



Dear CUF folks,

Do you consider yourself to be a courageous person? My initial answer is “not particularly,” because I’m no Rosa Parks, or Malala Yousafzai, or David Hogg. Those are courageous people, risking their lives for a deeply valued cause. But on reflection, we all know people who demonstrate courage in their daily lives: the parent who advocates tirelessly for their differently-abled child; the queer kid who stands up to a bully; a person who gets up every day despite debilitating mental illness. Sometimes courage looks like “keep on keeping on.” As writer and artist Mary Anne Radmacher wrote: *Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'*

So courage does require taking a risk, whether it be one's own existence, one's own comfort or anything else we value (status, appearance, money, etc.). And the deeply valued cause may be a global one, or a personal one, or anywhere in between. When we look at it this way, the answer of whether or not we are courageous is much more nuanced. A better question for self-reflection is, *“in what ways am I a courageous person?”* We each have the opportunity to ask ourselves this question as we explore the theme of *Courage* this month.

Of course, it's not only individuals who demonstrate courage, but also groups, communities, sometimes nations. Courage can be contagious, (as are apathy and cynicism), so a subgroup may inspire the whole, which in turn can inspire other communities, and sometimes it grows into a movement. So this month we will also be asking ourselves, *“in what ways is Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship a courageous congregation?”*

I'm going to post both of those queries on Facebook, and I invite you to share your reflections there, or via email (sarah@revsarahrichards.com). I so look forward to learning of all the personal and community stories of courage with you this month!

Peace,