

## **The Arena of the Heart**

We are engaging in social distancing, staying home for the purpose of slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our normal day-to-day routines have been interrupted and we face many uncertainties. Now is a good time to remember that we can continue to develop robust internal resources that can be used to manage the uncertainty, fear and anxiety that may arise. These are normal emotions in the face of uncertainty, and are nothing to be ashamed of and are not a sign of weakness. “Only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness will we discover the infinite power of light,” (Brene Brown). When we are brave enough to acknowledge our fears and uncomfortable feelings alone and together we will grow stronger.

The following is from a speech given by Theodore Roosevelt in 1910: “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

When we consider our own heart is the arena, our own feelings are there with us and we face them with courage and resilience, we have the chance to dare greatly in this worthy cause. In addition to the fear and uncertainty that may be in the arena, we will also be awake to the powers of joy, adaptability and resilience. We must be awake and willing to take it all in, the joy and the pain and everything in between. And how we learn to be in the arena in these days will prepare us for daring greatly into the future. “Daring greatly is being brave and afraid every minute of the day at the same time.” (Brene Brown).

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