

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #55**. In today's episode, we're going to talk about the seven basic principles we all need to adopt in order to start facing our fears head on—what I call the 7 principles of courage.

Hey there, and welcome back to the Do It Scared podcast! As always, my name is **RUTH SOUKUP**, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the New York Times bestselling author of five—very, VERY soon to be six—books!

If you haven't yet heard the word, my newest book, Do It Scared, is now available to preorder, and we've put together some INCREDIBLE bonuses that you can access to over at doitscared.com once you order—and you guys—these bonuses are incredible, so be sure to go do that soon, if you haven't already.

In the meantime, whether you are new and just finding me through this podcast for the first time, or whether you've known me for a while from Living Well Spending Less or Elite Blog Academy—welcome! My hope is that this is a place where you will find new inspiration and motivation to move past the things that are holding you back so you can create a life you love.

In today's episode, we're going to take a step back and look at the bigger picture when it comes to facing your fears and overcoming adversity in your life, and look at what it means to start adopting a new set of principles in your life—what I call the principles of courage.

Each of these 7 principles are concepts I've talked about here on the Do It Scared podcast before, but today we are going to bring them all together, and talk about how adopting this new code, this new set of core beliefs in your life, can help give you the strength and the courage to do hard things and to step outside your comfort zone so that you can start achieving those big goals and dreams, and ultimately create a life you love.

A couple of weeks ago, in Episode 53, I introduced you to the Fear Archetypes. I explained that fear looks very different for everyone, and also explained how there are seven unique ways that fear plays out and manifests itself in our lives—something I call the 7 fear archetypes.

And this is important, because the more you can start to see your own patterns of behavior, the more you can understand your own Fear Archetype and see how it is playing out in your life, the better equipped you will be to start overcoming it. Identifying your fear is the first step in conquering it for good!

But the next step in conquering your fear is what we are going to talk about today, and that is changing your mindset when it comes to fear. It's changing those core beliefs that might be keeping you stuck, and adopting a new set of core beliefs that will help you keep growing.

And ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It's about having the courage to look inward at where we're getting stuck, to face the fears that are standing in our

way, and then to take action in order to get unstuck and create a life we love.

Because courage doesn't mean we are never afraid. Instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It is putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path will lead us.

Okay, so, just one more quick thing before we dive into all the practical application today's episode. As usual, we've got a great little download that goes along with this episode, that will lay out the 7 principles of courage that we are going to talk about today, and you can get that, along with the show notes at doitscared.com/episode55.

However while you're there at doitscared.com, I want to also encourage you to take our Do It Scared Fear Assessment, if you haven't already. It will allow you to identify your own fear archetype, and it is a super useful tool! The free version of the assessment will give you your top archetype, or you can upgrade to the premium version of the assessment and get information on your top three archetypes, as well as your overall fear score.

And actually, if you've ordered my new book Do It Scared, you can claim our book bonuses and get the premium assessment for free, so that is also a really good option. So once again, you can get all the information about the assessment or about ordering the book and getting the bonuses at doitscared.com

Alright, with that out of the way, let's dive in!

Have you ever known someone who just seemed fearless?

Someone who wasn't afraid to go after it, a person who isn't afraid to take risks or step outside their comfort zone, or do things that most other people just wouldn't dare do. Someone who is always just GOING for it? Someone who, if they DO have any fear, is certainly not letting fear stand in their way. A person who is living their life to the fullest.

So what makes that person different?

And why do some people seem to have all the courage, all the gumption, all the nerve, while so many other people—maybe even you—have the hardest time taking any risks at all?

It might be that they're just wired differently, that they somehow managed to be absent on the day that fear was being handed out. That they somehow got to skip the fear gene.

But I don't think so.

Because, you see, while fear looks a little bit different for everyone, I do believe that we all DO experience some sort of fear, at least some of the time. And this fear plays out in seven unique ways. The Procrastinator fears making a mistake, while the Rule Follower has an unhealthy fear of authority and breaking the rules. The People Pleaser fears being judged or letting people down, while the Outcast is afraid of rejection. The Self Doubter fears not being capable, while the Excuse Maker fears being held responsible, while the Pessimist fears pain and adversity.

So if we all experience fear at some point, why does it affect some people more than others? Why are some people completely crippled by their fear, while others don't seem to be phased by it? Why do some people stay stuck in their fear, while others

are able to push past it and do big things in their lives?

Honestly, I think it comes down to mindset. But the good news is that your mindset can be changed.

It's something you can work on.

And so, once you've identified the unique ways in which your own fear may be manifesting itself in your life, it is time to start moving past it. This process begins with adopting a new set of principles—the principles of courage—as well as letting go of the limiting beliefs you may have about yourself and others.

And so that's exactly what we are going to talk about today—these 7 principles of courage, and how you can use them to start shifting your mindset. And as we go through them, I want you to really think about each one, and whether this is a core belief you currently hold, or whether it might be an area you need to work on.

Because in the end, adopting this principles, these core beliefs, will give you the mindset shift that you need to start pushing past that fear that may be holding you back.

So let's dive in!

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE IS DARE TO THINK BIG. Because here's the thing: we need big goals to actually get big things done.

Over the past few years, I really do think that the most important thing I've learned about overcoming fear and setting effective, life-changing goals is that setting a whole bunch of smaller goals that seem like they should be attainable is actually counter-productive to getting big results.

Because when it comes to goal setting, the MOST important part is daring to think big and creating a stretch goal—one that pushes us past our comfort zone or one that we might not fully even believe is attainable, at least not for us.

It's daring to believe that we are capable of more, and daring to push ourselves past our current limits to create something amazing. It's daring to set goals so big that they scare us. Goals that make our chest tighten or our stomach flutter.

Those are the goals that will motivate us.

You see, when we set goals that feel safe and achievable, we are caving in to our own preconceived notions of what we are capable of. We're not pushing past our comfort zone; we're just settling for the status quo. And there is nothing inherently motivating about that. It's comfortable. It's what we know. It doesn't require us to stretch or change or work any harder than we already are. And so we don't. In fact, sometimes—often—we work less hard. We do the bare minimum. We get bored and we lose focus.

But when we set—and commit—to a big goal, one so big it freaks us out a little, we force ourselves out of that comfort zone into the unknown. Is it scary? Yes! But it is also totally invigorating and completely motivating. There's nothing that will make us work harder or keep us going longer.

The reality is that the flutter in our stomach and the tightening in our chest is fear, but it's the good kind of fear, the kind of fear that kicks in when we need to do things we don't think we can do.

And if you don't feel that way toward your goals? Well, then I would dare say that your goals aren't big enough! And I would challenge you to start thinking bigger and pushing yourself just a little bit harder.

Those big goals—even when we don't fully achieve them—are what make life worth living!

Those are the things that spark our passion and get us excited to jump out of bed in the morning! Those are the things that keep us going, even in the dull moments or the hard moments or the painful moments.

Those big goals—the ones we have to stretch and push and fight for—are what empower us to create a life we love, not just one we tolerate.

So do it. Dare to think big.

Because stretch goals are the secret to getting and staying motivated. And that's principle number one.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE IS THAT RULES ARE FOR SUCKERS. And while that sounds SO rebellious, it's really not. The thing is, not all rules are stupid. In fact, there are lots of really good rules out there. Important rules we should follow. But there are also a lot of dumb rules out there, rules that make no sense, rules that other people made up just to make themselves feel important, or because they've always been done that way, or because they made sense at the time, but don't anymore.

The principle that rules are for suckers is more of a reminder to develop a healthy skepticism and a willingness to question authority and the status quo. It's so important that you never just follow blindly because someone decided something was a rule. Know that it is okay to sometimes follow your own path. The thing is—just because someone says something is true, or because it shows up on the Internet, or because “everyone” is repeating it as fact, doesn't actually make it true.

That's where good old-fashioned common sense and critical thinking skills are so important. The next time you hear something that “everyone” is talking about—or freaking out over—ask yourself, “Does this actually make sense?” Is this the crisis or emergency that everyone else is making it out to be? Could there be a different perspective?

And then, just as we need to dare to trust our own intuition and to use common sense when it comes to peer-to-peer interactions and “group think,” we also need to question those “rules” that come from a position of power or authority.

And that can be pretty hard to do sometimes, especially when for our entire lives we've been told to do the exact opposite. We're told to respect authority and play by the rules and stay in line so that we don't get into trouble.

Don't get me wrong here--not all authority is bad. But not all authority is good either, and very few of us ever stop to think about the difference. Following rules is the default option, a part of our natural survival instinct. Questioning our boss or ignoring his rules could get us demoted or fired, so we toe the line. Disobeying the law could get us arrested, so we stay out of trouble.

But what about when authority is wrong? What about when the rule goes against our better judgment, or worse yet, our conscience? Do we dare question then?

It's not always easy to go against the crowd, or to use your head and embrace common sense when the rest of the world is being driven by emotion and fear. It takes real courage to question authority, and to step outside the box when everyone else is telling you to stay in.

But their rules don't have to be your rules. And for that matter, neither do mine! So dare to forge your own path. Because you should never be afraid to think for yourself. That's principle number 2.

PRINCIPLE NUMBER THREE IS TO ALWAYS OWN IT. We don't like to think of ourselves as victims. After all, it is a pretty strong word with a lot of negative connotations. Victims are weak. Victims are whiny. Victims are stuck being, well, victims.

And yet, so often, we play the victim card without even realizing it. Those rationalizations that we've made for why we can't be successful, or why we can't go after our goals and dreams, or why we can't accomplish the things we really want to do are so close to the surface, such a part of our internal narrative, that they come out before we even realize what we are saying. They are such a part of our story that we don't even recognize that we are making excuses.

On the surface, so many reasons that people give for NOT being able to do something sound perfectly legitimate. After all, who can blame someone dealing with a health concern or disability for not going after their goals? How can someone facing serious financial hardship think about pie-in-the-sky ideals? How can anyone dream big while dealing with major family issues? Those are real problems. Actual hardships. Genuine obstacles.

But a good excuse is still just an excuse.

And as long as you are looking for a reason not to, you'll find one. Excuses come in an unlimited supply, for everyone. Yes, some people get dealt a lousy hand. And yes, sometimes life isn't fair. But whining and complaining about it won't change anything, and I guarantee that there are plenty of people out there who have had it worse.

And along those lines, learning to always own it also means that you stop wishing for a hero to come and solve all your problems, or to save you from yourself.

Because here's the problem with waiting to be rescued—life doesn't work that way! Most of the time, the people around us are far too busy trying to keep up with their own busy, chaotic, and frustrating lives to worry about saving you from yours. And ultimately, that makes waiting to be rescued just another excuse! Like playing the victim, telling ourselves we can't do something because we don't have anyone to help us along the way is just one more big fat lie.

You don't need a hero. You are not a damsel in distress!

And waiting to be rescued won't get you anywhere. You want that promotion? Do the work to deserve it, and then ask for it. Feeling stuck? Start doing something—anything—differently, and take the necessary steps to get unstuck. Got a talent you want to pursue? Then pursue it. Make a demo tape. Write that book. Get an agent. Go out and get it. Remember—action is the antidote to fear, and at the end of the day, the only thing that is stopping you is you.

It is pretty natural to want to blame other people or our circumstances when things

go wrong, or when we fall short of our goals and expectations. Our first inclination is often to complain about the way we were treated, or about all the ways the deck was stacked against us—the unfair treatment, the tragic circumstances, the lack of money—and to make one excuse, justification, and rationalization after another.

It's much easier to point the finger at external circumstances than to acknowledge our own shortcomings. And it is certainly easier to give up when things get hard, especially when we are handed a perfectly legitimate excuse not to keep going. Who could blame us for wanting to throw in the towel? But that's exactly why taking responsibility for how you respond to everything that happens to you is such an act of courage.

Because when you always own it, you will be in complete control of all the choices you make. And that's principle #3.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE IS THAT THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, ONLY LESSONS. On this podcast I've been pretty open about my past, and all the ways I've majorly screwed up in life. From my depression and multiple suicide attempts to getting divorced and filing for bankruptcy, to dropping out of law school and so many others.

In fact, when I look back on my life, I can see all too clearly that much of my life has been a series of bad moves, wrong turns, and major screw-ups. And yet, what I have realized along the way is that there are no mistakes, only lessons. Every wrong turn has somehow led me to where I am right now. Every misstep has led to what eventually became the right step. And I have faith that the current rough patches in my life will be the future lessons that I'm eternally grateful for.

And every day, I continue to discover that the very best lessons almost always come directly from my biggest mistakes. Learning what not to do and what doesn't work helps me figure out what does work.

Because in the end, there are no mistakes, only lessons

And when you make the conscious choice to stop worrying about all the ways you might possibly screw up and instead focus only on what you can learn from the experience, you give yourself the power to simply try, regardless of what the outcome will be. It takes away all the pressure to get it exactly right the first time, and instead lets you fully enjoy the journey.

Not only that, there is a fate worse than failure. A consequence of not trying that will ultimately haunt us far longer than the repercussions of making a mistake or the fallout from trying and failing.

It's the pain of regret.

Because while the fear of failure is very real, it is clear that the temporary pain of making a mistake is nothing close to the lingering and haunting feeling that you could have been or done something more. Mistakes only hurt for a little while, but regret could follow you for the rest of your life.

So don't let it. Let your fear of regret be stronger than your fear of failure. Dare to take those risks so that you don't have to spend a lifetime wondering "what if." Be okay with making mistakes. Focus on the only thing you can control: the choices you make from here on out. And remind yourself: There are no mistakes, only lessons, because every breakdown leads to a breakthrough—that's principle number 4.

THE FIFTH PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE IS TO EMBRACE HONEST FEEDBACK. I'm just going to say this: as humans, we are fundamentally flawed and predisposed to make really, really stupid decisions! And while it is easy to cast judgment on other people, whether it be celebrities who crash and burn, politicians brought down by scandal or the jerky neighbor down the street, the reality is that none of us are completely immune to the seduction of money, power, glory, and adulation, not to mention the temptation to be lazy, make bad choices, or succumb to our vices.

And that is why we need accountability in our lives! We need truth-tellers and naysayers, people who love us enough to call us out when we are going down a bad path, and who care enough to get in our face. We need people who we can trust enough to give us honest feedback from, and people to whom we can give that feedback in return.

It's not always easy to accept things we don't really want to hear—those hard truths, constructive criticism, and dissenting points of view. We don't really want to deal with someone telling us we might be making a mistake, or looking at a problem from the wrong angle, or forming an opinion based on insufficient information.

That is exactly why true accountability—the accepting of honest feedback, and being willing to follow up on it—is SO courageous. It means admitting you might not have all the answers. It requires being open to sometimes heated discussion, and to ideas that aren't yours. It means acting on wise counsel that may have initially conflicted with your opinions and desires. It demands both humility and trust.

And in order to trust, you have to be willing to be vulnerable, to let your guard down and to let the other person see the real you—the quirky, flawed, messed-up, and less-than-perfect version that you normally try to keep hidden. You have to be honest about your thoughts and hopes and dreams, as well as about your fears and frustrations and insecurities. What's more, you've got to be willing to see and accept that side from that person as well.

It's important to hear other points of view, even when you don't agree with them. Listening to the thoughts of someone who doesn't agree with you forces you to solidify your own beliefs. And fighting to make things better will get you better results.

So don't fear conflict. Instead, embrace honest feedback. Because everyone needs true accountability. And that is principle number 5.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE OF COURAGE IS THAT BALANCE IS OVERRATED. Have you ever noticed that this idea of balance seems to be almost mythical, magical concept always lurking on the horizon, just out of reach? We think it is our lack of balance that is keeping us from having the life we want, and we convince ourselves that actually achieving balance is what will make us happy.

And because we're certain that we haven't yet achieved this magical state of balance, we're never quite satisfied with where we're at. It doesn't seem to matter what we're working on or striving towards, or what season of life we happen to be in, we're consistently plagued by an underlying feeling that our life is somehow out of whack and off-kilter, a sense that when we spend too much time on any one thing, we are doing something wrong.

It's that little voice that says whatever we've done, it's probably not enough.

But what if that voice is lying to us?

What if this idea of balance that we've convinced ourselves is not only possible but desirable actually isn't? What if it's just a myth? A fairy tale? A trap designed to hold us back from wholeheartedly pursuing our goals and dreams?

What if balance is somehow overrated?

Because the thing is, I don't think we're called to balance. I think we're called to PURPOSE.

With that in mind, what do you think would happen if you gave yourself permission to go all in, without feeling guilty? What would change if you were able to stop pursuing some mythical idea of balance, and instead allowed yourself to get obsessive about going after your dreams or pursuing your purpose? What would that mean for your life right now? What would have to change?

In the end, every action has its own set of consequences, and every time we select one thing, it means we are not choosing something else. So own it. If in your heart of hearts you believe that you have been called to a certain path, don't waste time on regretting the things you can't do. Understand that when you make a choice to pursue a dream, you are also making the decision to leave something else behind.

And that's okay.

Because none of us can do it all, but we can make peace with the choices we've made. And in the end, that needs to be good enough.

And believe this: balance is overrated. If everything is important, then nothing is. That's principle #6.

SEVEN. JUST KEEP GOING. So often we are completely blindsided when something unexpected gets us off track. And then, because we are caught so off guard, we are easily devastated and discouraged. We don't know how to handle the obstacle or roadblock that confronts us because we haven't mentally prepared for it.

But I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt that the only sure thing in life is that things will go wrong.

Bad things will happen. Things will go wrong. Mistakes will be made, over and over again. People will be jerks sometimes. Accidents and tragedies will come out of nowhere. Roadblocks and obstacles will pop up. And the only way we can stop being a victim of our circumstances, and a casualty of the things that go wrong—because they will go wrong—is to stop expecting everything to go right.

Pain and suffering are never fun. No one wishes for hardship or struggle, or for life to be just a little more difficult. We don't relish adversity or things going wrong. We're not secretly hoping for a little tragedy or heartbreak. We don't really want to feel sad or angry or discouraged or outraged.

And yet, most of us, when we look back at our lives at our happiest moments, we will almost certainly find that they were inevitably tied to some sort of struggle. The things we are most proud of are the things we have had to fight for!

So while we might think we are at a disadvantage because we haven't had access to the same opportunities as someone else, the truth is that the end of the day, nothing matters as much as our willingness to just keep going. To take one step, and then another, and then another, and to never, ever quit.

Courage is never a one-and-done kind of thing. Because it's never about how smart or talented you are, or how amazing and original your idea might be, or what degree you've earned or how much money you are starting with. Instead, it is your grit and perseverance and your willingness to work hard and keep working hard that will make all the difference.

You don't need to know every step along the way before you begin; you just need to take the next one, and then the next one after that. Remember, action is the antidote to fear, which means that as long as you keep moving in the right direction, as long as you keep taking action toward the goal you want to reach (even if that goal is just identifying a goal!), you will get there someday.

Courage, then, is a muscle that needs to be strengthened each day. Courage is a daily decision. It is a conscious choice to take that next step, and then to take the next one after that. It's the decision to just keep going, no matter what. Because nothing will ever take the place of persistence. And that is the final principle of courage.

And that, in a nutshell, are the 7 principles of courage. Dare to think big. Rules are for suckers. Always own it. There are no mistakes, only lessons. Embrace honest feedback. Balance is overrated. And just keep going, no matter what.

And adopting these principles—learning how to change your mindset and create a new set of core beliefs in your life, a set of beliefs that will help you move past fear and start stepping out of your comfort zone is essential to finally daring to face your fears and create a life you love.

Of course, the final piece of this puzzle is taking action. And that is exactly what we'll be talking about in 2 weeks, in episode 57!

Okay, so don't forget that if you would like to take the Fear Assessment or if you want to preorder the book so that you can all of our incredible book bonuses, you can get all the information on our website at doitscared.com. Pretty easy to remember—just go to doitscared.com!

And then, before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I LOVE hearing from you! If you have any questions about what we talked about today, or any other topics that you would like to see addressed on the Do It Scared podcast, please feel free to reach out, either via email or just by messaging me on Instagram.

And that about does it for this episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup podcast! Thank you so much for joining me today! If you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes, or, better yet, share this episode on your Insta story and tag me to let me know! If I repost your story, we'll send you a do it scared t-shirt just for fun!

Also, be sure to subscribe, either on iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you like to listen, to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes—as well as this idea of balance we were just talking about--be sure to join me next week as we chat with blogger, author, and homemaking expert Jennifer Roskamp of the IntentionalMom.com. Jennifer is a homeschooling mom of 9 kids who has also built a successful 6-figure business, even while facing some pretty scary circumstances. She has such a great perspective and so much wisdom to share about life, parenting, and making the time to follow your dreams. It's an episode you definitely DON'T want to miss!

And I will catch you then!