

Quiet Courage October, 2026 Rev. Amy Kindred

Anyone can have boastful courage. “Look what I did!”

However, for me, it’s the understated occasions whereby one remains strong in one’s skin and tone of voice that’s powerful. These are the times when “quiet courage” far surpasses “boastful courage.”

For example, consider occasions when someone has said something that hurt you deeply. While one’s first response might be to lash out, a more meaningful and maybe lasting difference is to maintain calm composure and respond in a calculated manner.

For example, a seminary president once said to me, “You don’t belong here. Bisexual people need to go away.”

On another occasion, a NASA scientist said to me, a clergy person, “No minister should make as much money as a doctor.”

In both scenarios, I could very easily belittle the person for making rude and harmful statements and ban them from further communication. I have to admit, that is my first impulse. And yet, if I really am committed to fighting injustice (Upholding justice is one of our UU values, right?) then, I need to pause to remind myself that when a person makes a hurtful remark, intentionally or not, my self-worth must remain untouched.

In the Upanishads, sacred scripture from the Hindu tradition, quiet courage is not defined as loud bravery or aggression but as Abhaya (absolute fearlessness) and Dhariya (steadfast patience). This deep well of inner strength can be nurtured. Self-realization and a peaceful heart can be cultivated in moments of silence, in times of prayer, meditation or during periods of reflection. One doesn’t have to remain completely quiet or without a response, when provoked, but it is important to prepare yourself and to remind yourself that you have self-worth before you speak.

Regarding courage, Audre Lorde wrote, “Next time, ask: What's the worst that will happen? Then push yourself a little further than you dare. Once you start to speak, people will yell at you. They will interrupt you, put you down and suggest it's personal. And the world won't end. And the speaking will get easier and easier. And you will find you have fallen in love with your own vision, which you may never have realized you had. And you will lose some friends and lovers, and realize you don't miss them. And new ones will find you and cherish you. ... And at last you'll know with surpassing certainty that only one thing is more frightening than speaking your truth. And that is not speaking.”

October is LGBTQ History month. Queer doesn't mean to exist in an invisible bubble. It means, "You be you; I'll be me." We'll create a community filled with human diversity!!"