

A New Kind of Courage

by iPriority

The towers that crashed took so much that was familiar. A sense of peace. A belief in our nation's invincibility. Before September 11, some things were just unthinkable. Since then, many of us have been thinking of little else.

The days of grief and loss following the terrorist attacks gave way to weeks of fear, fueled by "all anthrax, all the time" news coverage. And now, that edge of fear softened into an uneasiness that settles on us like a film of dust. Will there be another attack? What about the economy? When will we have peace?

If that peace is to come from external circumstances, we may be in for a very long wait. Our previous sense of invincibility lies somewhere under the rubble of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. But what's to replace the old kind of confidence?

A new kind of courage.

Since September 11, we have been transformed more rapidly than anyone could have imagined. In a world suddenly less trivial, so are we. Self-satisfaction is out. Self-sacrifice is in. Captains of industry are out. Captains of fire stations are in. We now realize that, as a people, we have work to do. Our heroes showed us how.

The firefighters and rescue workers that went into those burning buildings knew the risks they faced, but they decided-as an act of will-to set aside their fears and confront the task at hand.

The kind of courage that inspired a nation can instruct it as well. We may not all have a burning building to run into, but we have lives to continue, children to raise, jobs to do and our own fears to confront. This kind of courage always looks to something bigger than ourselves.

In times of warmth and peace, we can build our own lives, decorate them and furnish them with nice things. But we now know that when the storms come, it's the foundation that counts.

From "Courage: Finding Hope in Uncertain Times"