



Many of you know I'm a fan of Brene Brown. Her TED Talk, "The Power of Vulnerability," is one we recommend to all of our new clients. http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability?language=en

She sends out a weekly email blast called, COURAGEworks – Your weekly dose of daring.

You can sign up here: http://www.courageworks.com/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=cw-dod-list&utm_content=061316&utm_campaign=cw_heartbeat&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTXpnelpUSTFaREUzTjJNeilsinQioiI1REZWMmp4elhFWU5kYWJNZWxoTEd2WkFuZiYybVJ4REYwSXJYNGJQRnJwOENicUFCMmRCYkYoazNYZDdNYWhDbmlaNTFVUW9pSHdyTGVMbUtqeWswb1l2TUZXcXVoYUdNNGpEV1UyTjQzZzoifQ%3D%3D

Those of you who follow her work know that courage is a big theme. Just yesterday, my wife and I attended church. We heard a guest speaker, a woman from Pakistan, speak on trust and courage. She made an interesting statement:

***We don't need courage
unless we're afraid.***

Her pronouncement gave me pause. I thought we weren't supposed to be afraid. Fear is the enemy... etc., etc... But on further examination, I realized she has a point. She went on to point out that the Bible sets forth, "Fear not," or the equivalent, 365 times – one for each day ☺. Interesting...

Fear must be a big deal;

and not just for us moderns (or post-moderns if you prefer). It's been a problem for millennia.

***Could it be that the chink in our armor that is fear could be the opportunity
to take courage?***

Where would we be without fear? There is a healthy fear of certain things – riding in a car that's out of control; swimming in snake-infested swamps; an abusive father – to name a few. There are times to flee a fearful situation. But then there are times to face other fears. I've written elsewhere about the acronym for FEAR: False Evidence Appearing Real.

***Much of what we fear
never materializes.***

Some does. Most doesn't. And it's these fears we must face with courage. Even fears that are outside our control – those "imposed" on us – can be faced with courage. How much have we learned from brave POWs? Or from those who experienced the horrors of the Gulags in the former USSR or the concentration camps of Poland or Germany? We'd be without the profound lessons to be learned from the likes of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Viktor Frankl had they not experienced fear and grappled with how to face their fears with courage. Now I don't wish those circumstances on anyone. But,

***the pressure of facing fears
with courage can often produce
"pearls" of great price.***

If I strive for a "safe" life for myself, or if I make that safety the number one priority for my children, what might I miss? For one, the opportunity to build the "muscle" of courage.

Frame this a bit differently. What kind of life do I admire? A life that is safe, but devoid of risk and challenge? Or, a life of courage? When it's all said and done, what sort of life do you want to look back on?

***You and I will probably never face the trials and sufferings of a Gulag,
but we will face challenges...
And we will get fearful.***

It might be the fear a founder of a family business has when she thinks about life after business. It might be the fear of the unknown outcome of a crucial conversation I'll have over lunch today. It might be the fear of the state of the economy. What are my choices? Ignore, run, cower or face these fears with courage. Look back at your life. Have you practiced all four options? When you think of the choices you've made, which option makes you proud? What if that muscle grew going forward? Doesn't everyone win when that happens? As the French say,

Bon courage!