

# Courage and Strength



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## Purpose

To understand that we have different strengths and weaknesses and that strengths are not always obvious.

To understand the concept of courage and how it differs from dangerous risk taking.

## Entrance of Pupils

*A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of Courage and Strength for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)*

## Introduction

Who would you say is the strongest person in your class? Lots of people may claim to be, but is it true and what might we mean by strength?

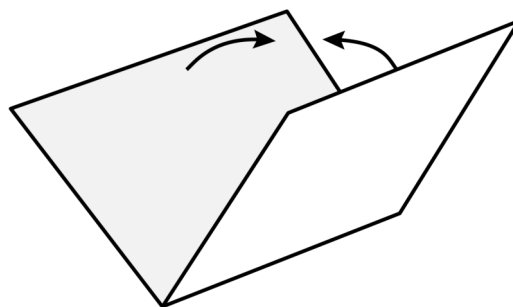
Try this strength test.

Take a piece of A4 paper

Fold it in half and then half again four more times until it has been folded 5 times.

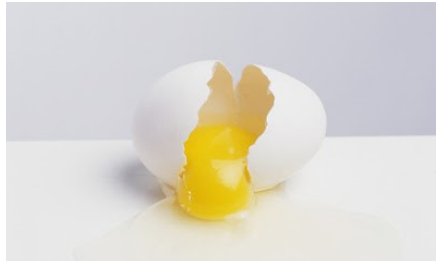
Now try ripping it up.

You can't? .....But it's only a piece of paper!



## Watch this short film—'The Great Raw Egg Experiment'

Here we have a raw egg. It has not been boiled or tampered with in any way. We know that eggs are fragile—easily broken. Just think about the saying 'it's like walking on egg shells' meaning we have to tread so very delicately and carefully because egg shells are so easily broken.....OR ARE THEY?

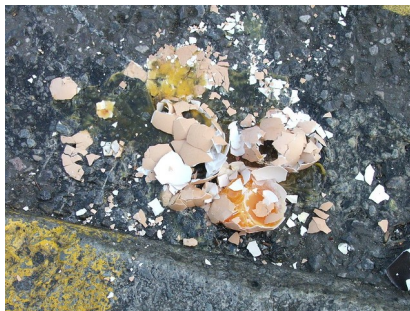


Try this experiment. If you cup your hands together with your fingers interlaced and then ask someone to place an egg END to END into your cupped hands, you will find that no matter how hard you apply pressure, the egg simply wont crack!



Who would have thought it! An egg shell actually has a 'hidden' strength built into it's structure when held in this manner.

And just to prove that it is really a raw egg, if you then turn the egg around 90 degrees and try to crush it now—you will find that you get a very different outcome!!!

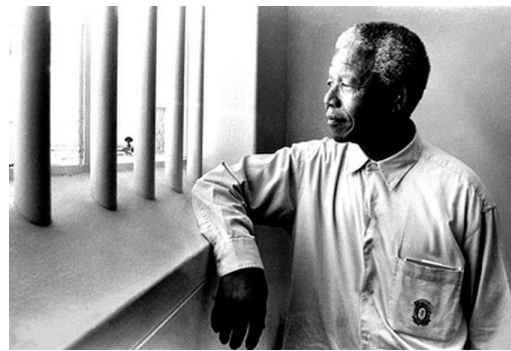


## **Is Strength Always Physical?**

You may have watched ‘Britain’s Strongest Man’ or ‘Gladiators’ or other similar shows of physical strength,, but what about strength of character?

Think of people, famous or not known, that endure all types of hardship without complaint. Many people quietly keep going throughout illness, bereavement, poverty, injustice, war and natural disasters. Would we be that strong in their situation?

We can also think of the strength of people who stand up for what they believe in. This might be as small as refusing to join in with friends if you don’t agree with what they are doing or as mighty as enduring 27 years in prison like Nelson Mandela for fighting for human rights.



Perhaps we need to look and think more deeply about what is STRENGTH?

## **What is Courage?**

One definition of courage is ‘the ability to do something that frightens you or could be dangerous—being brave when facing a difficulty.’

This is such an important characteristic because without it, we would miss out on so many opportunities.

Many people have fears, which, when extreme could even be called PHOBIAS.



Some people are afraid of heights, but how sad if this makes you miss out on fabulous views



Others might be afraid of flying and miss out on seeing their relatives who live abroad.

Courage, is the ability to summon up the strength to either overcome the fear or to take part in the activity **DESPITE** the fear.

### **What Courage is NOT**

Courage is not the same as dangerous risk taking. In fact it is quite the opposite.

For example– imagine that it's winter and a local reservoir is frozen over. Some might believe that it takes courage to step out onto the ice to see whether it cracks or not. This is **NOT** bravery, it is fool hardiness. The real courage in this situation is to speak out against the idea and refuse to take part.

In the same way, playing 'chicken' by running across a busy road is stupidity which not only endangers yourself, but also risks the life of road users.

### **Challenging Yourself**

Think about what you are afraid of. It might be something as simple as speaking up in class. How could you work on managing that fear and developing a sense of courage?



## Strength and Courage

It takes strength to be firm, it takes courage to be gentle.  
It takes strength to conquer, it takes courage to surrender.  
It takes strength to be certain, it takes courage to have doubt.  
It takes strength to fit in, it takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to feel a friend's pain, it takes courage to feel your own pain.  
It takes strength to endure abuse, it takes courage to stop it.  
It takes strength to stand alone, it takes courage to lean on another.  
It takes strength to love, it takes courage to be loved.

It takes strength to survive, it takes courage to live.

Anonymous



## The Bible Says

### David and Goliath

The Philistine army had gathered for war against Israel. The two armies faced each other, camped for battle on opposite sides of a steep valley.

A Philistine giant measuring over nine feet tall and wearing **full armour** came out each day for forty days, mocking and challenging the Israelites to fight. His name was Goliath. Saul, the King of Israel, and the whole army were terrified of him and no one dared to take on the challenge.

One day **David**, the youngest son of Jesse, was sent to the battle lines by his father to bring back news of his brothers. David was just a young teenager at the time. While there, David heard Goliath shouting his daily defiance, and he saw the great fear stirred within the men of Israel. David responded, "Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?"

So David volunteered to fight Goliath. It took some persuasion, but King Saul finally agreed to let David oppose the giant. Dressed in his simple tunic, carrying his shepherd's staff, sling, and a pouch full of stones, David approached Goliath. The giant cursed at him, hurling threats and insults.

David said to the Goliath:

"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the **God of the armies of Israel**, whom you have defied ... today I will give the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air ... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel ... it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:45-47)



As Goliath moved in for the kill, David reached into his bag and slung one of his stones at Goliath's head. It found a gap in the armour and sank into the giant's forehead. He fell face down on the ground. David then took Goliath's sword, killed him and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. The Israelites pursued, chasing and killing them and plundering their camp. Samuel 17 1—58



### **Let's Pray**

Dear Lord

**Give us the ability to recognise true strength and be able to be strong in times of difficulty.**

**Amen**

### **Putting It Into Practice**

**Research the story of Nelson Mandela. In groups, look at:**

- A. His early struggles against Apartheid**
- B. His time in prison**
- C. His work as a world wide leader after his release.**

### **Exit of Pupils**

*A thought provoking slideshow of the key issues raised in the assembly about the theme of Courage and Strength for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)*



## Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

### Day 2

Dear God

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change

The courage to change the things I can

And the wisdom to know the difference,

Amen

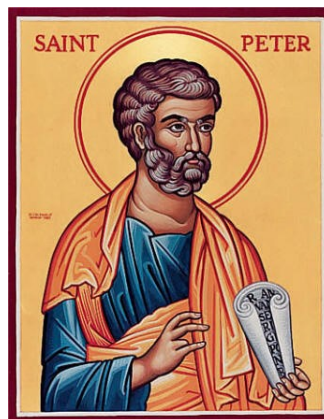
Choose either the word 'Courage' or the word strength and either write an acrostic poem or compose a rap to show your understanding of that characteristic.

### Day 3

Dear God

When we hear the story of St Peter, we hear about his courage but also about the impetuous and sometimes cowardly things that he did. Despite this You called him Your 'Rock' on whom You built the Church. Let us learn from St Peter's example.

Amen



### Debate

In your class, debate the difference between courage and risk taking. Where does one start and the other end?



## Day 4

Dear God

Help me to remember that You are by my side and if I fall at times, You will be there to carry me.

Amen

Study the photo of the protester at Tiananmen Square and discuss what you think about it.



## Day 5

Dear God

The story of David and Goliath reminds us that real strength is not the same as physical brawn and that bullies can be defeated. Help us to have the strength and courage to come to the aid of those less strong than ourselves

Amen

Read the full story of David and Goliath from the Old Testament Bible Samuel 17: 1-58. You will find a description of David and Goliath and how they were dressed and equipped for battle. Draw a picture from this description and create a headline that shows strength is not about size or equipment.

