader, organization, country, or conflict. The crisis of our time is about the dying of an old social structure, an old way of institutionalizing and enacting collective social forms...many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems that something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying, and exhausting itself – while something else, still indistinct, were rising from the rubble.”

I was recently interviewed for a documentary on intergenerational healing for those with Holocaust legacies. While on camera, I was aware of what a great opportunity could be present for all mankind. I have personally witnessed the healing of individuals with survivor legacies, and I recognize how much conscious courage is required to enter the healing

domain. If we could take an example like genocide to demonstrate that mass societal healing is in our grasp, who knows how fast that healing could migrate to the many other troubled areas in our world? Could this not aid in a resolution to all types of human suffering and global challenges?

Conscious courage is a way of connecting Focalizing and all energy and somatic psychologies with the Information Age we are living in. Information has become a dominant currency that regulates our ways of being. We have the ability to tap into a wider psychic band-width of energy and information, without a computer. We can discover these pearls of wisdom in our own bodies and in the nature from which we emerge. We no longer fully accept as reality the intellectual ways that our human minds see and interpret the physical world. We gain a wider, multidimensional scope of reality, guided by what we feel inside us.

Our conditioned thinking does not normally allow us to tune into the voice of nature. To reach this wider bandwidth of information, we must suspend our everyday ways of seeing and judging our lives and our world. We must learn to trust the life force within us as it connects us to our source, the earth. By respecting our place in the evolutionary process, we let that connection inform us in addressing matters at hand. Conscious courage assists to access this fertile underground, or energetic field, that manifests healing and innovation.

Conscious courage has changed my life, as well as the lives of those I've had the opportunity to work with. Matter is energy, as Einstein and those in the Quantum field assert, and there is a place where physical images and felt senses are the same, and can affect one another. Through conscious courage, Focalizing, and similar processes, we can open the door of the subconscious mind and find this place. Once we find the source of vibrant energy inside of us, we can heal and transform whatever needs our attention, be it personal, or global

After a Focalizing event, a client shared an insight that emerged when he was reminded of a recent time he had spent in the Aran Islands. "We spent a week there with David Whyte, an incredible Irish poet, a man who has greatly affected my life. He had us step up to the edge

of a 200 foot cliff. We just get our heads over the edge to feel the winds and the sea spray from the turbulent ocean below. It was literally stepping to the edge and looking *outward*. We used Focalizing to step to the edge and look *inward*.”

We can increase our consciousness at any time; we can co-create positive shifts in our evolution. Manifestations of a greater law of loving intention have been present since the beginning of time; miracles are nothing new. Can we pass Buckminster Fuller’s exam? Armed with conscious courage, perhaps we can. I encourage you to do so, and wish you well in all of your efforts.

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