



## **Book Recommendation**

### Courage is Calling by Ryan Holiday

This is a rallying book which is part of the Stoic Virtues Series. Ryan Holiday is a philosopher and New York Times bestselling author. The book is packed with inspirational stories of courageous people throughout history – courage is defined as “honest commitment to noble ideals” – who responded to their call. He provides the examples of those who have gone before to inspire us but also to remind us of the debt we owe, the responsibility not to waste their sacrifices. Reading their stories, with Holiday’s urgent prose evident, is like hearing the drums beat out the message: *when you are called, will you answer?* And if you don’t, how will you live with yourself? The entire book is an exhortation to answer the call to courage. It aims to stir us into action.

In Part I, Holiday informs us, it is not that we do not feel fear if we are courageous. We feel it AND rise above it. He wants us to know that fear holds us back. It freezes us. It gives us a million reasons not to try. However, we must also know that we are all chosen. Whether we answer the call is our choice; to rise or run away. Holiday reinforces his message with this impactful statement: nothing worth doing is not scary. But courage it is not something just available to a select few. All of us, flawed, limited, imperfect, will be called. Will we rise? It is about not shirking your duty, but about doing the thing you know you should do. Choosing personal safety as a top priority leads to a boring life. Rather, we need to keep our soul intact.

This book challenges. It is not for the fainthearted, but Holiday is at pains to write that there is no one who has achieved greatness without wrestling with their own doubts, anxieties, and demons. Interestingly, Holiday sees apathy as the opposite of courage, not fear. Not interested, doing nothing, is lack of courage, he attests. He amplifies, “If you feel that there isn’t anything you can do, chances are you will do nothing. You will also be nothing. A protected, self-justifying nothing”. Boy oh boy! Tough words and thought-provoking.

Courage is calling us to do something for someone other than ourselves. In fact, it is this aspect of selflessness which takes courage to the realms of heroism, Part III: The Heroic.

We need to read *Courage is Calling* bravely, to withstand such statements as “There are things worse than dying. Living with what we had to do to keep living, for one. Regretting that lost opportunity to have been a hero. The hellish existence of a world run by cowards”.

The Afterword shows remarkable humility. Holiday combs back over his personal history and is at pains to face his own shortcomings. He shows such courage in shining the spotlight on where he did not stand up, where he did not shine. This adds so much to the book. A writer with such vulnerability is a writer with integrity; one that inspires you to hear his message; he is someone who has lived the personal consequences of not being courageous, of not heeding the call. He is



not preaching from some elevated plane. He is here with us. This is the salve – should you need it – if you are feeling berated or shamed by the hard-hitting tone of the body of the book.

Personally, I want to 'stand up' as a result of reading this book. I feel encouraged to practise in small ways to speak out, to go forward, so that when the big calls come, I will be there. To make courage a habit. He throws down the glove. Will I pick it up? Will you?

We at **my manifesto** can't imagine a more inspirational book on this topic. This is a book to read and ponder; to revisit a multitude of times when you need reminding and encouraging to be the one who acts courageously, to be the exception.

Astounding. Outstanding. Irresistible.