

Title: The courage of being yourself

Name: Sara De Canta

School: BMCC

Date: 28 October 2022

When I was little, I used to read a lot of storybooks and watch lots of cartoons. From a young age, I dreamed of being part of at least twenty of those many stories, so compelling, so adventurous, and so full of details and insight that they almost made me forget the fact that it was a fictional reality. In every story, I remember that the thing that absolutely bewitched me and that captured all my attention was not the princely clothes, the castles, or the beauty of the charming prince; what I liked was the courage of the characters, but not the kind of courage that fights a three-headed monster, a zombie or a warlock; I talk about the kind of courage needed to fight for one's dreams, one's ideals and one's beliefs. Listening to yourself and having the courage to become whom you are meant to be and whom you want to be is one of the greatest forms of virtue.

It is not always easy to listen to the tiny little voice that calls you inside your head, and that reminds you who you want to be in life. In fact, sometimes, the context we are living in, the geographic place where we are born, the culture, and religion stop us from taking courage and pursuing these dreams. For example, I was born in a country where it is not always allowed to fantasize with your mind; a country where even being in possession of a degree often doesn't allow you to find the job you aspire to, asking you to settle for jobs you have never intended to do. I come from a country where you have to look perfect even when you go shopping at the supermarket, and where everyone looks at the way you dress, if you wear high fashion brand bags and heels, if you have tattoos and if you are a "good looking" person because that is always one of the requirements for obtaining a job that interfaces with customers. But what if I don't want to dress fashionably? What if I want to have a body full of tattoos and if my physical appearance does not meet the beauty standards required to get the job that I want so much but that they will not give me due to my aspect? What if I want to go to university and not settle for the first available job? What if I want to hear what the rest of the world has to say, but in

person and not by hearsay or by the books written by someone else? What if your parents ask you to inherit the family business, but it's not your dream? All this soup of requests and implied obligations to satisfy the standards of society were affecting my true personality, my will, and my work possibilities (and more) in the world. *Find the courage to be yourself* is an article written by Raam Dev on his personal blog, in which he stimulates to be yourself, and says “Be yourself. It’s not impossible, but it takes courage. It takes courage to be and to think differently. But the act of being and thinking differently is only different to those looking at you from the outside” (Dev). The author knows it takes courage to be yourself and that it is not an easy task, but it is possible if we pay less attention to what others want. I can also relate these problems I was experiencing to the phrase once said by The Silver Elves “If you do not have the courage to be yourself, what will you be?” (The Silver Elves). The authors here ask what and who we could be if we can't be ourselves. Freedom of expression is often a fictitious, abstract truth, almost a utopia; freedom of expression prompts you to bring the real you out into the world, but when the real you hide for fear of being judged because people don't really understand this diversity that characterizes you or your aspirations, then what is left to do? Be whom society expects you to be, hope to feel included, have friends, have a job, and avoid being sidelined. It takes courage to be yourself because sometimes the consequences of being yourself are not pleasant and easy to digest.

Furthermore, adapting to please society makes people love someone who is not quite real, or authentic; people fall in love with masks, the masks that we all wear and that act as a bit of a protective shield against the ignorance and judgment the world sometimes has in store for us. Iyanla Vanzant, a New York speaker and inspirer, adds interesting elements to this thought of mine by saying “When you don’t show up as who you are, people fall in love who you’re not. Then when they find out who you are, that’s when they leave” (Vanzant). Here, Vanzant says

that people may also fall in love with who we pretend to be, but that when it comes time to show who we really are, people don't always stick with us. It is not worth being loved by someone who does not love the real you; it is not worth building a relationship of friendship or love on a lie to please the needs of others, because unless you want to live in the lie forever, sooner or later the truth will come out and people once at your side, they will take a different path.

However, when you get tired of playing a role that does not belong to you and find the courage to change all this staging, everything changes. Michael Sam, a former American football player, once said “Great things happen when you have the courage to be yourself” (Sam). Here, Sam says that the moment we find the courage to be ourselves, good things come naturally. Even Walt Disney, one of the world's best-known entrepreneurs, animators, and film producers, architect of a magical world that has made many children dream around the world and many adults reflect as well, once said. “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them” (Disney). The American motion-picture producer says that everything we've ever dreamed of can come true if we do everything to make it happen. That's what I did. I was able to look beyond my fear, and I found the courage to pursue my dreams and be myself. I moved to a country more than 8000 km away from my home and my family, trying to coexist with a completely different culture from mine and speaking a language that I love, but still do not understand because it is written and pronounced in completely different ways. In the beginning, it was not easy; leaving your comfort zone never is, especially when you leave your family. The obstacles were many, because I had to roll up my sleeves and find the courage to do what I had never done before and even the simplest things like renting a house, opening a bank account, sharing an apartment with people from different cultures or making a doctor's appointment were not easy things to do. Despite everything, I am satisfied with my choices

because I would not be the person I am today, or rather, I would have been this person just inside of me but without being able to externalize or live it; I probably would never have gone to university; I would not have met my friends who come from all over the world and who have opened my eyes and mind to many aspects of life; I probably wouldn't have the hobby of photography, which came to me from the desire I had when traveling to capture emotions and memories and make them eternal. Here in the United States, especially in New York, I found freedom of expression in dressing and speaking. People come to New York to follow their dreams, trying to improve themselves and become the person they have dreamed of.

In conclusion, I think courage is an important virtue in everyday life because we are the only person we will be with for our whole life. It is important to remember to take care of yourself and to have the courage to be whoever you want to be, even if it might be difficult and challenging. When you feel good about who you are, it becomes easier to make others feel good too. Find the courage to follow the path that leads you to your dreams even if it is steep, slippery and winding; do not follow a paved and easy road that has already been created for you by someone else and, at the end of the road, you will have achieved great satisfaction even if with great effort. It takes courage; have the courage to make yourself heard, to stand up for yourself and to leave if a situation does not make you happy. Have the courage to love yourself, and others will love you. Have the courage to be happy, and get out of your comfort zone, happiness is not comfortable! Have the courage, the rest will come by itself.

Works Cited

Dev, Raam. "Find the Courage to Be Yourself." *raamdev*, 30 Jan. 2010,
raamdev.com/2010/find-the-courage-to-be-yourself/

Disney, Walt. "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."
[brainyquote, www.brainyquote.com/quotes/walt_disney_163027](http://brainyquote.com/quotes/walt_disney_163027).

Sam, Michael. "Great things happen when you have the courage to be yourself." twitter,
ESPYS, 16 July 2014, mobile.twitter.com/espys/status/489598218431635457.

The Silver Elves. "If you do not have the courage to be yourself, what will you be?"
[quotefancy, quotefancy.com/quote/2836732/The-Silver-Elves-If-you-do-not-have-the-courage-to-be-yourself-what-will-you-be](http://quotefancy.com/quote/2836732/The-Silver-Elves-If-you-do-not-have-the-courage-to-be-yourself-what-will-you-be).

Vanzant, Iyania. "When you don't show up as who you are, people fall in love who you're not. Then when they find out who you are, that's when they leave." Pinterest,
[minimalistquotes.com, www.pinterest.com/pin/iyanla-vanzant-quote-when-you-dont-show-up-as-who-you-are-people-fall-in-love-with-who-youre-not-in-2022--925841635869063250/](http://minimalistquotes.com).