

Fearless

Experience, Human Nature



“ Fearless” and “ courageous”; two common words that have been used to describe soldiers for centuries. There is, however, a big difference between being courageous and being fearless. Courage is one of the best terms used to describe a soldier: that no matter how hard the circumstances are and how scared he/she is, they keep pressing on. It is truly amazing how courageous these men and women are. Humans were made to fear, it is humanly impossible to be without fear, there is no soldier that is truly “ fearless”.

Soldiers at war often put up a front that they are unafraid, the reason they put up this front is to be trusted by fellow soldiers, to fit into society's view of a soldier and to maintain their sanity. The world often perceives fear as a sign of weakness. The word fear is defined as a “ feeling of anxiety or agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, evil, or pain. Extreme fear is terror which applies to an overwhelming often paralyzing fear” (Fear”). In the heat of battle, a soldier's senses are heightened to the danger that surrounds him.

Any civilian in these circumstances would choose to run and hide or escape, but the soldier has been trained not to selfishly retreat, but to heed orders and advance. He/she may know his/her life is in grave danger, yet for the sake of courage and duty to his/her country he continues on. The courage that a soldier surrounds themselves with is the quality of spirit which enables one to face danger or pain without showing fear. If a soldier falters he or she may be dismissed but will certainly not be trusted by his/her fellow soldiers.

Each soldier desires trust, loyalty, and respect and each of their lives depend on it. The soldier makes a choice to lay his or her individual fears and <https://assignbuster.com/fearless/>

emotions aside to be courageous. In the short story, "The Things They Carried", by Tim O'Brien, not only were the physical items that they carried described but also the emotional burdens they carried. "They carried shameful memories. They carried the common secret of cowardice barely restrained, the instinct to run or freeze or hide. They carried their reputations.

They carried the soldier's greatest fear, which was the fear of blushing" (O'Brien). Soldiers care about what fellow soldiers think of them. They need to be trusted. The face of fearlessness is formed to avoid being made a coward or being put to shame, and to keep a good reputation. Their fellow soldiers are all they have at war. In general, there is a disconnect between society's view on war and a soldier's view on war. Citizens are easily influenced and swayed by different means of communication in society.

Society often portrays war and soldiers to be something that they are not: fearless. According to platoon leader, Paul Stanley, "soldiers realize the cost and effort required to be willing to fight and what it means to be in life or death situations, society thinks they understand but they don't" (Paul Stanley). He said his view is totally different than that of an everyday citizen. Lieutenant Stanley also commented on society's negative view of soldiers; "Society believes soldiers are more like weapons instead of people. Sometimes society depicts soldiers in a negative light, as being merciless fighting machines, which is not the case either. Lieutenant Stanley said that his view of his country was better after war; he appreciates life more and is a better person. How society depicts soldiers is what we believe a soldier to be, which often means supernatural beings or war machines. In "The Things

They Carried”, first Lieutenant Jimmy Cross, had gotten sidetracked during battle and because of it one of his men was killed.

From then on Jimmy chose to put all thoughts outside of war aside in hopes that it would never occur again. He wouldn't show his emotion towards anything; in other words, he would act fearless (O'Brien 232-239). The feelings and emotions are still there, they are just hidden behind a wall, making it easier to keep him and others safe. Soldiers often need to block out any emotion and images to maintain their sanity. A first lieutenant in the Desert Storm War, Paul Stanley said “ especially as an officer, you can't act scared.

Everyone looks to you, so you have to be strong for them. ” Soldiers have to have confidence in themselves and the team around them and also trust that they received the proper training. They learn to subdue their fear and cope with emotion. A common disorder that soldiers are diagnosed with after war because of their suppression of any emotional burdens is called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder occurs when a person experiences a severe trauma or life threatening event.

If soldiers were fearless, they wouldn't be affected by this disorder. Soldiers are heroes, courageous, noble, self-sacrificing, and brave and so much more, but they are still human, they are not fearless. The aspect of being fearless plays a large role in keeping a soldier alive and sane. Their fearless attitude is the way soldiers are able to fit into society's view of a soldier, be trusted by their team, and maintain their sanity.