

I Double-Dog Dare You: Finding Courage to Succeed in Business

By Paul J. Meyer

We all remember playing with friends during endless summer days when everything seemed exciting and we couldn't wait to prove our great courage when confronted with the infamous "double-dog dare." No matter the task, once the phrase had been uttered, there was no turning back. To refuse a double-dog dare was to invite endless summer mockery.

NO ONE wanted to be forever labeled a "chicken," and so we all took the risk; we all rose to the challenge. Thus, we learned early on that courage meant standing up against often foolish odds and taking the proverbial plunge into the unknown.

The dictionary, however, defines courage as "the state or quality of mind that enables one to face danger with self-possession, confidence, and resolution." It is a reserve of moral strength on which one may draw. It is enduring stoutness of mind in a time of trial. It is the inherent capacity to rise to a challenge, not the foolish challenges of childhood summer days, but the real ones – the challenges that change your life.

Those endless summer dares taught us to associate courage with taking unnecessary, risky chances, but the truth is that without courage, no knowledge or work can bring success. We often lack success because we lack the courage to truly step out on a limb, allow ourselves to risk, and take chances. We believe that if we could just learn a few more skills, we would be able to take the leap, but we inevitably collect too much information and suffer from the paralysis of analysis. And so we never take the risk to take the first step.

That first step takes courage, not more seminars. In fact, assuming you have integrity and intelligence, the quality **most** needed for success is courage. Think of it this way: A body in motion stays in motion. It is *overcoming inertia* that takes the greatest amount of courage. Once you are willing to take the first step into the unknown, then the *impossible* seems within reach. Certainly, having the courage to try doesn't guarantee success, but simply believing that the high road **is** the right road is a sign that we possess the ability to travel it.

Robert Frost said it so eloquently in his famous poem "The Road Not Taken":

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

You see, it is having courage to simply travel on the difficult road that makes the difference. It doesn't matter if you make a mistake. Be proud of the journey and determine to make one less mistake the next time. It isn't what happens to you in life, but your reaction to it that determines your capacity for greatness. We all have genius within us; you simply have to have the courage to dream and set lofty goals. Courage allows you to do that, to see and use your full potential.

Don't let the fear of failure stop you. After all, when are you a failure? Are you a failure when someone tells you no or you lose an employee or your business takes a dive. No! You are only a failure when you quit trying.

There are no guarantees. Life is a series of risks, but the biggest risk of all is the risk you take to grow to become the person you really want to be.

Remember that as you walk through the forest, it isn't the tall trees, but the vines and roots that trip you up; it's the little things that impede your journey. When you walk forth with courage, you may still trip over the roots, but you will have the strength of mind to see beyond and partake of the greatness around you.

That is real courage, not the double-dog dare variety, but the quiet and steely fortitude that leads you from mediocrity to success, despite the obstacles.

Paul J. Meyer is a best-selling author and founder of over 40 companies, including Success Motivation Institute, Inc. He understands that courage is one of the most important attributes of a successful businessman. To learn more about his book, *The Courage to Succeed*, visit www.pauljimeyer.com.

