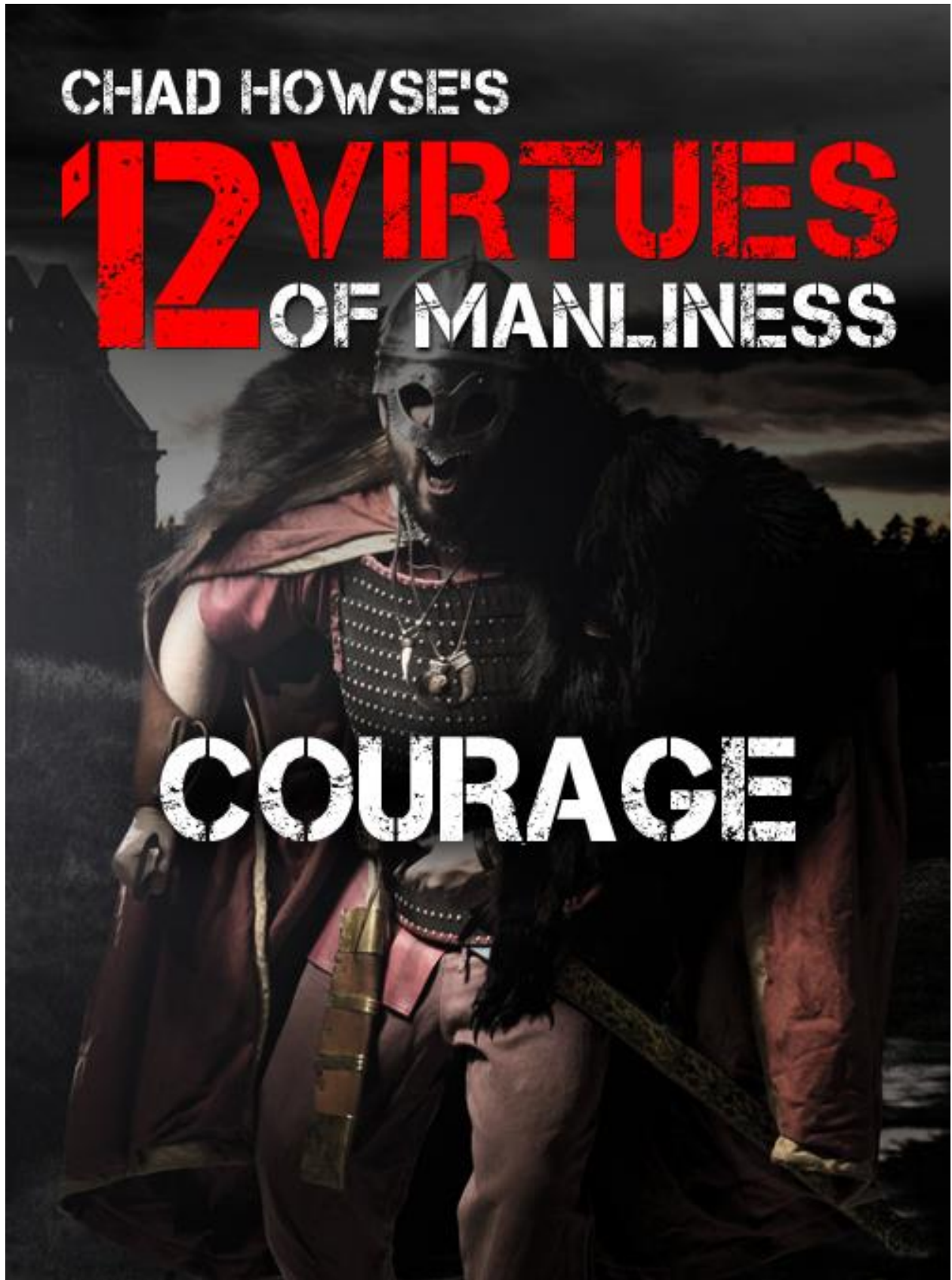


CHAD HOWSE'S

12 VIRTUES OF MANLINESS

COURAGE



COURAGE

Courage is a necessity. Most males today live a life devoid of courage or with diluted definitions of what courage is.

It's the same with the term "hero". Bruce Jenner was deemed a hero because he changed his name and got breast implants. There's nothing, not a single heroic about that.

Both courage and heroism require some detriment or possibility of detriment to the hero. You have to face fear. You have to be 'game' for whatever comes your way. Strength without courage is useless.

Train your body all you want but without courage your strength will serve no purpose.

Gameness is a side of courage that set the boys apart from the men, and still does. When we were in our tribes, before technology and innovation allowed men to act like women and women like men and both like lazy bastards, a man was useless to himself and to his tribe if he didn't have the courage to fight. It was a necessary attribute to be a part of a *community*.

He had to be a caretaker, a defender, not someone others had to defend and take care of.

Today it isn't necessary for survival, nor for the survival of the guy standing next to you. It is, however, a must for those who want to live a flourishing life, a life with purpose and meaning, and a life that can be deemed as manly.

You cannot be a pussy, content with fading into the crowd when battle begins, or living a safe, secure life where your goals and aspirations are concerned.

Being a man means living with audacity and daring. You cannot be a spectator nor a critic.

This is where our society breaks from reality. In our society you *can* survive as a critic, as a spectator, as a little bitch that tells others how to live and act but won't take any actions on his own part. You can *exist*, rather, without actually doing anything of value. You cannot, however, *live*.

Courage is acknowledging fear and marching forward regardless.

The Breath of Life

Set aside our roles as men, to be defenders and protectors and providers and procreators, for a second, and let's simply talk about *life*. No matter your sex, be it male

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or female, you *need* to actively practice courage on a daily basis if you're going to live a life worthy of the *gift of life*.

I think the book was called, [Resilience, by Eric Greitens](#), a former Navy SEAL now running for governor. In talking about BUDs, the training course you have to endure to become a SEAL, and the training following that course, he spoke about those moments in life when all hell breaks loose, when chaos is all around us, when we're presented with two options: fight or flight.

It's in these moments that we don't *rise* to anything we haven't trained for. In life we're completely dependent on our training. If we've come across intense situations before, if we've trained for them, thought about how we'll deal with them, we'll be better equipped to fight. If we spend our time avoiding conflict, staying small, avoiding our fears and living a safe life, we'll flee.

It's how we're wired.

You need to *train* courage, and you need to do it daily.

Courage is what will allow you to *live*, let alone protect, provide, and procreate.

Being a man of courage, a man who faces his fears, even a man who *seeks them out* knowing that it's within fear that lies opportunity, that will *live*. He'll explore, he'll have an exciting life, one devoid of the boring monotony that plagues the masses, confining the majority to a purgatorial state not even remotely like living.

You need courage to *live*, it's no longer just about survival.

COURAGE IS CONTAGIOUS

“Courage is contagious. Be the guy others gain strength from.” ~Chad Howse

I’m reading a book called, *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*. Without going too much into the book it’s essentially a collection of speeches given by a great man, a former prisoner of war in Vietnam.

One such speech is given at the retirement ceremony of a Navy SEAL, one of the early members of SEAL Team Six. In his description of the guy, Stockdale, the author, labels him ‘one of a kind’.

That simple description got me thinking.

What makes a man a ‘one of a kind’, or a true original?

His description of the Navy SEAL sheds some light on that.

Fear never deterred how he acted, nor his idea of what others thought. He danced and partied and was quick to make others feel better. He saved lives and put himself in danger, often, if it meant he had a *chance* to get someone else out of it.

His courage was contagious, as was his mood.

He led without trying to overtly lead. He just did. He was the first to do things.

The thing about this description is that each of us have the capacity to do this, few, however, will. We stay small because to stand out would mean more scrutiny, more eyes on us. We stay safe because to actually *try something* would mean that we’d have to put ourselves out there where the possibility of failure is not only more immediate, but on a far more grand scale.

While being thoughtful and mindful and calculative is important, it’s also important to react rather than to weigh all of your options out on the table almost trying to give yourself an excuse NOT to act.

A great life can be made in a moment. A single decision can shape who you are and how you’re remembered. But that single decision stands on the shoulders of the man and the training you did before the crescendo was reached.

You’re not meant to live a small life, one out of danger and out of the spotlight. The spotlight isn’t the goal, but the action is. What’s the point of breathing if you’re not going to push your limits in this life?

What’s the point of your heart beating if you’re not going to test its limits?

What’s the point of ANYTHING if you’re not going to try to act on your deepest, darkest fears and ambitions, those things bring life to your soul?

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With everything said thus far, the switch can occur within a day. You can go from being a scared little bitch to a lion with nothing but a change of perspective and a conscious effort to be more than what you're being right now.

Please, make that decision and make that effort or you'll end your life looking back on those years you wasted with a heavy heart and the burden of regret. I promise I'll do the same.

THE MOST IMPORTANT VIRTUE

“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.” C.S. Lewis

I watched a movie the other day. It made me think whether or not I would have the courage to stand up for what I believe, and what I stand for, even in the face of death. It's easy to say we think something, believe something, and would *do* something. But would you? Would *I*?

Courage isn't *thinking* about doing something but being too afraid to follow through with it. **Courage is action in the face of fear.** A life isn't *lived* if fear isn't faced. Conquered. Controlled. **A life where fear wins each and every battle isn't much of a life at all.** Back to the movie...

A man and his crew of soldiers, mercenaries, and criminals set out on a mission. A mission that no one else would embark on because of the dangers and almost certain death. Some of the men have nothing to lose. They're in the group because they'd rather fight than be a prisoner. Others truly believe in the cause of the mission. Skip ahead an hour or so towards the end of the film, and they're faced with a very difficult decision:

Captured by the cunning enemy, they either renounce their beliefs and live. Or maintain them and die a gruesome and slow death.

Each is given the opportunity to renounce. Some do. The one's that do renounce are told that they're going to be given a home and LIFE. But instead are killed as they're taken away from the crowd... Hanged to be exact. The rest of the group who are handcuffed don't know this. All they've witnessed is that those who *don't* renounce are tortured and then killed. Those who go back on what they 'believe' are taken away to what the rest assume is freedom.

As they go down the line, they get to the leader of the group. For him, they bring out two horses. He has ropes tied to both wrists. The horses on either side of him. As the horses are whipped, they begin to walk, stretching his body from opposing sides in the process. Bones breaking. Shoulders, elbows, and wrists dislocating. He screams. But he doesn't fold. He doesn't give in.

This goes on for a few rounds until the horses are instructed to run, tearing his limbs from his torso in the process. He dies a slow and painful death simply because he won't even SAY something that isn't in line with who he is. **He won't utter words that will save his life because he believes so strongly that death is the only reasonable option given to him.**

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And dying in your beds, many years from now, would you be willin' to trade ALL the days, from this day to that, for one chance, just one chance, to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take... OUR FREEDOM!

What would we do?

The same was done to William Wallace. Given the chance at life – and to avoid a very similar death – if only he pledges allegiance to the King of England. A king whom has enslaved and tortured Scotland – as well as killing his family and slaughtering his wife – for years.

As Wallace's limbs are torn from his body. He screams; "Freedom!"

Martin Luther King Jr. was essentially killed because he was fighting for equality and justice. He could have backed down. Given up his position as the leader of the movement to another. He could have lived a longer life had he stopped. **But what is life if we're not living by some greater purpose than comfort?**

Lincoln felt that freedom was a constitutional rite of every single American. Freedom is what America was founded on, and yet slavery was the backbone of its industry. That didn't sit well with the former him. Lincoln didn't see the color of one's skin as a justification for slavery. He was willing to die for the equality of others. The freedom of others.

The many faces of Courage.

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'" Mary Anne Radmacher

Courage **is the most important** virtue a man **can posses**.

I think of friends and family who possess courage in other ways than the one's discussed above. I have entrepreneur friends who had a tough go at it in the beginning. I remember my neighbor when I was growing up. He'd work 18 hour days, 7 days a week. Making no money. Investing his time and money into his company, but yielding *no* returns.

Regardless, **he'd wake up every day with the courage to continue.** Today, he's very successful. The world is filled with millions of others who couldn't wake up and work for 'nothing' but a dream. They reached their end. **Their fear got the better of them.**

I have met people who recognize their fears and face them head on. I have also met people who let their fear run their lives. One group lives a great, meaningful, and fulfilling life. The other lives a sheltered, even comfortable one.

Courage is standing up for what you believe in, even when you're standing alone. Courage is growing. It's putting yourself out on a limb. It's getting out of your comfort zone. It's trying something new and frightening that deep down you've always wanted to do.

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Courage is also putting your dreams on hold. Sacrificing *your* wants for the health and dreams of someone you care about. Courage has many faces.

A man MUST be Courageous.

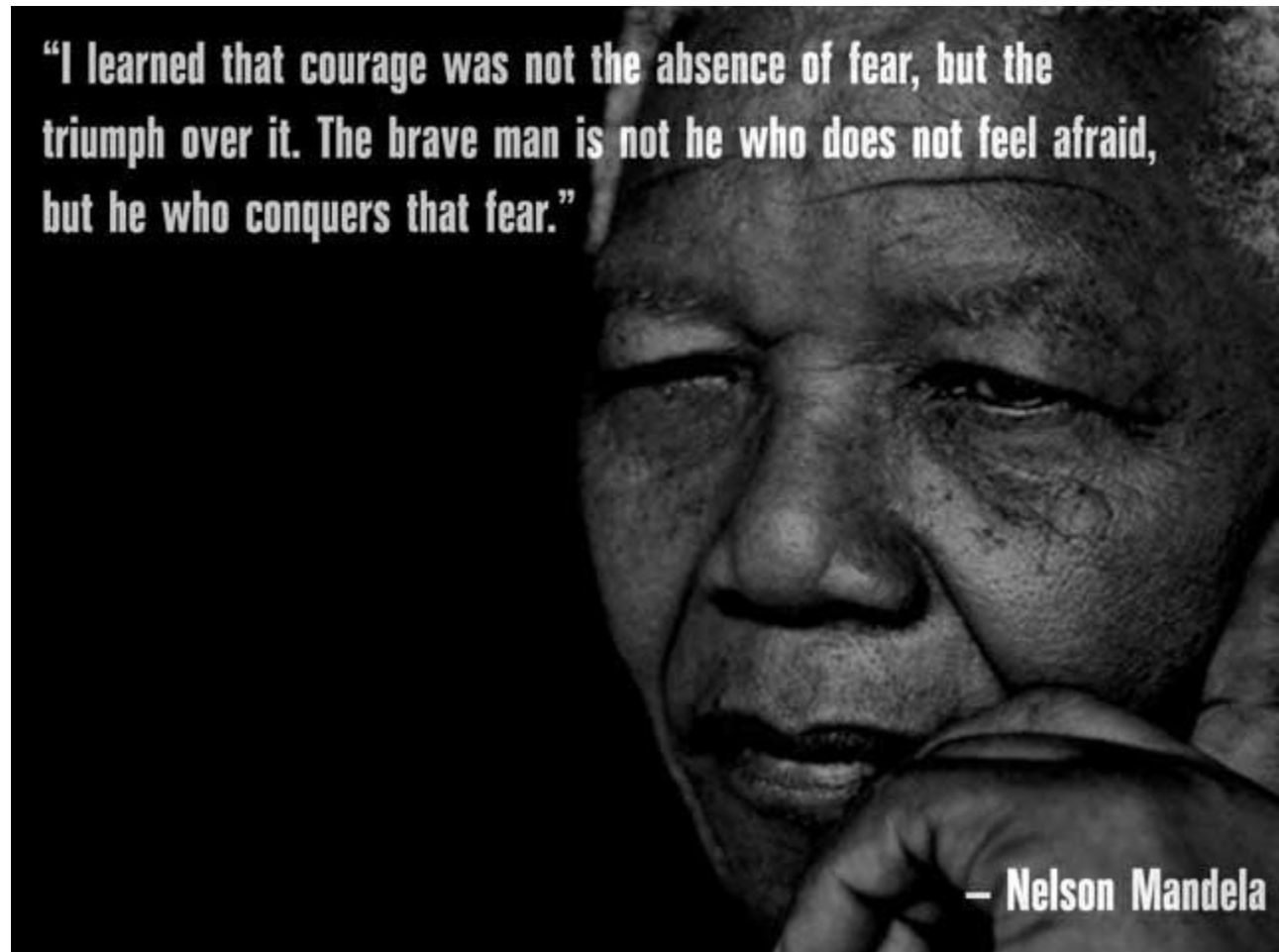
“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear.” Mark Twain

If a man doesn't have courage – or at least isn't developing it – he isn't truly a man.

I'll be the first to admit that I'm in the 'developing it' category. If something does scare me, even if I'm put into a situation that makes me nervous, I *have* learned to recognize my fear. And I face it. **I've begun to go so far as to seek it out.**

No matter what our fear is, the end result is always a lot better than we fear it could be.

If a man* doesn't have courage, who can he support? How can he support his girlfriend or wife when he's just as scared as she is, and he's not willing to face those fears? How can he support his children when his judgement is clouded by fear? How can he help anyone reach their potential if he's too afraid to reach his own?



HOW TO DEVELOP COURAGE

STEP #1 KNOW WHAT YOU STAND FOR.

Know who you are and what is important to you. It doesn't have to be something groundbreaking. It can be very simple and – to someone else – small and inconsequential. Hard work. Health and physical fitness. Being kind to people. Putting your family first, or simply *others* first. Facing fear at every opportunity.

All of those things are great things to “stand for”. Make this list short and personal. What you stand for is a big part of who you are. Knowing who you are is pretty important.

STEP #2 KNOW YOUR WILDEST DREAMS.

Whenever I set goals I think, “if failure wasn't an option, what would I like to accomplish?”

Another thing I do yearly is create my perfect day. That day that if I had to live *one* for the rest of my life, this would be it. Where would I live, who would I be living with, what would I do, eat, smell, think, drink? Break it down to the smallest most insignificant detail.

We *need* to know what we want most out of life if we're going to *live* our wildest dreams (kinda the point of life, no?). It seems like a no brainer, but how many of us actually write this down and keep it at the forefront of our thoughts when we're making big decisions?

Everything we do should help us get to this place where we're living what we once could only *dream*.

STEP #3 KNOW YOUR FEARS.

Dreams are our most pure desires. They're also scary once you set out to achieve them. We spend so much time running from our fears, but it's often these fears that would lead to the greatest growth and sense of accomplishment. We should be going *towards* them. Conquering them.

Know what scares you most. We need to understand what we're afraid of when we make decisions in our lives.

Are you staying with your girlfriend simply because you're afraid of being alone? Are you staying at the job you hate because you're scared to try something new and fail? Are you not going on that life-changing trip because you're scared of dying on a plane? Are you not going up to that beautiful girl and telling her so, because you're afraid of rejection?

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Fear can be debilitating. Conquering our fear is liberating. Write down 10 things that scare you. Work on *not* letting these fears hold you back from living a great life. Have the courage to conquer them.

STEP #4 HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE ACTION.

We now know what we stand for. We know our dreams. We also know our fears. We have a very concrete, tangible idea of how we can develop courage. We're never going to have an absence of fear. If you do, go to a shrink. You have something wrong with you.

But we *can* develop and cultivate the courage to face those fears.

Why do this? The day we started living was the very day we started dying. We literally have one shot at life. And it's not a very long one. It can also be taken from us any minute. **If we live a life controlled by fear, one without courage, we're going to fail at life.** It won't be a waste – or will it? – but it won't be a masterpiece either.

STEP #5 DO SOMETHING EVERY DAY THAT SCARES YOU.

The butterflies I had in my last fight don't compare to those I had in my first. Or my first time sparring for that matter. In my last they were relatively non-existent. I was so comfortable going into that last fight, and it was my best one up to that point.

If we face little fears daily, the big one's become easier. Think of things you can do every day that scare you a little. Join a rec league team of people you don't know and have never met. Try a new activity. Visit a new place in your city. Try stand-up comedy. Just take action!

Let's make a list and help each other out with this one in the comments section:

What's a fear you can face tomorrow?