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1. TO PONDER

"Once you become real, you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always. – Margery Williams

"These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action. – T.S. Eliot

List the persons in your life who define courageous and how they have inspired you to show up.

2. COURAGE... Showing UP!

Inspiration for me, and possibly for you, will come sometimes in the most unexpected moments of my day. A few days ago, I was even more surprised to discover a few moments of inspiration and reflection brought on by moments of connection to friends, family, clients and even a stranger .. all moving courageously through their day.

They would be surprised to hear that I am inspired by each of them or that I would even call them courageous. But I feel a renewed sense of determination to be more "me," to show up more, and take a firmer stand because of them. These people showing up in my life are very consciously moving in their own determination to make their life better or just get through the day and in those moments are doing so with a spirit of intensity rooted in a character of courage – yes, I would say they are each and every one of them - courageous. I am not sure any one of them would name the spirit I observe as one of "courage." Some of them would remark that how they are making it through their day is no more unusual than anyone else. They are doing what they need to do and taking care of what they can. For some, the explanation might border on a feeling of "resignation," a "fearfulness" or "just having to" because they can't in the moment come up with any other choices. But with their indomitable spirit of moving on or forward, putting the next step in front of the other. I have even been told by some of them that it just is what it is and not such a "big deal." However, I seem them doing "their ordinary" in such a way that would surprise most of us - almost to the point of our thinking "I could never do what they are doing."

These courageous spirits have undergone a leg amputation, the surprise crash of a marriage, the painful and lingering death of a parent, the death of a spouse, the loss of a home to mother nature's wrath of storms, the end to a dream job, a relocation to a new state and unknown community, the illness of a child, the beginning of a new role to lead a team in a yet unknown work environment, and the fight to succeed at a war with a faceless enemy.

Inspired...yes! I can do more ... I can live more fully ... I can be more to others ... I can also be the person who takes on a spirit of courage when presented the opportunity and challenge. I am inspired yes... to be truer to myself, and maybe then an inspiration to others. I can be ready and when courage is required, I will have the inspiration to show up and say yes and no. As these wonderful beings in my life have shown me in their strengths, do what you can do, one step at a time, one hour at a time and believe in the compassion of one person for another.

3. CHOOSE "To Be Inspired ... Be Courageous"

Choose to say "yes" ... it is time to move ... it is time to move on ... it is time to move up... maybe time to move over.

Choose to say "no" ... discover the truth ... seek out support ... prepare for the change ... and speak your reality ... plan the transition.

Choose to be inspired ... first, inspire another ... encourage them to say yes and say no ... be silent and acknowledge the courageous spirit ... now, listen to your heart ... see the view from another angle ... know that today is not tomorrow ... know that you deserve peace and happiness ... inspire yourself ... say yes ... say no ... choose to be courageous in the little things.

4. READING CHOICES

In a conversation this morning with a colleague, I was reminded about a book I have stuck in the corner of my office. It's title – "List Yourself, Listmaking as the Way to Self-Discovery." Authors are Ilene Segalove and Paul Bob Velick. For the perpetual list maker that I am, it is a unique approach to setting down the memories of one's life and reminding each of us who we really are. In the crease of the pages, lies the hint that we may have had some of those courageous moments in our life.

For the more business minded, I have started a set of 3 leadership fables by Patrick Lencioni, "The Five Temptations of a CEO," "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team," and "The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive." Interesting and creative writing approach to very pointedly identify what sometimes shows up in the most subtle of work environments.

For fun reading, and there has been a fair amount of that lately, I have finished Sue Grafton's "R is for Ricochet." Currently on my bedside are two books – "The Devil Wears Prada" by Lauren Wesiberger and "The Woman in the White House (Hillary Rodham Clinton) by Norman King.

5. JEAN'S LATEST CHOICES

Embracing a household move – the first in 12 years and that is a new record for us ... Made it official, I have been accepted into a PhD program for Professional Coaching ... more visits to support family in AZ ... "Yes" to a few small professional projects to stimulate some connectedness ... participated in the Strengths Facilitator Qualification course for a second time ... inspired to declare a focus for my research in strengths and partnerships ... saying "No" to the naysayers ... choosing inspiration instead.

My Constructive Choices AUDIENCE:

* Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,

* New Managers (and aspiring leaders) ready to discover unique strengths to establish a leading community,

*Individuals wanting to sort through the choices to build a more fulfilling life, and
*Coaches who choose to reach out and support the choices of others.

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