

Pass It On®... Courage to Do

In 1841, a physically imposing, twenty-three year-old Frederick Douglass leaned against the rail of a ferry headed for Nantucket. He contemplated the wake widening out behind him and second-guessed his decision to travel after 3 years of trying to remain inconspicuous as a runaway. But he had been invited by a group of abolitionists to attend a rally on Nantucket Island. The Fugitive Slave Act was still in force and Frederick risked being captured and a sure return to slavery by making the trip. The courage it took to take such a journey must have been summoned from deep within his soul.

Little did Frederick Douglass know; this was the beginning of his courageous and history-altering journey. He would go on to help shape the opinions and the words of Abraham Lincoln.

Born with Spina Bifida, 12-year-old Mitchell couldn't walk. He longed to be with his scout troop in the outdoors but was afraid to impose on the others who would have to somehow get him to camp. When the time arrived to trek to a spot in the high desert, the scoutmaster asked the other boys how they felt about Mitchell. To a boy, they all agreed that he should go. They built a special litter of Aspen poles and carried Mitchell the 3 miles up a rugged trail. It took a lot of courage for the first boy to raise a hand in support, and courage by the others to join in. It became the journey of a lifetime for each boy as they paired off and took turns carrying Mitchell up the mountain.

There are times in each of our lives that will require us to carry more than our fair share of weight, to take courage. And times when we will certainly shrink from the call. Kate, a gregarious teenage girl was reluctant to speak up to passing comments about her race. Though made casually, and by friends, they were still hurtful. Kate could not find the courage to confront her friends until her senior year. At a community gathering to promote unity, she was asked to speak. "When we are quick to judge, or when we make false assumptions about any being, we are depriving them the chance to prove themselves as good people and from believing that there is a place where they belong," she said pushing through her fears. "This country is

built on 'Trust in God' and I believe that in the eyes of God, all are equal and equally loved." There was silence as this brave girl stood and looked out at the hundreds of eyes watching her. And then, applause. Sometimes courage is as simple as saying the right thing, at the right time.

For Frederick Douglass, Kate, and a group of young boys, they each acted on something bigger than themselves, something defined as courage—a word that moves us ahead into unknown waters while leaving a wake behind much bigger than ourselves.

Courage...PassItOn.com

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