

XCELERATE NIKE LACROSSE NATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR, BRIAN LALLEY, DISCUSSES COURAGE IN LACROSSE:



YOU MAY BE A GREAT PLAYER, BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MAKE OTHERS BETTER? WHAT IS YOUR INFLUENCE ON THE VICTORIOUS ACTIONS OF OTHERS?

When someone in sports is courageous, what do you think of? More than likely, your mind cues in on some spectacular play in a huge situation. It's a tie game in the national championship and coach draws up the play for you to get the ball.

A situation like the one explained above would most definitely take courage, but there are many other areas where courage comes into play in the sport of lacrosse, or any sports setting. One way I like to explain/define courage for myself is fearless action. What's important to understand about that definition is that it is not, "no-fear action." The definition is fearLESS action. To me, having courage means you understand the emotions involved that might keep you from giving your best possible action. You then manage those fears or even leverage them to create the best possible version of you by giving your best possible disciplined effort in that moment.

Beyond taking the big shot, where can having courage be important for an athlete to become a better player and/or better athlete? I believe that it is hard to have courage without a certain level of competence. I am not about to strap on goalie pads and think I'll have the courage to compete at a high level as I've never played the position. Areas in my life where I work to summon courage to act in the most impactful way possible are as a coach, a club/camp director, as a husband, as a father and as a midfielder (when I am able to play still).

Where do you seek to have the biggest impact in your lacrosse path? In your personal life? Courage begins with understanding the limitations of fear and having confidence in what actions give you the best possible chance at the outcome you seek. When you have courage, you'll produce more positive outcomes, but also have the ability to learn from your failures and setbacks and continue to move forward.

SURVIVE & THRIVE

When we're confident in our survival, we then seek to improve our position whether that be through being the top scorer on the lacrosse team, getting recruited to a top college or being named captain of the team. While it is a natural human instinct to want to improve our position in life, far too few people in all walks of life truly understand their influence on others and how important it truly is. From the perspective of one athlete on a lacrosse team, they have an influence on and are influenced by their parents, coaches and their teammates. That influence is delivered through their attitudes, actions, and words.

INFLUENCE & RESULTS

Victories are the result of victorious behavior. Sometimes that may come from the fact that the winning team is just more talented. What about when both teams are of equal skill, IQ and athleticism? As human beings, we must understand and take responsibility for the influence we have on others through our attitude, our actions, and our words. Teams of individuals who influence each other in a positive and supportive way create an environment where people are more energized and willing to move out of their comfort zone to improve. Learning environments that are plagued with negativity and harsh criticism are disjointed and stiff. People stay in their comfort zone to avoid the negativity and to feel safe.

QUEEN ESTHER: THE COURAGE TO TAKE A BIG RISK



DANIEL: THE COURAGE TO NOT GIVE IN



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SOURCES

Esther risked her life to persuade her husband, King Xerxes, to foil the plans of Haman to annihilate the Jews in their country. She was motivated by the faith, taught by her uncle Mordecai, that she would be fulfilling the call to save God's people through her.

"Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16 ESV).

According to this passage, Esther prayed and fasted to put her trust in God to give her courage to plead with King Xerxes to protect her people. Her faithful sacrifice paved the way for the Jews in her country to stand up against attacks on them and fight back and protect one another. God brought about a great victory for them that day.

In Daniel chapter 6, a group of politically motivated administrators laid a trap for Daniel by manipulating the king to sign into law a regulation that would put to death anyone who worshipped any god other than him.

Daniel stood on his conviction to pray to God only, in spite of the consequence of being thrown into a den of lions as punishment. He was motivated to face this fear because he was so grateful to God for all the ways God blessed and protected his life. That gratitude made him extraordinarily confident.

"When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously" (Daniel 6:10 ESV).

Daniel's courage grew through praying three times a day even though it was against the law. His honor of God in prayer overpowered the temptation to be afraid of people. His devotion to God inspired King Darius, a foreign king, to write to all nations in their day to fear and revere God (Daniel 6:25-26 NIV).

1. Who are people that God has placed in your life to tell you how to live according to his Word, like Mordecai did for Esther?
2. In the difficult situations in your life, have you prayed and fasted to put your trust in God's plan to bring about victory? Do you want to learn to trust God?
3. Do you believe your choice to turn to God and act upon his Word will lead to others finding a relationship with him?
4. Do you pray in places where you are not distracted? Do you set aside intentional time each day to only pray with God?
5. Do you believe living courageously by Scriptures will make a positive impression on people?
6. Who are some family and friends that you can pray to inspire with your courage from God?

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