

## Positive Judaism Study Guide #2: When Living Hurts: Facing Life with Courage

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The founder of Apple Computer, Steve Jobs said, "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition." Steve teaches us the importance of living our unique purpose.

We are also mindful of Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer: "God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other." Reinhold teaches us that the power of courage can lead to important growth. This study guide explores the qualities of courage from a biblical context and shows how: bravery, perseverance, honesty, and resilience bring about positivity and well-being.

<b>Courage</b>	<b>Emotional strengths that develop the willpower to achieve goals in the face of internal or external opposition: bravery, perseverance, honesty, resilience</b>
Bravery/Gevurah	Able to face physical and non-physical threat, difficulty, or pain, and to act on convictions even when unpopular.
Perseverance/ Malacha	Able to complete the task and to persist in the face of obstacles. Being persistent and industrious.
Honesty/Emet/ T'mimah	Speaking truth and having real integrity and being able to take responsibility for one's actions, feelings, and affect on others.
Resilience/Koach	Despite the situation, able to remain active, energetic, focused, and flexible. Able to bounce back.

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### 1. Bravery

Ben Zoma taught: Who is mighty? Those who conquer their evil impulse. As it is written:

"Those who are slow to anger are better than the mighty, and those who rule over their spirit than those who conquer a city."

- Pirke Avot 4:1

Eternal One, hear my prayer: Let my cry come before you. Do not hide Your face from me. In my time of trouble; Turn your ear to me; When I cry, answer me quickly.

-Psalm 10:2-3

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### 2. Courage

Though I walk through the valley of death, I shall fear no harm, for You are with me.

- Psalm 23

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### **3. Perseverance**

Personal effort and perseverance contribute the major part to eventual success. In fact, any negligence or laziness is rated as sinful when circumstances seem to have called for exertion of the self.

-Akedat Yitzchak 25:16

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### **4. Honesty**

Moses our teacher commanded on the matter of integrity. As it is written: "You must be wholehearted before your God (Deuteronomy 18:13)

-Sefer Ma'alot Hamidot

God says in the Book of Zechariah (4:6) "Not by might, not by power, but by My spirit . . .".

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### **5. Resilience**

Praised are You, Eternal One, Creator of the universe, who has made the human form in wisdom and created in it a system of openings, arteries, glands, and organs that is marvelous in structure and intricate in design. Should only one of them fail to function by being blocked or open, it would be difficult to stand before you. Wonderous fashioner and sustainer of life, source of our health and our strength, we give You thanks and praise.

- Asher Yatzar prayer

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### **\* Optional Discussion Questions**

1. Many people live with enormous physical and emotional pain. How are they expected to be positive?
2. What examples do you know of people who have endured incredible challenges and then say, "it changed my life for the better?"
3. Resilience is a core strength in Positive Judaism. How can resilience help or hurt a person in their life?
4. Why do you imagine that at most funerals, Psalm 23 is recited, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of death I shall fear no evil?" Is this realistic?
5. Prayer is often in the language of the Divine. Must one believe in God to benefit from prayer?