



Moral Courage

By Rushworth M. Kidder

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Why did a group of teenagers watch a friend die instead of putting their own reputations at risk? Why did a top White House official decide to come clean and accept a prison sentence during Watergate? Why did a finance executive turn down millions out of respect for her employer? Why are some willing to risk their futures to uphold principles? What gives us the strength to stand up for what we believe?

As these questions suggest, the topic of moral courage is front and center in today's culture. Enron, Arthur Andersen, the U.S. Olympic Committee, abusive priests, cheating students, domestic violence -- all these remind us that taking ethical stands should be a higher priority in our culture. Why, when people discern wrongdoing, are they sometimes unready, unable, or unwilling to act?

In a book rich with examples, Rushworth Kidder reveals that moral courage is the bridge between talking ethics and doing ethics. Defining it as a readiness to endure danger for the sake of principle, he explains that the courage to act is found at the intersection of three elements: action based on core values, awareness of the risks, and a willingness to endure necessary hardship. By exploring how moral courage spurs us to strive for core values, he demonstrates the benefits of ethical action to the individual and to society -- and the severe consequences that can result from remaining morally dormant.

Moral Courage puts indispensable concepts and tools into our hands, equipping us to respond to the increasingly complicated moral challenges we face at work, at home, and in our communities. It enables us to make clear, confident decisions by exploring some litmus-test questions:

- Is the benefit worth the risk?
- Am I motivated by my desire to uphold my beliefs or just to impose them on others?
- Will my actions create collateral damage among those with no stake in the outcome?

While physical courage may no longer be a necessary survival skill or an essential rite of passage out of childhood, few would dispute the growing need for moral courage as the true gauge of maturity. Treating this subject not as an

esoteric branch of philosophy but as a practical necessity for modern life, Kidder deftly leads us to a clear understanding of what moral courage is, what it does, and how to get it.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Defining moral courage as "the quality of mind and spirit that enables one to face up to ethical challenges firmly and confidently," Kidder, president of the Institute for Global Ethics, offers a treatise on the "courage to be moral" replete with examples and analysis. He offers a step-by-step guide, including checklists, on how to apply moral values to difficult situations, understand risks (more often career troubles and social ostracism than physical harm) and endure hardships brought on by moral courage itself. He explores how and why people can fail to be morally courageous, and ways that they can learn to behave better, offering anecdotes that range from an investment firm employee choosing to confess a potentially costly mistake to a married couple refusing to let unmarried guests sleep together, despite prevailing cultural norms. The book is weaker on the philosophical side. An extended distinction drawn between physical and moral courage ends up muddy and sometimes patronizing toward those whose courage entails only physical risk; it appears almost as if moral courage were a white-collar courage and physical courage a less exalted blue-collar sort. The analysis of how moral action and values interlock is never thoroughly convincing, since the former seems to cover almost anyone who claims to stand on principle (such as the boss who cut his workers' wages by \$3 an hour), but there is enough thoughtfulness here for a substantive introduction to a worthwhile subject.

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From [Booklist](#)

Former *Christian Science Monitor* editor and author of *Good People Make Tough Choices* (1994), Kidder makes an eloquent, impassioned plea to instill and cultivate moral courage throughout all of our work and personal lives. Far from giving only empty words and far from offering a series of platitudes, the author promotes public and private examples of moral courage--the courage to be moral--to underscore its importance and relevance today, from the lessons of Mahatma Gandhi to the issues faced by Enron executives and whistle-blowers. His book is also far from simply a cheerleading exercise; included are clear definitions, checklists, and a prescription for teaching the principles at all ages. Finally, it is a primer for decision making; anecdotes and outlines of clear choices, for instance, between truth and loyalty, will help mindful readers determine the right actions to follow in every aspect of their lives. *Barbara Jacobs*

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Review

"Moral Courage is a wonderful book--lively, thoughtful, and practical." (Bob Abernethy, executive editor and host of *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* on PBS)

"Rush Kidder brilliantly deals with the perilous pathways where moral courage is absolutely required." (David M. Abshire, president of the Center for the Study of the Presidency, former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, and cofounder of the Center for Strategic and International Studies)

This book, like one candle in the darkness, belongs in every place of learning--and every library. (Library Journal (starred review*))

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Diane Lomas:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read any book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent all day every day to reading a reserve. The book Moral Courage it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book has high quality.

David Ruby:

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Ana Vela:

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John Yang:

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