



**KICK-START YOUR
COURAGE**

MaArtial®

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BUILDING COURAGE



OUR JOURNEY

MaArtial was founded by an international group of coaches, martial artists, and authors with a single common goal: to help people seeking to make a change in their lives discover and cultivate the inner courage that would allow them to do so.

As instructors with 25+ years of experience, we know that the true benefit of martial arts is not in training the body, but rather the mind. We've personally seen the results manifest in students who have come to our classes with low self-esteem and walked away with an increased sense of self-confidence.

Our mission is to help you gain the same kind of self-confidence to face everyday challenges as we built in our own clients. And instead of rigorous training, this can be accomplished through short, easy-to-practice mental exercises designed to be incorporated into your day-to-day life.



OUR EXPERTS AND PHILOSOPHY

We strive to awaken the inner courage within people, the untapped potential that motivates them to take action, increase their confidence, and to face life's obstacles in the modern age.

Our principles and philosophies come from sources passed down through the generations, and include Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, Miyamoto Musashi's *The Book of Five Rings*, Plutarch's *On Sparta*, and many more.

These teachings, which provide the core strategies for modern martial arts, can also be adapted into mental exercises including meditation, visualization, breathing, and other techniques designed to aid one in the quest for inner mastery.

The exercises contained in this book are not one-off techniques but designed to be practiced, mastered, and ultimately incorporated into one's daily life.



WHY COURAGE

Imagine the ancient classes that are revered and in modern culture: Samurai protectors, Spartan warriors, Shaolin monks, Viking crusaders. They all share one common trait: *courage*.

In fact, the virtue of courage is explicitly defined in each of their code of conduct, whether in the Bushido Code, the 10 Laws of Shaolin, or other material passed down through generations.

In today's world, courage is often mistaken for blind aggression, for leaping into battle without thinking about the consequences. But the ancients knew that courage was not blind, but rather a carefully calculated decision that involved acting with calm and confidence.

The playing field may have changed over the years, but the mental approach to handling life's challenges remains the same. We've developed our formula for building courage based on wisdom passed down through generations, distilled into exercises that can be practiced by anyone.



OUR UNIQUE COURAGE-BUILDING FORMULA

The essential formula for building courage can be broken down into three distinct steps. These steps both reflect the long-term journey of building courage over a lifetime, as well as the short-term implementation of courage in a single moment.

Our unique formula requires no prerequisite knowledge or physical or mental acumen. To practice the exercises contained in this book and develop your own sense of increased courage and confidence, you only need a desire to bring positive change into your life.

1. **Calm.** We cannot act with confidence if we are overcome with emotion. By first establishing a foundation of calmness, we can proceed knowing that our mind is in the right place to make decisions and act upon them. Breathing and meditation exercises can help us calm down in daily life, or in high-pressure situations when we need to proceed with courage.

2. **Concentrate.** We must focus on the situation at hand to discover the correct course of action. Utilizing mindfulness techniques can help us focus on the present moment, and fully concentrate on the tasks at hand and decisions that need to be made.
3. **Act.** Once we have calmly decided on the best course of action, it's time to act on that decision. Self-motivational practices such as mantras can inspire us to act once we know the right thing to do.

This formula represents the genesis of courage over time, and within any given moment. Whatever challenge or obstacle is at hand, if you approach it using these three steps, you will approach it with true courage.

Further Practice

The exercises described in this handbook are condensed forms of the step-by-step techniques contained in our online courage-building course, which contains more than one-hour of hand-illustrated animation to help guide you through the process.

For a more comprehensive learning experience, which includes narration and visuals designed specifically to walk you through each exercise, take our online course at www.maartial.com.

Thank you for reading, and congratulations on taking the first step towards becoming a courageous you.

Please Note: This preview copy of our book features a shortened version of just 1 of the 10 exercises contained in the full version. To purchase the full book, please visit: www.maartial.com.

PAUSE. BREATHE. RESPOND

"Water is fluid, soft, and yielding. But water will wear away rock, which is rigid and cannot yield."

- Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

In the face of uncertainty or chaos, take a moment to remind yourself of the correct course of action to take to proceed with courage.

A mantra can be a great way to underscore your mentality and remind yourself what you want to achieve.

Reciting "be like water" or "go with the flow" when faced with changes or challenges will remind yourself of what your ultimate goal is when it comes to adapting to the situations that life might throw at you.

The U.S. Marines use something similar: for decades, their motto has been "Improvise. Adapt. Overcome." *Semper Gumby*, a play on *semper flexibilis* (always be flexible) is another unofficial motto commonly used throughout the U.S. military.

In the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu frequently reminds us to consider the path and properties of water while responding to particular situations. How would water respond to the obstacles it comes into contact with? What effect would water have on its environment?

Imagine a narrow stream of water making its way down a gentle slope. The water reaches a large rock that completely blocks its path. It slowly builds up into a larger pool. Soon, the water will find its own way around or over the rock through a path of least resistance.

This metaphor leads into our own mantra for acting with courage:

Pause. Breathe. Respond.



HOW TO PRACTICE THIS MANTRA

When faced with a sudden obstacle or challenge, take a moment to think before you react and repeat to yourself:

“Pause. Breathe. Respond.”

1. **Pause.** Before you react to any situation, force yourself to pause and consider the best course of action. As the water stops when it reaches the rock, so should you when you encounter change or an obstacle.
2. **Breathe.** While paused, take a moment to focus on your breathing. A single inhalation and exhalation is enough. As you breathe, picture the water slowly building up in front of the rock.
3. **Respond.** Note the difference between a response and a reaction; a reaction is often involuntary, while a response is carefully considered. After pausing to consider your options, respond in the manner that best suits your needs in the same way the water finds a path around the rock.

Say the mantra “pause, breathe, respond” to yourself to remind yourself of your action plan and have it stored to recall when needed.

Picture the stream of water and how it approaches the rock, and imagine your response to change flowing in the same natural manner.

BENEFITS OF THIS MANTRA

This mantra can be used as an action plan whenever coming into contact with an obstacle, a change, or an unexpected event.

In these instances, you may feel like you are forced to react quickly; instead, take a moment to pause, breathe, and respond and you will find that your decision-making can dramatically improve.

Instead of reacting with anger or aggression when someone cuts you off in traffic, remind yourself to “pause, breathe, and respond” and you will see things with a clearer mind.

Before you send an email in response to a particularly upsetting news, take a moment to pause, breathe, and respond with the confidence that you are acting from the right mindset.

Repeating this mantra to yourself often will allow you to implement it in difficult or distressing situations, when it is most needed.



“**YOU** ALREADY ARE WHAT
YOU WANT TO **BECOME**”

Zen proverb

If the destination has no meaning, then the journey has no value.

Try to practice the exercises contained in this guide daily in order to build a habit. This will accomplish two goals: to take a moment out of everyday to focus on yourself and your inner development, and ensure that you can call upon each exercise when most needed.

A few minutes of practice every day can become an exercise that will grow into long-term courage to face the future.

It is important to note down those points that are of value to you, so that you can continue to practice them and instill them as habits, which you can access quickly when needed. Courage is a life-long journey providing value and insights into knowing who you are and how to achieve your dreams.

The exercise described in this handbook is an abbreviated form of the step-by-step techniques contained in our online courage-building course, which contains more than one-hour of hand-illustrated animation to help guide you through the process.

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