



## Women's Fitness

June, 2017

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CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

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### WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WEREN'T AFRAID?

Move overseas? Start a business? Write a book? Maybe you would speak up in meetings or ask your crush on a date. Whatever it is, you don't have to wait for your fear to magically dissolve before you find the courage to follow your long-awaited dreams.

"Courage isn't the absence of fear or self-doubt, it's intentionally taking action in their presence," says Margie Warrell, author of *Make Your Mark: A Guidebook for the Brave Hearted* (Wiley, \$24.95). "That's something that's easier said than done. Fear can paralyse people and stop them taking the risks they need to take."

It might not be simple, but cultivating courage will make your life sweeter. And, like your body, it can be trained. "Courage is like a muscle," Warrell says. "It doesn't matter how much you tell yourself you're a shy person or you're just not very assertive or you're not a risk-taker. Every one of us can be braver." All you've gotta do is follow this prescription for courage...

### CRYSTALISE YOUR VALUES

Those paralyzing moments of indecision can be unlocked with one small task, says human behavioural expert Dr John Demartini: defining your values. "I always say that the most courageous thing you can do in your life is be authentic," he explains. "One of the greatest challenges we face is a bombardment of other people's expectations on us, and learning how to be ourselves in a world that's expecting us not to be takes more courage than walking on coals or bungee jumping."

We all have unique values and priorities that guide our daily actions, but, says Dr Demartini, we're often not awake to them. And you can't be true to yourself if you don't know who you are. To get a better idea of what lights you up (Note: This might be wildly different to what society or your parents tell you) take some time to think about what energises you, what you always find time for in life, what motivates you and what goals you've achieved (or head to [drdemartini.com](http://drdemartini.com) for a free values determination quiz).

Defining your values will help you to make more courageous choices because it points you in the direction of your true north. "When people are doing something that's authentic and meaningful to them, they'll want to pursue greatness and the next level," says Dr Demartini. "They'll want to conquer the next plateau. So courage is a natural spontaneous behaviour in people who are living congruent with what they value most."

### FLIP THE FEAR

Say you've worked out a big goal that you want to achieve, one that's totally in line with your core values, but you're so scared of it that all you can see are worst-case scenarios. This is normal, says Warrell, so you need to be hypervigilant of your mind's tendency to turn shadows into monsters. "Neurologically, we're wired to focus more on what could go wrong than what could go right," she says. "We terrorise ourselves into not doing anything." Faced with almost certain disaster, it's no wonder courage feels as unattainable as a pet unicorn.

What we forget to do, says Warrell, is consider the cost of stalling. She describes it as 'flipping' your fear: "Instead of asking yourself what will happen if I do this, if I quit my job or ... whatever it is, what is it you need to be afraid of if you *don't* do it?"

Your intuition can come into play here – listen out when it speaks up via nerves in your tummy or an edgy feeling that just won't go away. "Often our intuition is guiding us to do something that requires change and feels uncomfortable, so we ignore it at our peril because we don't like what it's telling us," Warrell notes. "When you're uncomfortable, just sit with it and pay attention and [ask yourself] 'What is it about the way I'm thinking about this that has me so nervous or upset?' Often when we really sit with our fear, we realise that we didn't need to be so afraid."

### SEEK OUT THE POSITIVE

Sometimes life throws up the kind of challenges that require courage to endure them: illness, loss, financial difficulties and relationship break-ups can knock us to the ground. In these cases, courage takes on new meaning. It becomes the ability to accept that life contains both pleasure and pain, and the inner strength to look for a new perspective, says Dr Demartini.

"In life, there are always two sides to things," he explains. "Whenever there is a crisis, there's a hidden blessing. Whenever there's a challenge, there's an opportunity. And until we go and look for the other side, we're going to live in fear. But once we identify how we can use [the challenge] to our greatest advantage, we are free to go on with our courageous actions."

It might not happen straight away – it might be weeks or months till you're able to pinpoint an opportunity in the crisis – but it will always be waiting for you.

It's worth persisting, says Warrell, because pursuing courage in all its forms will enrich your life. "The more people cultivate their courage, it just expands what's possible for them."

Think **FIT**

## Train your courage

Flex your bravery muscles with these daily 'workouts'

### HOLD YOURSELF WITH CONFIDENCE

"When we shift how we hold ourselves physically, it shifts how we feel psychologically," says Warrell. Develop a posture that reflects the confidence you wish you had.

### MIND YOUR WORDS

Watch the language you use and catch yourself when you exaggerate risks. "Don't terrorise yourself and talk up things that scare you by using dramatic language," tips Warrell. Stay alert for statements like, "It's impossible" or "If I do this, I'll die."

### PRIORITISE TASKS

Take a moment each day to consciously set five tasks that are meaningful to you – and make them a priority, says Dr Demartini. "You'll have more courage to walk your talk because you'll get things done and you'll master your life incrementally," he says.

### EMBRACE DISCOMFORT

Stretch yourself as often as possible – whether it's by giving a presentation at work, letting your guard down with others or initiating a difficult conversation. "Start embracing discomfort as a prerequisite for your own happiness," Warrell advises. "Every time we act in the presence of fear and do something uncomfortable we dilute the power that fear has over us and we grow our own personal power."