

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

Drawing on Courage

Know Your Values

Fear is the force that deters acts of courage. Yet, there is an opposing force that keeps pushing you forward: Your values. What matters to you might be external—like a vision that inspires you or a cause that is meaningful to you, aka your purpose. Or it might be internal—a desire to stay true to your convictions, or simply do the right thing, aka your values.

Finding the courage to stand up for what you value is especially consequential in the organizations and communities you belong to. When you are considering going against a given worldview, a popular or accepted norm, or the majority opinion, your actions are often thwarted by the fear of becoming an outsider. When it comes to acting with courage within an established system, we often refrain because fear enlists its good friends reason and comfort. To facilitate change, you don't necessarily have to stand up in big ways without fail. Instead, you can stand up in small ways over and over again (that is what everyday courage is all about). How do you do it?

One reason why fear wins in this tussle is that our purpose or values have become fuzzy or unclear. Building a reflective practice to periodically examine your values can help bring fuzzy values into focus and create a path forward. Then, you can advocate for change and speak up.

This activity from *Drawing on Courage* by Ashish Goel is a tool to both clarify your values (to yourself) and advocate for (to your community, company or organization) what you stand for. It has been adapted for use in both high school and higher education classrooms.

Drawing on Courage, copyright © 2022 by The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University on behalf of Hasso Plattner Institute of Design. Published in the United States by Ten Speed Press, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

Activity: Write an Internal Op-Ed

LEARNING GOAL

To help learners understand their values so they can stand up for what they believe in. To help them develop self-awareness, courage in the face of fear or uncertainty, and the agency to spark change.

WHERE TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

Classrooms | Virtual learning sessions (Zoom, etc.) | Workshops

MATERIALS

Paper | Writing instrument

FORMAT

Individual work, with opportunity for individual or paired reflection

INSTRUCTIONS

An op-ed, which stands for “opposite the editorial page,” is a piece of opinion writing from a guest author that appears in a newspaper or magazine. An op-ed is often written to shed light on a contrary point of view, deliver a hot-take, or advocate for change.

Consider what your own op-ed might be. It doesn't have to be a letter to a newspaper (and you don't have to submit it). It can be a thoughtful email that you share with your peers, a handout for a discussion group, a call for action in your community, or a blog post about something you feel deserves more attention.

Even if it doesn't get published, writing an op-ed clarifies what you stand for, shows what that might mean, and helps you take a stand or spark a conversation.

First, consider the audience, community, or group in which you want to spark a change. For example: You could be a student trying to get the dorms to adopt recycling OR A scientist whose idea runs counter to the prevailing theories OR A recruiter who cares about diversity working in a company that doesn't hire for diversity OR A resident who cares about pedestrian walkways in their neighborhood. Reflect on what you stand for and why it matters to you.

STRONG OPINIONS, DEEPLY FELT



ALRIGHT FOLKS, LET'S TELL PEOPLE WHAT MATTERS! SPEAK TO THEM! CHALLENGE THEM! WHAT DO WE WRITE ABOUT?

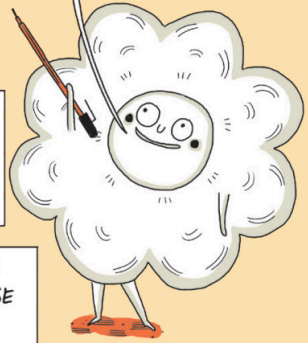
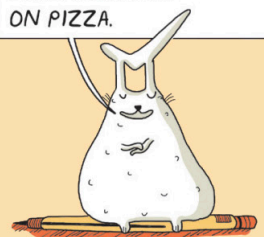
WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT WHO WOULD WIN IN A CARBON FOOT-PRINT FIGHT BETWEEN ALMOND AND HAZELNUT MILKS.

AH, BUT IT SHOULD BE SOMETHING WITH A WORTHY PURPOSE...



"HOW SPORKS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!" HOW'S THAT FOR AN OP-ED?

I COULD PUT FORTH A VERY STRONG DEFENSE FOR PINEAPPLE ON PIZZA.



HOW ABOUT THE UNBEARABLE FUTILITY OF EVER SAYING ANYTHING?

WOOF!



Then in your op-ed, try to cover these questions:

What is important to the group or organization you are addressing?

Why should they care about what you are advocating? Can it support or enable what is important to the group, and they are just not able to connect the dots? Or will it challenge how they currently approach things?

Do you have stories from other groups and learnings from your own experiments?

Can you propose simple ideas (prototypes) that the group can try out?

Now write and share your op-ed.

WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!



This educators' guide is a prototype (hooray!). We're hoping to understand what types of materials are useful to educators and learners in K12 and higher education classrooms. If you used this, please share your feedback with us in this four-question survey.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Check out *Drawing on Courage!* The book offers even more ways to nurture an inquisitive mind and the ability to act with intention.

Learn about all of our d.school books at dschool.stanford.edu/books.

To request a complimentary examination copy to review for use in your classroom, contact Penguin Random House Education at k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com for PreK–12 Education or highereducation@penguinrandomhouse.com for Higher Education.