

Teddy's Tips on Leadership

“There were all kinds of things I was afraid of at first, ranging from grizzly bears to mean horses and gun fighters; but by acting as if I was not afraid I gradually ceased to be afraid.”

Theodore Roosevelt

Courage – the quality of being brave. Teddy Roosevelt was brave. He had courage. He wasn't born with it, none of us are. His life was shaped by key events that helped him develop courage.

Growing up in New York City as a child weakened by asthma and wearing spectacles, he was teased by other children and often called “Four-eyes.” His family affectionately called him “Teedy,” not Theodore or even Teddy, making matters even more difficult on the street. At an early age he began developing courage to stand his ground in the neighborhoods of New York.

At the age of 24 Teddy went west to become a Rancher. He settled in what were then the Dakota territories, arriving in his Cowboy clothes custom-tailored for him by Brooks Brothers and wearing his spectacles. He was immediately challenged to “prove himself” in the manly art of fighting and was called “Four-eyes” and “City Dude.” Once again he mustered up the courage to face these rough, tough cowpokes, many of them out west to avoid the law. He took boxing while at Harvard, and never lost a fight out west.

As a Lt. Colonel leading the Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War in 1898, Teddy again drew on that courage to lead his men up Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill, driving the Spanish out of Cuba. It took courage to charge up those hills, dodging the Spanish bullets. He was first up those hills, shouting back at his men, “Follow me!”

Teddy became President in 1901 upon the assassination of President McKinley. Now he was no longer dealing with children in the streets, cowpokes in the West, or soldiers at the crest of a hill. Now he had to deal with Kings, Sultans, Emperors, Congress, Governors, Labor leaders, and Capitalists. It took courage to stick to his agenda, to stand by his principles. Fear is always present when charting the course of a country, but he learned early in his life to act as if he was not afraid.

What causes you to be afraid?

- Is it fear of failure?
- Or perhaps fear of success?
- Is it fear of rejection?
- Fear of picking up the telephone and making calls to potential clients or customers?
- Fear of asking for an advance, for a loan, for a line of credit?
- Fear of not having the right answer at your fingertips during a meeting with your customer?

Whatever it is that causes you to be afraid, follow Teddy's advice. Act as if you're not afraid and you too will gradually cease to be afraid.

David Markovitz Brings Teddy Roosevelt Back to Life for You. David conducts keynote presentations as Teddy and conducts breakout workshops as David. Learn more about his programs at www.TeddyLeads.com.

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