

## The Adventurous Heart by Pete Dalton

*He ho'okele wa'a no ka lā 'ino.*

A canoe steersman for a stormy day. A courageous person.

Much is made of confidence. It's a quality that people often lack, want more of or are in awe of those with it. We can be confident in a particular context by simply developing trust in ourselves and the universe that things will turn out in a particular way.

Another way that you can develop confidence is through successfully achieving something and then after the event believing that it can be done again with a high degree of certainty because you have done it before successfully. In this case confidence is developed after you achieve something, so waiting to be confident before you can achieve something would mean you would never take action. So, what drives us to take action when we lack confidence? The answer is courage. Let's take a look at some ideas around courage.

### **Why courage?**

We can have moral courage to disagree with others and stand out, and we can have courage to take actions that we fear doing but still do them anyway. Great things have been achieved by a single person acting with courage. We can demonstrate courage in all parts of our lives from the grand to the mundane. On a daily basis we can draw on courage to be more effective and to help ourselves and others, whether this is standing up for a cause you believe in, giving a presentation or having the courage to engage in self exploration and inner work.

### **What is courage?**

Two of the definitions of courage I have come across recently are:

*The ability to maintain one's will or intent despite either the experience of fear, or the occurrence of adversity, frustration, defeat or reversal.*

*Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty*

Courage is about taking action despite there being uncertainty and even fear. When we lack confidence - courage can drive us forward.

The word courage can be traced back to its latin roots 'cor' and refers to 'heart' as the seat of emotions and inner strength. In the Hawaiian language a phrase *pu'u wai ha kila* – points to a similar concept and loosely translates as 'heart of steel'. However, it is noted that this is a modern phrase as ancient Hawaiians did not use the concept of heart in the same way as Westerners nor did they have steel. Courage however, is clearly something that comes from within rather than from outside.

Another Hawaiian phrase related to courage is *ho'o kanaka* – the definitions of which include: *manly; human; courageous; to become a servant or helper; to assume human shape, as a child in the womb*. Perhaps this points to another feature of courage – that it is an essential feature of the human condition and a quality that helps us to develop and grow.

Another Hawaiian word associated with courage is *manawanui* the meanings of which include: *'to have patience, fortitude, patient, steadfast, courageous and persevering'*. This

alludes to the quality of perseverance that is linked to courage. People who are effective often display not only courage to act in spite of fear and uncertainty but also the ability to act time and time again with persistent determination.

The phrase *lepahū* means 'to lose courage, to give up'. Lack of courage is associated with giving up – the antithesis of perseverance. Interestingly, two components of this word are *lele* one meaning of which is 'to fly' and '*pahu*' one meaning of which is 'to thud'. So in a sense to lose courage and give up is to 'land with a thud'.

*A'o nō i ke koa, a'o nō i ka holo*

-Learn when to be brave, learn when to run

Koa is a very important word in Hawaiian for courage and bravery. It features in the preceding phrase, which highlights that prudence and knowing when to act is linked to courage.

### **Courage- some lessons from Oz**

Films and books provide classic teaching tales. The search for courage was one of the themes in the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. Here the Cowardly Lion is engaged on a quest to find courage and towards the end of the film when the Lion meets the Wizard there are some lessons we can learn.

*Our thinking affects our courage*

The wizard tells the lion "*you are a victim of disorganised thinking*" – an astute observation indeed. Much of the fear that holds us back is there because we project our thoughts into an uncertain future and play out worst case scenarios which in all likelihood probably won't happen. In these cases, our thinking can be considered 'disorganised' and as a result we can lack courage.

*Courage comes from within*

That the lion is mistakenly on a quest to find courage outside of himself also emphasises the point that courage comes from within.

*Courage involves taking action*

The wizard tells the lion "*back where I come from, we have men who are called heroes. Once a year they take their fortitude out of mothballs and they parade it down the main street and they have no more courage than you have*". A difference between someone who achieves something and someone who holds back is that they were prepared to take action despite the fear and uncertainty.

*Courage is linked to wisdom*

The wizard also reframes the Lion's behaviour by saying "*you are under the unfortunate delusion that because you run away from danger, you have no courage, you are confusing courage with wisdom*". This alludes to another feature of courage - that it is linked to wisdom. Courage is not about taking action no matter what the circumstances are, which may be considered to be foolhardy and disastrous. Instead courage involves some degree of wisdom and good judgement to weigh up a situation and then to choose whether or not to act.

## **The Huna principles applied to courage**

The principles of Huna provide some simple guidance as to how to foster and develop courage. You might consider them in applying courage in your own life. This includes:

*'Ike*: (Awareness).

Courage comes from your belief that something is important enough to take action in spite of danger.

*Kala* (Freedom).

Facing danger and moving forward in spite of fear is your choice.

*Makia* (Focus).

Choosing the right time to be courageous, exercising good judgement and focussing on successful outcomes.

*Mana* (Power).

Recognising that courage comes from within and that you drive your actions.

*Aloha* (Love).

Courage supports our drive to grow and connect; courage also comes when your love for something or someone is greater than your fear of consequences.

*Manawa* (Presence).

Being persistent in your actions; staying present and centred within your intentions.

*Pono* (Effectiveness).

Taking action; success.

### **Endnote: The Adventurous Heart**

Whilst looking at the etymology of the word courage, I came across a source that claimed that in Middle English, the word '*corage*' was used more broadly to refer to what is in one's mind or thoughts, so this could cover a range of emotions and concepts not just what we narrowly define as courage. Examples provided includes '*bold corage*' – meaning 'brave heart, and '*wikked corage*' translating to 'evil heart'.

Now as Huna adventurers if we stretch that idea a bit, perhaps it's time to consider all the things we can do when we develop 'adventurous corage' – our own 'Adventurous Heart'.

Stepping up despite fear and uncertainty, taking action based on wisdom and good judgement, being persistent and having faith in your own adventurous heart are surely vital components of a rich and rewarding life.

Pete Dalton ©2020

Pete Dalton is an Alakai of Huna International living in the UK. For more information on his work visit his website [www.urbanhuna.org](http://www.urbanhuna.org)