The Construct of Courage: Categorization and Measurement

2 authors:

Cooper Woodard
The Groden Center
14 PUBLICATIONS **256** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Cynthia L. S. Pury
Clemson University
66 PUBLICATIONS **871** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:

Autism Treatment for Toddlers View project

The Construct of Courage
Categorization and Measurement

Cooper R. Woodard   *The Groden Center*
Cynthia L. S. Pury   *Clemson University*

The original courage scale developed by Woodard (2004) measured courage as the product of the willingness to take action and the fear experienced while taking the action. Recent findings suggest that fear may not be a necessary part of courageous action. Items from the original courage scale were reanalyzed using only the "willingness to act" scores. A four-factor structure—work/employment, patriotic/religion-based belief system, specific social-moral, and independent courage or family based—was found. This factor solution was replicated in a slightly revised version of the scale administered to a new participant sample. Interpretation of these factors suggested that courage may be classified by more complex, context-based situations. A revised version of the scale, the Woodard Pury Courage Scale-23, is included for further research and investigation.

Keywords: courage, fear

Courage is a commonly accepted and often discussed construct, yet research in this area is remarkably limited. Until recently, courage remained in the background, an obvious but overlooked core virtue that undoubtedly colored many aspects of life. In the comprehensive review of positive psychology topics in Snyder and Lopez's (2005) *Handbook of Positive Psychology,* courage is noted three times in the introductory chapter (Seligman, 2005). It is suggested to be a personal trait on par with love and forgiveness, a buffer against mental illness, and a primary outcome goal of psychotherapy. Despite these attributes, it is not discussed again in nearly 800 pages of text and more that 50 chapters. This may in part be due to various definitions, as well as controversy regarding the various types of courage.

> "I do know the nature of courage; but, somehow or other, she has slipped away from me, and I cannot get hold of her and tell her nature."
> Laches in Courage by Plato

Defining Courage: The Question of Fear

One reason why courage has not received more attention and inquiry may be attributed to difficulties in establishing a clear and concise definition. Early research on courage made great strides in forming a foundational definition, although the question of fear continued to be a complex dimension of this construct. Shelp (1984) proposed four components of courage: (1) free choice to accept or not accept the consequences of acting, (2) risk or danger, (3) a worthy end, and (4) uncertainty of out-

come. He indicated that fear *may or may not* be present in the courageous act. Specifically, should we not label someone courageous if they take part in a dangerous act for a worthy end, but show no fear? Shelp explained that the person who shows courage is not necessarily fearless or fearful, but rather respects fear, attempts to master fear, and acts despite some level of fear being present. He offered this definition: "Courage is the disposition to voluntarily act, perhaps fearfully, in a dangerous circumstance, where the relevant risks are reasonably appraised, in an effort to obtain or preserve some perceived good for one self or others recognizing that the desired perceived good may not be realized" (p. 354).

Rachman (1984), in his research on fear acquisition, fearlessness, and the effects of trauma, suggested that courage was related to resilience in the face of threat or danger, and perseverance or the capacity to act despite stress and fear. However, he noted the ability for phobic patients to act courageously despite exhibiting extreme fear, and questioned whether or not this represented a *lack* of courage. Rachman discussed both sides of this issue, questioning whether courage was mastery of fear and hence fearlessness, or if courage in its purest form necessitated fear. He concludes by suggesting that training or exposure to the fearful situation may move the person along on a type of continuum, from courage to fearlessness. This seems to suggest that courage required some element of fear, until one arrives at a different state of fearlessness in the face of threat for a worthy purpose, end, or outcome.

More recent reviews and research have focused on possible definitions for courage, although the question of the role of fear remains complex. (For a comprehensive listing of selected scholarly definitions of courage, the reader is referred to p. 191 of Lopez, O'Byrne, and Peterson [2003].) For example, Woodard (2004) developed a courage scale by administering a pool of 108 situation-based questions to 200 participants. Using a cognitive-vulnerability conceptualization of fear (Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985), Woodard defined courage as "the ability to act for a meaningful (noble, good, or practical) cause, despite experiencing the fear associated with perceived threat exceeding the available resources" (p. 174). Using the theoretical base of fear and the definition identified for courage, a courage score was calculated by multiplying the rating of the participant's willingness to act in the situation by the participant's fear rating. This method ensured that fear was a part of a participant's courage, and discounted the participant who was as willing as the fearful participant, but with lessened levels of fear.

Pury, Kowalski, and Spearman (2007) gave open-ended questions on courage (as well as a variety of scale-based questions) to 250 participants. Findings suggested that actions considered courageous compared to the individual's typical actions, or "personal" courage, might alternatively be thought of as fearful courage. On the other hand, actions considered courageous compared with the way most people typically act, or "general" courage, might be consistent with the concept of fearless or confident courage. Such a reference-based conceptualization of courage as a construct perhaps being modified by fear-reducing familiarity, ignorance, or training explains how what is courageous for one person may or may not be courageous for another.

For the purposes of the present research project, we chose to focus on willingness to act in threatening situations for a worthy outcome, without including the added question of fear. We established the following definition of courage: Courage is the voluntary willingness to act, with or without varying levels of fear, in response to a threat to achieve an important, perhaps moral, outcome or goal. This definition acknowledges that fear may or may not be present to any significant degree for an act

to be considered courageous, and makes evident the two generally agreed upon components of courage: threat and worthy or important outcome.

Identifying Types of Courage

As the definition of courage has continued to evolve, nonempirical information on various types of courage has surfaced in the literature. While very early discussions of courage were often tied to physical courage (or courage when the risk is one of physical harm), discussions of moral courage became more prevalent (Walton, 1986). Moral courage represented action when the threat was one of moral or ethical integrity, or perhaps (as suggested by Putman, 1997) when there is an element of social disapproval. Or is this social courage (e.g., Larsen & Giles, 1976)? What about existential courage (e.g., Maddi, 2004)? Putman (1997) also suggested there might be psychological courage, or the courage displayed when one encounters one's own irrational fears and anxieties, or fear of loss of psychological stability. Lopez et al. (2003) suggested that psychological courage is related to vital courage, where the threat is illness and side effects of medical treatment.

It remains unclear how many types of courage exist, and research supporting any suggested type of courage is limited. Part of the difficulty of categorization may stem from the multiple components identified in the definition of courage, including (1) the presence of a threat, and (2) an important or worthy end or outcome. The threat may produce varying degrees of fear, including perhaps none at all, and the worthy goal may have varying degrees of moral importance. When creating a type of courage, should situations be categorized by the threat ("I would run into a burning building. . ." as physical, for example) or by the outcome (". . .to save the lives of trapped and fearful children" as moral, for example)? Traditionally, courage has been cate-

gorized based on the threat (e.g., Putman's psychological courage and most discussions of physical courage), but this remains a slippery aspect of courage categorization. Moral courage, for example, is more often identified in situations where there is a morally desirable *goal*. It is rarely identified for threats to a person's moral well-being or integrity.

Lopez et al. (2003) suggested that there were three types of courage: physical, moral, and vital. However, this categorization or division is based on reviews of previous studies, most of which only examined courage in a specific, predefined context, such as courageous medical patients (Finfgeld, 1999) or decorated bomb disposal operators (Cox, Hallam, O'Connor, & Rachman, 1983). Further support for the physical, moral, and vital division was proposed in a literature review and research study conducted by O'Byrne, Lopez, and Petersen (2000). In this research, five open-ended and five scaled questions were administered to 38 participants. The researchers selected and identified major themes in the responses. However, although some responses could be classified into one of the three proposed categories (e.g., physical; continuing to play soccer despite breaking an arm), others were not so easily categorized (e.g., trying out for cheerleading in front of others). Pury et al. (2007) reported that the most common themes (threats and outcomes) of courage in their sample were threefold: physical, moral, and trying something new. Limited themes of vital courage were reported, although trying something new may be a common, non-pathological example of a threat to the psyche covered by psychological courage (Putman, 1997).

Few research studies have tried to empirically derive types or categorizations of courage. In the process of exploring hardiness, Woodard (2004) used factor analysis to examine responses to the previously discussed scale he developed. Results sug-

gested a four-factor solution: general courage, dealing with groups, acting independently, and a combination of physical and moral situations. However, some items loaded on more than one factor, and as noted previously, the scoring method favored the high fear–high willingness-to-act participant. The purpose of the present research is to add to our current understanding of the various types of courage that may exist by categorizing the *Personal Perspectives Survey* (PPS-31) created by Woodard (2004), reexamine Woodard's (2004) factor structure without the added dimension of fear, and compare this information to the factor structure of the *Woodard Pury Courage Scale* (WPCS-30).

Method

Overview

The present research was conducted in three phases. During Phase 1, participants ($n = 47$) were asked to categorize the type of threat present in each of the 31 items of the PPS-31. The options given for categorizing the threat were as follows: social, physical, or emotional well-being. "Moral" was not provided as an option, because none of the items on the test had a moral threat (although many had moral outcomes). "Vital" was not provided as an option because these items could generally be considered physical threats. We hypothesized that participants would be able to agree ($>75\%$) on the type of threat posed in the PPS-31 items, and that this categorization might help to explain results from Phase 2 and 3 of the study.

During Phase 2, the "willingness to act" scores from the original Woodard (2004) participant sample were reexamined. For Phase 3, a slightly revised version of the scale used in the Woodard (2004) research, theWPCS-30, was then administered to a new participant pool ($n = 162$) for the purpose of repeating the factor analysis. We hypothesized that the factor structure of

the WPCS-30 "willingness to act" items of the new sample would be similar to the "willingness to act" factor structure from Woodard (2004) participant sample. Based on the outcome of this research, we planned to suggest empirically supported types of courage and offer a revised version of the WPCS-30 that has a stable factor structure.

Research Participants

The participants for the first phase of the study were 47 college undergraduates, and the participants for the third phase of the study were 162 college undergraduates. The participants were drawn from a medium-sized public university in the southeast and received course credit for participation. The size of the sample for Phase 2 was based on recommendations made by experts in the field of factor analysis (Goldberg & Velicer, in press). The participants for phase two of this research study were 64% female, with a mean age of 18.3 ($SD = 0.86$; range $= 18–24$). This sample was 11% African American, 85% Caucasian, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Hispanic, and 2% mixed ethnic background.

Measures

The PPS-31 was used in Phase 1 of the present research project. This same measure was used in the Woodard (2004) research, the data from which was reanalyzed in Phase 2 of the present study. For Phase 3, the WPCS-30 (a minimally revised version of the PPS-31), was used. The revisions to the PPS-31 included (1) ensuring the items reflected our current definition of courage, (2) removing one item and replacing one item that may have prevented future validation research, and (3) using positive wording to improve clarity (three items). Both instruments are paper-and-pencil tests composed of 31 or 30 items. Each item presents a threat with an important outcome, and asks the participant to first rate their willingness to act on a

five-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*), and then rate the level of fear they would experience (1 = *little fear*, 5 = *very high fear*).

In the original article (Woodard, 2004), a total courage score was produced by multiplying the willingness to act rating by the fear rating. However, given our revised definition of courage as not necessitating fear, the willingness to act score alone was used in the present research. Note that each item referred to in the text and tables in the present research retains the original item number from Woodard (2004) publication to maintain clarity.

Results

Phase 1: Categorization of the PPS-31 Items

Forty-seven students were asked to categorize the 31 items of the PPS-31 to determine the type of threat and level of agreement of type of threat present in each item. For the 31 items as a group, agreement ranged from 45% to 97%, with an average agreement percentage of 77.8%. Fourteen of the items were categorized as physical threats (average agreement percentage = 81.8%), 11 were categorized as social threats (average agreement percentage = 76.4%), and six items were categorized as emotional threats (average agreement percentage = 71%). Categorization of type of threat (P = physical, S = social, and E = emotional) is indicated in Table 1.

Phase 2: Factor Analysis of the PPS-31

Woodard (2004) collected a participant sample (*n* = 200) to create the PPS-31. In the process of creating this scale, a courage score was calculated by multiplying the level of agreement ("willingness to act") rating by the fear rating, and then summing these scores. Given our revised definition of courage including situations where fear is not present, the original responses from

the Woodard (2004) participant pool were reexamined. The agreement or "willingness to act" total scores (which were not multiplied by the fear rating) had a mean of 111.45, a range of 82 to 141, and a standard deviation of 12.29. These results were explored using a principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The scree plot suggested a four-factor solution, which accounted for 31.4% of the total variance. Seven items did not load >0.40 on any of the four factors and were deleted. The deleted items are listed at the bottom of Table 1. In a second factor analysis on the remaining 24 items, all but one item loaded >0.40 on one of the four factors. No items loaded >0.40 on more than one factor, and this solution accounted for 36.6% of the total variance. The factor loadings for each item are represented in Table 1.

Phase 3: Replication of the Factor Structure With the WCPS-30

The WCPS-30 was administered to 162 research participants. As noted above, the items on this scale are the same as those on the PPS-31 except for some minor wording changes (for consistency with the definition of courage), one item (#60) was deleted, one item was replaced (#55), and all items were positively worded. To replicate the factor structure, the same seven items that were removed after the first factor analysis of the Woodard (2004) data were removed from this data set. The agreement or "willingness to act" total scores had a mean of 108.69, a range of 81 to 134, and a standard deviation of 9.95. The results of a principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation of the agreement or "willingness to act" item responses are contained in Table 2. In this solution, 37% of the variance is accounted for, and three items did not load >.40 on any of the four factors. Three items had factor loadings >0.40 on two factors. Of the 23 items included in the factor analysis, 15 (65%) loaded >0.40 on the same factor as that item's loading in the Woodard (2004) sample

Table 1

Loadings and Threat Type of the 24-Item Solution on Woodard (2004) Willingness to Act Scores

Item	Type	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1-Accept job despite criticism	S	0.60			
32-Ask for raise at work	S	0.55			
82-Foreign country for job	S	0.53			
79-Publish work despite criticism	S	0.53			
9-Help grieving family	E	0.45			
33-Dental surgery to save tooth	P	0.45			
18-Give life in war for country	P		0.72		
83-Lost in woods at night	E		0.66		
86-Torture for political secrets	P		0.62		
45-Risk life for world peace	P		0.59		
46-Social pressure/right thing	S			0.57	
54-Do without for others in need	P			0.57	
67-Endure pain for religion	P			0.54	
106-Hiding Jews during Holocaust	P			0.49	
17-Rejection by others for goal	S			0.49	
60-Confront father about abuse	E			0.45	
77-Act despite bullying as minority	S			0.42	
47-Refuse commanding officer	P			0.41	
103-Burning house for pet	P				0.64
102-Work in ER if needed	E				0.62
56-Confront abusive parent	P				0.48
31-Take part in work conflict	S				0.42
2-Intervene in domestic dispute	P				0.40

P = physical, S = social, E = emotional.
61-Walk across high bridge (Did not load >0.40 on any factor)
Deleted Items:
10-To help a friend, I would make a fool of myself on live TV.
16-I would avoid confronting my own emotional pain even though I could grow as a person (reverse scored).
23-If I were in an unfamiliar place, I could make new friends.
55-I could tell my friends and family I was gay, even if I knew it meant rejection.
63-I would agree to go to a challenging academic program, even if it meant leaving my friends and family far behind.
70-I would take a series of painful inoculations if I knew they would maintain my health.
99-I could endure necessary physical pain, such as giving childbirth without the benefit of medications.

and are marked with an asterisk in Table 2. For these 23 items, the agreement or "willingness to act" total scores had a mean of 82.68, a range of 60 to 102, and a standard deviation of 8.22. A reliability analysis produced a coefficient alpha of 0.683 for the 23-item set, indicating moderate internal consistency. This 23-item set is presented in the Appendix.

Discussion

Categorization of Threat

The results of Phase 1 indicate that many threats can be categorized as physical, social, or emotional, with fair amounts of agreement. Threats categorized as physical or social resulted in the highest levels of agreement, whereas the average level of agreement was somewhat lower than hypothesized for emotional items, at 71%. Despite these overall fair levels of agreement, such basic categorization does not fully explain the factor structure that was found in the Woodard (2004) data set, and confirmed in the more recently collected data set. Some of the factors show a majority of social (Factor 1) or physical (Factor 2) items, but others (Factors 3 and 4) are a mixture of these simple and basic categorizations. This mixture would suggest that although we attempted to restrain the defi-

Table 2
Loadings of the 23-Item Solution on Willingness to Act Scores

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
[*]32-Ask for raise at work	0.59			
[*]77-Act despite bullying as minority	0.56		0.40	
[*]82-Foreign country for job	0.53			
83-Lost in woods at night	0.53			
[*]1-Accept job despite criticism	0.49			
61-Walk across high bridge	0.46			0.42
[*]79-Publish work despite criticism	0.46			
31-Take part in work conflict	0.45			
[*]18-Give life in war for country		0.71		
67-Endure pain for religion		0.66		
[*]86-Torture for political secrets		0.64		
[*]45-Risk life for world peace		0.63		
[*]46-Social pressure/right thing			0.58	
[*]17-Rejection by others for goal			0.52	
[*]54-Do without for others in need			0.47	
[*]106-Hiding Jews during Holocaust			0.42	0.44
[*]47-Refuse commanding officer			0.42	
9-Help grieving family				0.63
[*]2-Intervene in domestic dispute				0.62
[*]103-Burning house for pet				0.47
33-Dental surgery to save tooth	(Did not load >0.40 on any factor)			
56-Confront abusive parent	(Did not load >0.40 on any factor)			
102-Work in ER if needed	(Did not load >0.40 on any factor)			

[*] Loaded >0.40 on the same factor as Woodard (2004).

nition of courage to the type of threat present, focusing only on this element may be insufficient to determine what types of courage exist.

Replication and Explanation of Factor Structure

The factor structure of "willingness to act" responses from the original Woodard (2004) data were generally similar to the factor structure of the participant sample collected for the present research project. Sixty-five percent of the items that loaded on the factors derived from the current sample loaded on the same factors as in the original sample. While far from perfect, this replication suggests that the WPCS-23 (see Appendix) has a relatively stable factor structure across two different, albeit similar participant samples. Further, a reliability analysis indicated moderate internal stability for this measure in its current form.

A review of the items that loaded on the four factors demonstrates that participant's agreement or "willingness to act" responses are dependent on a more complex conceptualization of courage. While the majority of the items that loaded >0.40 on Factor 1 were categorized as "social," all but one of the items having to do with work or employment loaded on this factor in the Woodard (2004) sample, and the remaining work-related item shifted to Factor 1 for the second participant sample. It is unclear why item 83 ("Lost in woods at night"), 77 ("Act despite bullying as minority"), and 61 ("Walk across a high bridge") loaded on this factor in the second participant sample but not on the first. However, the uniform inclusion of all work or employment items strongly suggests that this is a distinct type of courage. In contrast, items on the second factor of the original and more recently collected data set are mainly related to the outcome of sustaining political/patriotic or religious beliefs, or

what might be considered general belief systems. Additionally, this factor includes items where one's life is in danger or distinct physical pain is threatened. However, while all of these items were categorized as "physical" items, other physically dangerous items that were categorized as "physical" did *not* necessarily load >0.40 on this factor. This would suggest that this second type of courage is not what has been suggested as a pervasive physical courage, but may include physical dangers *incurred as a function of one's patriotic or religious belief system*. These two fairly robust factors suggest that courage types are more complex than we had anticipated. They appear to be related to the general life context or domain (such as work) or take into account both threat and outcome, rather than being explained by the most basic categorizations of threat type.

The third factor that was found in both the initial and more recently collected data are remarkably similar, and the items as groupings suggest the courage needed to cope effectively with social–moral pressures (threats and/or outcomes). This and the categorization of threat in these items being both "social" and "physical," lends additional support to the idea that more complex ideas underlie whether or not participants choose to act in certain situations. The fourth and final factor was the least consistent, as two of the items that loaded on this factor in the Woodard (2004) sample did not load >0.40 on any factor in the more recently collected data set. It is of interest, however, that these items generally involve a person acting alone or without the distinct social pressure of a group. These results as a group lend support to the existence of social–moral courage being the ability to act despite general social or cultural pressure (Factor 3), and what we will term independent courage, or the ability to act alone (Factor 4). The concepts presented by the item groupings of factors three and four are remarkably similar to

Factors 2 and 3 identified in Woodard (2004).

Alternatively, the items that create Factor 2 may represent an individual's commitment to society's abstract rules and principles. In a similar vein, Factor 3 may be conceived of as societal threats from or benefits to a specific other person, or concrete applications of those same principles. Taken together, both of these factors appear to represent courageous actions taken in the context of society. An additional alternative interpretation is suggested for Factor 4, particularly in the revised sample. Not only could these items be representative of a person acting alone, but there is also a theme of courageous actions taken in a family context. When the domains created by the factor analysis are understood in this manner—work, society (general principles and specific others), and family—they reflect concepts suggested by other researchers. Specifically, those domains cited by developmental psychologists as representing important roles that young adults need to assume (e.g., McAdams, 2001). Our findings might represent these developmental concerns, with alternate findings possible in older samples.

The various interpretations of these factors provide empirical support for at least three and possibly four different types of courage: (1) work/employment courage, (2) patriotic, religion, or belief-based physical courage, (3) social–moral courage, and (4) independent courage, or alternatively, family-based courage. Although this proposed conceptualization of courage types is certainly limited by the range of situations posed in the original 31 items, even this small grouping provided some opportunity for alternate item sets that would have supported typologies suggested in other research. For example, general physical (threat) courage could have been supported by a grouping of items 33, 86, 67, and 2, or vital courage could have been supported by a grouping of 33, 70, and 99 (in the first

factor analysis conducted). The factors that were found in this research do not support these conceptualizations of courage. However, the factor sets are marked by the inclusion of some items that do not "fit," and the factors did not exactly replicate from one sample to another, demonstrating only moderate stability. This may, however, be partially explained by changes in wording noted in the present text.

The results of our factor analyses suggest groupings based on contexts or goals, and threats or outcomes, rather than solely on the threat. These groupings may be related to meaningful roles in ones life (work, society, family) and perhaps suggest the way in which courage contributes to happiness. Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2005) suggest that there are three pathways to happiness in life: pleasure, engagement, and meaning. However, combined with previous findings, our results suggest that courageous action may be related to only one of them. Taking courageous action does not appear to be related to pleasure: in fact, just the opposite has been found in previous studies (Pury et al., 2007) in which participants overwhelmingly reported courageous actions were expected to lead to high unpleasantness. Likewise, the courageous actions described by our items do not seem especially engaging; a state in which time passes quickly and which are engaged in for their own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Introspection suggests that time passes rather slowly at the dentist, and healthy people do not seek out criticism, ridicule, or pain. Instead, our items seem best characterized as a path to the meaningful life. Although the actions themselves are not pleasant or engaging, the purposes or goals of courageous actions– doing what one thinks is right or necessary, being true to one's self and one's beliefs, and acting for the greater good–are all components of the meaningful life.

Although these results provide information as to empirically supported types of courage, is there a general courage that stands out from more specific types of courage? Support for a general courage would be found in a first factor that accounted for a comparatively large amount of variance, and one that did not have a single, clearly identifiable theme, or contained a complex mixture of situations. Such a factor (using courage scores that were the product of "willingness to act' and fear ratings) was suggested in Woodard (2004). In our current sample, however, the first factor only accounts for a slightly larger portion of the variance as compared to the other factors (14% vs. 8% for Factors 2 and 3, and 6% for Factor 4). Also, although the first factor also contains three items that are unrelated to the work theme, the majority of items were clearly employment related. Therefore, the evidence for a general courage is not strong, but the inclusion of unrelated items in the first factor remains difficult to explain.

Conclusions and Future Research

The present research has expanded our understanding of courage and offers a refined version of a paper-and-pencil measure of this construct with a replicated, relatively stable factor structure. In addition to offering empirical support for four types of courage, results suggest that these types of courage are complex (threat and/or outcome based), life-domain, or context-oriented conceptualizations. Support for a general, underlying courage is limited. Future research could take many directions, including expanding upon these findings by carefully validating the WPCS-23 with *factor-represented* groups or situations, expanding the responses of persons in differing cultures or age groupings, or altering the time frame or other aspects of the proposed threatening situation. Researchers may also want to examine the effects of time and experience on a person's willingness to act in threatening yet important situations, or perhaps explore the meaning of different combinations of fear and willingness to act.

For example, do certain participants' responses generally fall into one of the four quadrants of a fear/willingness to act axis? Is there fearful courage and fearless courage? Or is there even a relationship between fear and willingness to act?

Continued research in these areas will foster a better understanding of this complex virtue. The value of identifying courage is apparent, as it has clear application to many areas, including those familiar to the consulting psychologist. In a military, police, or even a corporate setting for example, there is a clear advantage to being able to identify people who are willing to act despite a threat for a worthy outcome. This could augment selection procedures, or identify members of an organization that might be well suited to certain assignments or tasks. Perhaps this is a desired virtue to consider in selecting or improving the skills of an effective leader, or an area to be assessed and then targeted for clients with executive coaches. Further, on a more personal or individual level, it may be desirable to identify people who are, or who are becoming courageously engaged simply in living.

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."
Anais Nin

References

Beck, A. T., Emery, G., & Greenberg, R. L. (1985). *Anxiety disorders and phobias: A cognitive perspective.* New York: Basic Books.

Cox, D., Hallam, R., O'Connor, K., & Rachman, S. (1983). An experimental analysis of fearlessness and courage. *British Journal of Psychology, 74,* 107–117.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* New York: Harper Collins.

Finfgeld, D. L. (1999). Courage as a process of pushing beyond the struggle. *Qualitative Health Research, 9,* 803–814.

Goldberg, L. R., & Velicer, W. F. (in press). Principles of exploratory factor analysis. In S. Strack (Ed.), *Differentiating normal and abnormal personality* (2nd ed). New York: Springer.

Larsen, K. S., & Giles, H. (1976). Survival or courage as human motivation: Development

of an attitude scale. *Psychological Reports, 39,* 299–302.

Lopez, S. J., O'Byrne, K. K., & Peterson, S. (2003). Profiling courage. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measures* (pp. 185–197). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Maddi, S. R. (2004). Hardiness: An operationalization of existential courage. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 44,* 279–298.

McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology, 5,* 100–122.

O'Byrne, K. K., Lopez, S. J., & Petersen, S. (2000, August). Building a theory of courage: A precursor to change? Paper presented at the 108th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.

Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 6,* 25–41.

Plato (1961). *Laches* (B. Jowett, Trans.). In E. Hamilton & H. Cairns (Eds.), *The collected dialogues of Plato, including the letters* (pp. 123–144). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Pury, C. L. S., Kowalski, R. M., & Spearman, J. (2007). *Distinctions between general and personal courage. Journal of Positive Psychology, 2,* 99–114.

Putman, D. (1997). Psychological courage. *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology, 4,* 1–11.

Rachman, S. J. (1984). Fear and courage. *Behavior Therapy, 15,* 109–120.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Positive psychology, positive prevention, and positive therapy. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 3–9). New York: Oxford University Press.

Shelp, E. E. (1984). Courage: A neglected virtue in the patient—physician relationship. *Social Science and Medicine, 18,* 351–360.

Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of positive psychology.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Walton, D. (1986). *Courage: A philosophical investigation.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Woodard, C. R. (2004). Hardiness and the concept of courage. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 56,* 173–185.

<center>Appendix</center>

<center>WPCS-23</center>

<center>Developed by C. Woodard, PhD, and C. Pury, PhD</center>

<center>Instructions:</center>

Listed below are some situations for you to consider. Once you have read an item, please circle a number to indicate your level of agreement with that item (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Next, circle the number to indicate the level of fear you would feel in that situation (1 = Little Fear, 2 = Mild Fear, 3 = Moderate Fear, 4 = Strong Fear, 5 = Very High Fear).

	Disagree/Agree					How much fear?				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Little Fear	Mild Fear	Moderate Fear	Strong Fear	Very High Fear
1) I would accept an important project at my place of employment even though it would bring intense public criticism and publicity.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2) If it looked like someone would get badly hurt, I would intervene directly in a dangerous domestic dispute.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3) I could approach someone whose family members had just been killed, knowing they were feeling overwhelming grief.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4) I would risk rejection by important others for a chance at achieving my life goals.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5) If called upon during times of national emergency, I would give my life for my country.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

<center>*Appendix Continues*</center>

	Disagree/Agree					How much fear?				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Little Fear	Mild Fear	Moderate Fear	Strong Fear	Very High Fear
6) I am able to participate in intense conflict in a work environment for the right cause.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7) I would talk to my supervisor about a raise if I really needed one.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8) I would go to the dentist and have painful surgery if it meant saving a tooth.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9) I would risk my life if it meant lasting world peace.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10) Intense social pressure would not stop me from doing the right thing.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11) I would refuse the order of a commanding officer if it meant hurting someone needlessly.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12) I could do without the absolute necessities of life if there were others in greater need.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13) I would confront a parent abusing his or her child in public.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14) I would walk across a dangerously high bridge to continue on an important journey.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15) I would endure physical pain for my religious or moral beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	Disagree/Agree					How much fear?				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Little Fear	Mild Fear	Moderate Fear	Strong Fear	Very High Fear
16) I would go where I wanted to go and do what I wanted to do, even though I might be bullied as an ethnic minority.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17) I would open myself to professional criticism by publishing my work.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18) I could move to a foreign country to have the perfect job.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19) I could keep my wits about me if I were lost in the woods at night.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20) I would undergo physical pain and torture rather than tell political secrets.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21) I could work under the stress of an emergency room if needed.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22) I would return into a burning building to save a family pet I loved dearly.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23) I would have hidden Jewish friends during the time of the Holocaust.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5