

A collection of clear, intelligent, empowering, spiritual essays.

The Courage of Love

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The Courage of Love

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The Courage of Love

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1. Inside Out

Energy enkindles and enlivens more energy like an electron dance. One flame lights another. Heat warms all around it. Peace flows outward and encourages creativity. Love—and only love—engenders more love. And love is the most profound energy of all. It is what we specialize in when we're happy, because happiness is the twin of love. It comes in so many forms: compassion,

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acceptance, acknowledgment; patience;
forbearance; humor; respect; affection;
romance; delight; bemusement;
cheerfulness; commiseration;
selflessness; service; courage; excellence;
determination; passion; wonder;
gratitude; playfulness; creativity; honor;
willingness; the sheer urge and will to
dance with life through all its phases,
through sorrow, despair, happiness, and
joy.. Where is the center of love? Love is
"a circle whose center is everywhere and
circumference nowhere" writes Voltaire.
We handicap love when we limit the

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circumference by judgment, and we also handicap it—perhaps in the most crippling way—when we forget to live from the very center of our lives, no matter what occurs or where our lives might take us. New Thought teacher, Emilie Cady, writes of our spirits flowing forth from inside us like a fountain, and that we are to stay at our centers within the clean, fresh, running stream of it, avoiding the stagnant periphery full to overflowing with old, discarded, even fetid thoughts and

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feelings. After all, running water is healthy—stagnant water is toxic.

Again and again Cady coaxes us toward the health at the center of us: “But remember,” she writes, “we must radiate if we would receive more. Stagnation is death... It is not until we learn to live at the center and to know that we have power to radiate from that center this unceasing, abundant life, that we are well and strong.” A fountain draws on a deeper source, and so must we.

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So today, in this one moment NOW, feel your spirit, which is eternally given of God, like a current of life and love and strong, protective peace at the center of you. Really feel it as a sensory sensation. The flow at the center of your spirit is warming, life- and light-giving, reassuring, simple and pure; it is invigorating and healthy and completely beneficent and kind. It is healing, peace-giving, respectful, joyful, confident. It is an "inward fountainhead," to use Cady's term. We find it by sensing it, feeling it,

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listening to it within. We refer to it and connect to it again and again. It is the source of our empowerment.

So let's simply commune with the God flow inside of us. Feel it like a fountain at the center of your being. Let it be your place of security. Let it be your power and your guide. Surrender to it. This is what we mean by the Big Self, the God Self of you. Abandon all those "little self" thoughts and feelings—let them just wash away beyond the periphery of

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this life-giving fountain- they are not your true life. They are not the real you! You have found the real you! The real you is this God you, deep at your center, continually flowing and soothing you, guiding you, protecting you, freeing you. It is joy itself. Feel it now— at the center of your being radiating outwards. This is how to live. This is the real pitch and sap experience that gives meaning to the otherwise colorless idea of “being centered.” To live from the flowing center is dynamic and sensate and full of health and glow and kind, positive,

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reassuring power! Feel it NOW, for it lives right here and now, not in memory, not in ideas of how you should or shouldn't be. It lives in the surrender right this moment to the best that is flowing through you every instant. It is true holiness, whole Spirit flowing through you *as you* when you open to it, or "wait on it" as the Bible says. Always refer to this inner warmth and flow. Become one with it. Identify with it as the greatest you, the one you commit to, the one that lifts you up and lifts up all people around you, too. This is the place

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you want to be, and as you remember and re-commit to it again and again, it begins to shine out of you more often and more brightly, until— when your commitment and surrender become complete— you live as “the light of the world,” lighting the path all around you, for yourself and for others.

This is your spiritual destiny as you strive onward. This is the true path!

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Stay on it always. You begin to see the best in others and ignore the rest. You begin to see the best in circumstances and let them inspire you. You're no longer shut in within the valleys of your life; you begin more and more to attain the mountaintops, where light is full and clean, the views sweeping, and peace and majesty fill you, heart and soul. Then, when you go down into the valleys again, as of course you will (for that is where most of life is lived), you bring this life-changing new ability with you, the ability to be deeply centered in your

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heart. Then the moments in the valleys open up in all their spaciousness and peace. They become mountaintop experiences.

Be at the center of the inner fountain. Feel it coursing through you. As it guides, share yourself from that consciousness. Share from that confidence. In this flow of God, what is there to fear? You live within the protection of pure faith, which is simply remembering to come from this alive,

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central place. God the good flows through you and becomes you. You trust yourself 100%, because now God gets to express through you as you. And you are a messenger of something universal that will always bring peace and empowerment to others.

So you're the lucky one, the blessed one, the "only son" or "only daughter" of God, the "sole heir to the whole world, and more, because there are people in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you!"

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as Thomas Traherne, the 17th century English mystic and poet, puts it.

Enjoy it! Live it! Give it away! Have fun! Dance!

The fountain constantly flows at the center of your life. At the outskirts, slowed down, out of synch, is where sickness, dis-ease, and stagnation accrue. Fear lives there. The real you doesn't live there! That is not your right

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place. That's not where Spirit lives.
That's where all that's *dísprítéd* lives.
You are meant to live at the very source
within the fountain, within "the living
waters of life," flowing brightly and
cheerfully every moment, a friend to all.
This is true baptism. This is where your
faith, your courage, your peace, and
your strength live. This is where the Holy
Spírit shines, and the Holy Instant
reígn! *Really* live there, and you will
really *live*! All else is a drift outward
into stagnation.

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So live and give from your God Self and
be free! This is the way of the fullest
joy—joy that is “fuller than fullness
can be,” to use the Yoga Vasishtha’s
memorable phrase.

Take these words of Lao Tzu with you
today:

If you don’t realize the source,
You stumble in confusion and sorrow.
When you realize where you come from,

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You naturally become tolerant,
Disinterested, amused,
Kindhearted as a grandmother,
Dignified as a king.
Immersed in the wonder of the Tao,
You can deal with whatever life brings
you.

4. Love Judo

There are some dramatic lines in a section of the Bhagavad Gita called "The Illumined Man": "If you let the mind follow the siren call of the senses, they sweep away your better judgment like a cyclone drives a boat from the charted course to its doom." This spectacular image is not far-fetched, but accurately describes what happens when we get swept in the little self of peeves,

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resentments, moods, disappointments,
anger and fear.

We face these traps every single day
until— a seemingly miraculous
“until”!— we simply rise above any
problem, letting all the walls and
barricades disappear between us and the
rest of life. We assume the higher
perspective, the bigger mind, the freedom
in letting go of self-involvement. Then
our energy and spirit is renewed, and a
solution appears.

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Emmet Fox, the British-American metaphysician, called this "Golden Keying It:" simply turn your thoughts from any problem to God. And God is the great ineffable wholeness that not only dwarfs the problem, but in its release of full-power energy within, also releases the problem as if it never were. From this empowered state, all so-called problems can be dealt with. Because the mind that creates a problem cannot solve that problem, it is said. Only Big Mind can solve it, and sometimes it is simply that state of mind in and of itself that

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solves by its sheer resonance and calming, reassuring nature.

This is often so true in relationships. If one oppositional side of a conflict is removed, the other is led, almost like a kind of Love Judo, into the most artful resolution.

Oh, to be free of the small self, and to enter the open road of the Higher, Full Self: the *real self*, as the Course in Miracles puts it! This requires a change

of consciousness, nothing more. It is open to anyone, anywhere, regardless of how seemingly “messed up” life has become. In some ways it’s so simple—when you get tied up in knots over anything whatsoever, just relax into a place of acceptance and open into big picture thinking. But this seems as hard for people as detaching from their own shadows! Still, that’s just what has to be done. And there’s only one way to do it— *let your own inner light “so shine.”* Don’t let yourself linger in the shadow of any person or event, but

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begin at once to merge with the power of life, with God, with the mystery that is flowing through you. Call it Christ Jesus, call it Infinite Mind: it's all One. We are all One. There is only the unity of life. The temple that is this whole world is you, when you are unified with the human family and the whole tableau of life. Resistance depletes, harmony completes.

Your brothers and sisters live not just in your "nuclear family," not just in New

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Orleans or Brussels or Beijing or Sao Paulo, but throughout the USA and Europe and Asia and South America. Your family is the human family everywhere. Sometimes personal family members are the hardest family of all to accept. Good! That is where to go to work accepting. Acceptance doesn't necessarily mean cozying up, it only means accepting the deep similarity and identity that we share with all people everywhere. No walls. No barricades. No attitudes. No recoiling resentments. A tall order, yes, but the

only one with any real sustenance for our spirits. All the self-involved dances that we do only exhaust us, and rob us of the ability to freely walk away from stress. Each acted out resentment creates a deepened neural pathway, so that the next resentment accelerates at an even greater velocity and wields a greater danger. Accidents happen at high speed. We have to slow down and practice patience; we have to open up our consciousness instead of closing it down; we have to find a way to give when we feel like reading someone the

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riot act, realizing in a flash that “the best speech we’ll ever regret” is the one made in anger. We have to stay centered in the one light and one power within.

As a man casting no shadow, the Buddha wants us to know that hatred can never conquer hate— only love can conquer hate. This is an unalterable truth. What part of “unalterable” don’t we understand? We must accept the one truth of love and goodwill in good faith.

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Thomas a Kempis calls it "the Law of Love." But the recurrence of accidents in our lives suggests that we never fully allow truth to add up to a convincing argument. It's only when we strive through humility to listen to voices farther along the path that we begin to progress. Oh, the seduction of self! How cruel it can be! But how kind and freeing is the path of humility, when we realize we don't have all the answers, and that as part of this so-much-greater One, we can learn from all the experience in the world. God is a

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relationship, not a game of empty solitaire. Winning a lonely game is not winning at all, it is only building a more iron-clad prison. Solitaire can never satisfy even as much as a game of rock/paper/scissors: at least beyond the bruising there is the happy mystery of synergy. G.K. Chesterton puts it this way: "There are no words to express the abyss between isolation and having an ally. It may be conceded to the mathematician that four is twice two. But two is two thousand times one."

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In the Bible John writes: "He must increase, but I must decrease." We get in our own way— we get in God's way— when we get knotted and inflexible over some situation or other. A bamboo survives the storm because of its flexibility; look within the bamboo and you find the hollow space of a flute. God's music is played through that hollow and empty space: this is the meaning of Krishna's flute. To be in the Big Self is to be fully in the mystery, without being able to clamp it down through separate, selfish thinking. But

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people have such difficulty letting go into oneness, because it is undefined, open, unfolding, totally present, totally unconditioned and totally permeable to possibility. It is a kind of free fall. It is surrender to the good perceived at the heart of everything. We need courage to do this.

This notion of surrender makes most of us uncomfortable: we like the definition, the hyper-vigilance of self, which gives a sense of control over

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danger. But nothing could be further from the truth—separateness brings the ultimate danger of loneliness. Separate self-consciousness sets up the notion of “other.” The real Self has only the identity of One, one without self-consciousness, and so without an “other.” If there is no other, *what is there to fear?*

To be free we have to be willing to die to self— and this makes us profoundly uncomfortable. Only meditation allows

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us to find the beauty in this, and the more we experience this beauty, the more it becomes "home" for us. Love becomes home. Openness becomes home. We begin to live in a consciousness of warmth and vitality, aware of the presence of wonder everywhere. Being free from self-consciousness becomes home. We go from the prison of self to the freefalling faith of not having a clue and loving it all. All of our judgments about ourselves or our partner or our parent or Britney or Osama bin Laden go right out the

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window. Our concern is to add something to life, not to find fault. The mystery is so intricately beautiful and relative and changing and profoundly indescribable that we must, as Rumi says, "sell our cleverness and buy bewilderment." This state of presence scares us until it saves us, just like learning to swim scares us until we feel its huge and natural freedom.

The Taoist Chuang-tzu fell asleep and dreamed he was a butterfly: when he

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awoke he wondered if he was a man who had dreamed he was a butterfly, or if he was a butterfly dreaming he was a man. He sold his cleverness to once again be in love with life.

Do we have to be naïve and in some way silly to lose the burden of self? Do we need to stop being rational to soar into the freedom of God, Higher Self, Great Spirit, our own divinity? No. Not at all. We only become more effective. A pilot doesn't forget how to operate the controls

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in order to successfully fly a plane; the best and most relaxed pilots have become “unconsciously competent,” to borrow a phrase from Tony Robbins. They have surrendered to what works, surrendered to the harmony of the air and the air machine, just as a swimmer has surrendered to a beautiful relationship with water, or a lover has forgotten him- or herself in the heart of love, or a reader has forgotten the mechanics of reading to be one with the book. There needs to be mastery of the mechanics of losing the self, to fully lose it. Unity

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consciousness is a natural unfolding that takes time.

So how do we learn to gradually surrender to oneness, to God, to the freedom that calls us but seems so elusive? We do it by practicing everyday, by going *within* and finding there the pearl of great price—the pearl that we scoured cities and relationships and college courses and fantastic landscapes and movies and conversations to find. We find that

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great pearl in meditation, we find it in prayer, we find it deep inside ourselves. These are the simple yet profound tools to move from self-involvement to unity, from small mind to Big Mind. They are the keys to the highest happiness.

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