

When the word courage is mentioned, who doesn't recall the Cowardly Lion in the beloved movie "The Wizard of Oz"? Since lions are supposed to be "the kings of beasts," the Cowardly Lion believes that his fear makes him inadequate. This is evident in the story when the Lion turns to his new friends; Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man to say, "*Courage! What makes a king out of a slave? Courage! What makes the flag on the mast to wave? Courage! What makes the elephant charge his tusk in the misty mist, or the dusky dusk? What makes the muskrat guard his musk? Courage! What makes the sphinx the seventh wonder? Courage! What makes the dawn come up like thunder? Courage! What makes the Hottentot so hot? What puts the "ape" in apricot? What have they got that I ain't got?*" And his friends agree, by saying in unison "*Courage!*"

Of course, this is just a movie but as the story goes on, one can learn a lesson from the Lion. The Wizard discounts the Lion's lack of courage, because he merely confuses courage with wisdom. Under certain circumstances, it's acceptable to be afraid. The Lion is presented with a medal for all his bravery against the Wicked Witch. As the Wizard proclaims to the Lion, "*As for you, my fine friend, you're a victim of disorganized thinking. You are under the unfortunate delusion that simply because you run away from danger you have no courage. You're confusing courage with wisdom. Back where I come from, we have men who are called heroes. Once a year, they take their fortitude out of moth balls and parade it down the main street of the city and they have no more courage than you have. But they have one thing that you haven't got - a medal. Therefore, for meritorious conduct, extraordinary valor, conspicuous bravery against Wicked Witches, I award you the Triple Cross. You are now a member of the Legion of Courage*".

In the Lion's case, he thought he lacked something – courage, but he was only deluding himself. The Lion proved that he had the leadership qualities from the very start - but he hadn't searched deep enough to find his courage. We all go through this no matter what the age or the situation. We need to start believing in ourselves, as well as believing in others.

The next time you are afraid to step out of your comfort zone, think about the Cowardly Lion; feel the empowerment to do whatever the task at hand may be! Find the courage to do whatever it takes to accomplish your dreams. Better yet, help someone else look deep within themselves to find their own courage. Cheer them on to accomplish their dreams and watch them *roar* to new heights!

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