

Reading Group Questions and Topics for Discussion

COURAGE

The Heart and Spirit of Every Woman

Reclaiming the Forgotten Virtue

Sandra Ford Walston

1. Most people feel the definition of courage is facing fear, being physically strong—something of a masculine trait. The origin of the word courage is Medieval Old French *corage*, meaning “heart and spirit.” Create a definition that best reveals the authentic facets of courage that reside in women whom you deem “courageous.”
2. Why is it important that the everyday women identify, claim, and apply her courageous feminine energy?
3. One reader testimonial said, “I was pleased Sandra Walston started with the Goddess time period (Part One)—the period when women knew courage was a part of their fundamental make-up. In contrast, an erudite doctor said, “Oh, the Goddess time period is only a myth. It doesn’t substantiate anything!” Share your personal viewpoint.
4. Another reader testimonial said, “When I took the time to write the ‘stepping stones’ (page 72) in my life, and then I went back to my list to name each circumstance as one of the twelve behaviors of courage, I felt my courageous “will” expand. I felt more in control of my life. I was motivated to take action in the design of the rest of my life.” When you did this exercise, what value (if any) did you gain?
5. One male reader wrote, “Why don’t women realize they are courageous? I can name loads of situations where my mother, wife, daughter, or female employee was courageous. Yet, when I asked each privately if they thought of themselves as courageous, they said no. This certainly confirmed Sandra Walston’s premise (only 10% of women would perceive themselves as courageous).” Did anyone in your reading group perceive herself as courageous after she took the survey (page 55)? Did your group fit the Research and Survey Results (pages 56-58) profile? Discuss.

6. Why is it important to be a model of courage—to identify, distinguish, and speak the twelve behaviors of courage found on the “Source Wheel” (page 86)? In what ways will this conscious action encourage our daughters, nieces, and the girl next door to reveal their courage?
7. According to the author, we all forget or lose our courage (heart and spirit); we all have a tendency to “fall asleep” in the poppy field like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. What would Dorothy’s life have been like if she hadn’t bumped her head, traveled to Oz, and found her courage? How might your life be different if you claim your courage? Think of a particular situation you are struggling with right now. How might courageous will be applied to break a stalemate?
8. Walston wrote about the everyday woman and courage because she believes there is not enough folklore, much less contemporary writings, about these feminine behaviors. Why is it especially important for women to endorse and display these behaviors, and promote actively other women who do?
9. Discuss the inner conflicts women face as they identify, claim, and speak the language of courage (Chapter Nine).
10. What female characters of the past or present, or which of your friends have you encountered as courageous? Why would you label them courageous? How are they like or not like you?
11. What happens to women when they decide to stand in their courage? In other words, what happens when they reveal their authentic spirit?
12. Discuss the inner conflicts that may have surfaced in your reading group. Do you find women acknowledge and laud their feminine energy of courage, or do they say, “I do whatever it takes to survive!”? Is there a distinction? Explain.
13. *COURAGE* Celebration Gatherings are starting across the country to acknowledge, validate, and celebrate women’s courage. What’s the value of participating in one of these groups?

14. When you enjoy your newly found courage, you're taking control of your life. How does your life change? What new paths are you creating that you never dreamed were there?