

Prisoners of Our Own Demise

Fortes Fortuna Adiuvat. (Fortune favors the brave.)

We are prisoners of our own demise. We all procrastinate when it comes to facing a comprising situation head on. Doing so inevitably makes the situation worse, and the troubles multiply. The islands of success are surrounded by a sea of problems. Success does not come easily. It takes fortitude, perseverance, and courage to overcome the obstacles we face on an ongoing basis. If we do not face our challenges head on, we essentially build a prison wall around ourselves. Inside this self-inflicted captivity, we may never overcome even the simplest challenges.

“We erect and build a prison and the tragedy is we cannot even see the prison.” Deepak Chopra

The important thing is to realize that when difficulties appear, they present an opportunity to make renewed efforts in our lives to develop ourselves and demonstrate our power to overcome obstacles. One meets hardships as a test of faith. By challenging adversity we can develop the depth of faith necessary to enjoy happiness in this world. As soon as we recognize obstacles for what they are, we also find we have the courage to face up to them. And, in challenging and overcoming them, we will experience our true character at work, fundamentally change our providence, and break through into a new assenting way of life.

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” Albert Einstein

Going through a tragedy causes an increase in courage that is necessary to

survive, and that courage carries over into the rest of our lives. Courage is almost a contradiction in terms. It means a strong desire to live, taking the form of a readiness to die. “He that will lose his life, the same shall save it,” is not a piece of mysticism for saints and heroes. To resolve the apparent contradiction on the demands of a hero requires a ruthless commitment to logic: to identify the problem, learn its fundamental cause, and grasp the path to its solution. To liberate ourselves, we must discover, understand, and then practice a new set of philosophical principles.

Being able to distinguish the past, present, and future in a way that allows the future to occur as a possibility, rather than as an extension of the problems of our past mistakes, makes it possible to break the deterministic vicious cycles that so often make us prisoners of our own mind, and blind us to our own wisdom and the wisdom of others. When we are present in this way, it is obvious that the wisdom of previous generations can help us navigate in this increasingly complex and unpredictable world.

When we allow fear into the equation, we do not think by logic but by an overwhelming emotion of loss as to what direction to take. The seed of evil is fear. Fear consumes our existence and our ability to think rationally. We must forsake fear and gain courage.

“You will never do anything in this world without courage. It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor.” Aristotle

“The heroes of the world community are not those who withdraw when difficulties ensue, not those who can envision neither the prospect of success nor the consequence of failure—but those who stand the heat of battle.” Hubert H. Humphrey

Fearlessness may be a gift, but perhaps more precious is the courage acquired through endeavor, courage that comes from cultivating the habit of refusing to let fear dictate one’s actions, courage that could be described as “grace under pressure.” There are some of us who don’t let our challenging circumstances overcome us at the point of attack. This fearlessness, clearly a blessing at times, could also be considered a detriment at those times when we should allow our fear to slow us down and seek Godly reasoning. But alas, our world is turning too fast. The demands of the instantaneous world seeking instant decisions and gratification are ever present in our society. It is imperative that we seek a balance in life that will allow us the time to make the right decisions and have the courage and wisdom to know when to make them.

“Sapere Aude! [dare to know] Have courage to use your own understanding!—that is the motto of enlightenment.” Kant

“The man who knows when not to act is wise. To my mind, bravery is forethought.” Euripides

