

Courage of Fear

By

Barbara Boyer



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"Love, like life, never dies. It merely shifts."

—Barbara Boyer

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What was your motivation for *Courage of Fear*?

Stick-to-it-ness, I suppose.

Stick-to-it-ness?

Yeah. I had a message I wanted to share. Like when I decided to accept the counseling position with the treatment center. When working individually with folks I found a growing pattern that emerged. That, in my opinion, was a sense of disconnectedness and a misconceived notion of worthlessness... never goodenoughism... that no matter what folks did, or who they became, it was never good enough. The main reason I took the counseling position was I believed maybe, just maybe, I could hit a larger audience. Make a real difference in folk's lives. Help them to understand that they are exactly the way they are supposed to be. Enthuse them to realize they were indeed lovable and worthy of being loved... connect them to the quiet of worthy. *Courage of Fear* allowed me to take this to a larger audience, that's all.

I do not understand. Isn't *Courage of Fear* a work of fiction?

Yes. Yes it is.

How do you correlate being a counselor with this work of fiction?

Many times in my previous line of work, counseling, bad things happened to good people. Or maybe I should say what appeared to be bad things happened. Folks spent so much time focusing on the *bad* it sucked the life out of the good. That negative worked as a spirit killer sucking the life and the joy out of precious time meant to be spent elsewhere. I understood. I had felt it myself in the past.

At the beginning stages of *Courage*, when it was a mere thought with a mere premise, I realized I wanted to share my message yet I knew I had to do it through the back door. I didn't want it to be one of those get it your face, hit you over the head, this is what you must do books. I wanted to tell a story and let the audience take what they needed and

leave what they didn't. In order to accomplish this I knew I had to have a protagonist that had everything, take away the one thing that meant the most to her, making her believe she had nothing. She had to get to that point of conflict of absolute nothingness, to make her question absolutely everything, in order for the story to take her full circle. She had to be in that state of perfection.

Do you believe you accomplished this?

It is in print. Some critics say no. Yes, I believe I did. One of the unexpected accomplishment is I have hit a larger audience than I had initially targeted with *Courage of Fear*. Some folks think it's just a love story, a romance. Others go deeper and glaze over the inspiration. Others go even deeper and identify with the connectedness of it all, right down to the title. I am amazed with the emails I get and even the reviews.

What is the deeper message?.. the main points you wish the audience to take away from reading *Courage of Fear*?

Ah, you tease, yes? Whatever that is for them. A common response I hear from people who have read the pre-released version is how once they picked it up they had a hard time putting it down. I'm glad they took that away with them. That makes me smile. But back to the question, whatever that is for each person, whether that be mere entertainment and escape for a few hours or something much deeper. There is so much in *Courage*. I suppose if I were to have to narrow down a few from the many I would say, connectedness, the full circle, and as Angela (the protagonist) writes in her book, *Wrestling With the Demons*, "Love is not an act based on conditions. Love is the condition all other acts are based on. Love for our Creator. Love for others. Love for ourselves."

What do you mean by that, Love is not an act based on conditions?

It's like one of Angela's other lines...

You do mean your line, correct? To clarify you wrote Angela's character right?

Yes. I did.

Her book, *Wrestling With the Demons*, is a fictitious book right? I mean, it doesn't really exist, does it?

Yes, it is a fictitious book to the world. It does exist within me. Does that count? You have to understand, Angela lived within me for a very long time as a separate entity. I guess sometimes I still haven't fully grasped the fact she never really existed.

... anyway, Angela's other line in the fictitious book *Wrestling With the Demons*, "Expectations imply that one knows best." One of the area's of opportunities I found to be true for myself at one time in my life and also with others I have worked with was, "When this happens I will be loveable. When he stops doing that I can love him (or love him again.)" People and situations shouldn't be who and what we expect them to be. It takes away from the beauty of life, the diversity, the color, the splendor, the mystery. Love shouldn't be conditional based on something someone does or becomes. Everything someone is or becomes leads with love. Love is the root, not the cause.

What did you mean when you stated that Angela lived within you?

K, now we are getting into process. After I had the main point of *Courage of Fear* (the premise) I began to consume my life with questions. What would make a person do this to get to that? Where did she work? Where did she live? Who were her friends? What did they do when they spent time together? Did she watch TV? If so, what did she watch?...

Did Angela watch TV? She doesn't in the novel.

Yes she did.

What did she watch?

Fox news.

Why didn't that make it in the book?

It made it on the page. These characters, each one of them, Culann, Lizzy, Leo, Jackson, they all had their time with me individually. They became real to me down to the finer details. To be real to the reader they had to be real to me. From what the critics are saying, it seemed to work. So I am happy to still share my life with them every once in a while. I remember one time a friend of mine said you are Angela aren't you? They said she sounded a lot like me. I replied, fool, I am all of them. I mean they all came from within me. How can I say that any one is less me than the other... if one must limit it like that.

When reading *Courage of Fear* I thought I was going in one direction and then all of a sudden I was some place totally different. This happened over and over again. Did you purposefully intend to do that with the reader?

Story depicts life, friend.

I read in your blog that you fought with Angela for over a month about something she wanted you to do and you disagreed.

Yes. As you know, there are twists in the story. Many times during the edits I had no idea where the story was going. More like, I knew where it needed to be; premise. The characters told me the story. (I literally spent months in their heads, or in my head before I even sat down to write.) But during the edits something felt wrong. It didn't seem to work. It felt contrived. Angela kept telling me she had to go one way and I fought it. It wasn't going to happen. I couldn't write till it went her way. Funny, readers report they had the same problem that I had with that part. I cannot tell you which part it is. Yet folks will know it when they read *Courage*.

Where did the title come from?... *Courage of Fear*?

Ah, I believe the title is the one thing I get slammed for the most. . . until folks read the story that is. Some believe it is what Culann says in the novel; about the story in Dooley's Pub back in his hometown in Ireland. Yet for me it is about that and also putting fear in its place, after courage. When one has one without the other it does all kinds of damage. I have heard it said many times that fear is a lack of faith. That just pisses me off, always has. Telling someone something like that only affirms a disbelief in self, again

notenoughism. I am afraid, so therefore, I am lacking faith. I am doing it wrong again. I am worthless. I can never do anything right. I am not pretty enough. I am not smart enough. I am not centered enough. I don't make enough money. I don't drive a nice enough car. . . the list goes on. It feeds the negativity. Fear is a god-given instinct. Sometimes it is very real. "Danger Will Robinson, danger!" Don't dance in the middle of the interstate. If someone repeatedly smacks you in the face, it may be best not to hang out with them. Courage comes with resistance against the negative. It is the quiet still voice inside directing our life to excel to a higher place. It is faith in action. Then there is the other fear. The fear that says if I chase this writing dream I will fail. The fear I will suck. The fear of the humiliation for trying. The fear of rejection. Courage steps in and says "so what! Maybe none of those things will happen. Maybe the opposite will happen. Take the necessary steps and you can accomplish just about anything." The fear is the faith, not the lack of it. If you have nothing but fear, you have suicide. If you have nothing but courage you have nothing but ego. One needs the other to be complete... to be in the full balance of love with the Universe... similar to the love of the characters in the novel, Angela and Jackson... ocean/moon, one cannot exist without the other—some folks get that correlation with the title, many more do not.

I need to say I was totally surprised with the ending. I wasn't expecting that at all.

Me neither. BTW, I hear that a lot from my audience. You and I are not alone in that. We talked earlier about my fight with Angela, the protagonist. It was during that time of the process I came to understand that the story had to end that way. Like I said, I had no choice. If I wanted to finish the damned thing... if I wanted to write again, I had to cave to Angela's demands... that's when I was made aware of how things were going to turn out. I have to giggle now thinking about it. I know to some this may sound crazy. But, hey, welcome to my wonderful zany world. Can you imagine what would happen if I didn't write stories? lol

People are quoted as saying you to be the female Nicholas Sparks. How do you feel about that?

Flattered, for sure. It is grand to hear such compliments. I think my mom would be proud that the outlandish imagination of her baby lead to be measured as such. I don't think I look anything like him though. And folks down there would definitely call me a yank.

Courage of Fear is getting great reviews. How does that feel?

Ah, it's business I know. I must say Kirkus was the hardest. I really spent months expecting the worst. From everything I read, I thought for sure they were going to rip me apart. I almost wet my pants when I read it. Happy is an understatement.

In your blog From Big Screen to Published Author you touch on the struggles of chasing your dream, going hungry, being homeless...

Yes, struggles and absolute highs. I think I have one paragraph in there about that. Truly it has been grand. Many times the lows were the highs... similar to what I was talking about at the beginning of our conversation. Sometimes my mind wants to see certain things, life things, as being bad, when they are just life. When I was raising my daughter I had this quote on my refrigerator for years. It was from Dolly Parton. Something I pulled

from some rag. It said something like I would rather be sitting in a rocking chair regretting some of the things I did than regretting never trying to do them. I loved that, obviously. When I was young life threw me some things that no child should endure. I didn't handle them as other's may have. I did what I did because it was the only thing I knew to do. I did the best I could...and many would say I literally sucked. I took those consequences and continued to trudge doing the best I could with what I had... you know? I heard those diagnoses of ADD, ADHD and such thrown at other folks and I said, oh I get it now. I suffer from BRAT. I knew no rules growing up. I was very angry at my parents for a very long time about that, being totally spoiled. My writing was always important to me. Then came my daughter and she was placed in the forefront. When she went off to college I knew my time had come for writing. Shit, this is a whole other interview. Nothing worth while in life comes without a price. I was willing to pay the price to chase the dream. When Shapiro told me my script wasn't good enough, he forced me to be better. It wasn't anything personal. How many folks can say they got in to see that guy for three hours? Talk about a high. The Universe was taking me in a direction. I knew if I asked the questions, the Universe would supply the answers. Then it was my job to accept those answers and do the next right thing to move forward or I could give up... kind of like what McCain is saying about Iraq. If I decided to quit, everything I had been through to get me to that point would have no meaning—been for nothing. Was I willing to do that? About as willing as McCain is to pull the troops out. I would rather be sitting in that rocking chair laughing about the ham I won in 2000 and literally lived off from for about a month as my great grandchild holds my novel, than sitting there rocking talking to my great grandchild about the wonderful home I once had and wondering what it would have been like had I had the novels to share with her. Some of the best times I've had were when I was living in my tent. Don't care to have to do it again... but I have a story to tell. Would I want to leave out the one in a redo if I had to sacrifice the other? Absolutely not. I am, and always have been blessed with *courage of fear*.

Are you working on anything else now that *Courage* is put to rest?

Well, let's hope that *Courage of Fear* is still very much alive and kicking. I mean, it doesn't even get released till December. Much of my effort at this time is working on giving *Courage* life to the world through Marketing. However, yes there is another story already in rough draft. And, quite frankly, I am itching to work on it. It is a great story with a lot of heart. When I work on a story, whether it is a novel or screenplay, it consumes my whole life. I literally become engulfed in the story, in the characters and their lives, in their hometown. There is no room for anything else. My friends are growing used to it. I fall off the face of the earth. I remember once, when I was working on a script I packed up the car and me and the pooch lived in a tent on the Galveston Island beach till it was done. Nothing but pen, pad, Matchbox Twenty, the pooch, Macanudo Red's, and the sun. It was grand and hotter than hell. I had to get my poor dog an umbrella. Did I say, it was hotter than hell? When I work on the next one I think I would like to rent a flat somewhere in Italy.

If there was one thing you would like to tell your audience, what would that be?

From my heart, I thank them for spending time with me... for the feathers... I enjoy meeting them and getting their emails. . . and if any of them happen to know Oprah, I am free.

If you would like to contact Barbara Boyer or read more about her story you can visit her website www.beboyer.com.