

“Maya Angelou on Courage”  
By Rev. Kim D. Wilson  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Poconos  
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“One isn’t necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can’t be kind, true, merciful, generous or honest.” --Maya Angelou

I don’t know when Maya Angelou first spoke about her insight on courage. Throughout her life, though, she often reiterated this idea, that it takes courage to be our best selves.

Courage is our theme this month, and two weeks ago we explored some aspects of courage. Today, we’ll hear some of the words of Maya Angelou to inspire our own thoughts on courage: where courage comes from, how we develop it, and the connection between courage and love.

Being courageous is a choice. It’s feeling our fear and doing something anyway. Courage calls us to be our best selves. It calls us to do the right thing, even though we’re afraid of the consequences; of the pain, of making a mistake, of being uncomfortable. We often find that when we do something that takes courage, that action reveals parts of ourselves we might not otherwise have seen.

If, as Maya Angelou says, we are born with the potential for courage, how do we develop that potential? In this audio clip I’m going to share with you, Angelou shares how she herself developed courage, and how we can practice it.

(Interview - 00:31-1:50 <https://soundcloud.com/hbrideacast/350-maya-angelou-on-courage>)

Courage comes from a place deep within ourselves. There’s a place, and I believe that it’s in our heart, at least metaphorically, and maybe physically. It’s the place where the Spirit of Love and our authentic self meet. And it’s from that place, I believe, that true courage springs.

And what do I mean by our authentic self? It's the part of ourselves that loves us exactly as we are, the same self that is open and loving to the world around us. The self that believes in us. It's the original self that we were born with, the one that usually gets battered and torn as we grow up, the one that we must slowly and often painfully reclaim. This was certainly true for Angelou.

If you're familiar with her book, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, you will know that Angelou's mother failed to protect her young daughter from harm, but in the video I'm going to share with you, Angelou tells us how her mother's love for her ultimately freed her to be the woman she became.

(Video, "Love Liberates"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbecKv2xR14&index=3&list=RDJqOqo50LSZO>  
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Maya Angelou also said this about love: "Love is a condition so powerful it may be that which holds the stars in the firmament. It may be that which pushes and urges the blood in the veins." This is Love with a capital L, which some call God, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Life. The Love and the Life of which we are all a part.

It is this Love which gives us courage.

(Image of Maya Angelou)

(Discussion)

Reread, "Touched by an Angel" by Maya Angelou