

What is Moral Courage to Me?

What does moral courage mean to me? What are my moral values? As a little kid, I was told to sit down and be quiet. Respect my elders, even if they say something offensive. I was told that if I don't like something to just ignore it. But what's the limit? When is it gonna be okay for me to speak up? And that's it, moral courage to me is talking when told not to. It's talking knowing you will be scolded and called disrespectful but doing it anyways. It's putting someone in their place and calling them out on their behavior.

Growing up in the United States and having my dad's side of the family here we always tried our best to visit my mom's side of the family in Mexico. I loved going. I loved the beaches and festivals. I loved my family but there was one thing that always bothered me. I couldn't really put my finger on it at nine years old but now I understand. I didn't like that some of my cousins would be outcast for being "different", regarding their skin color. I didn't like that my uncles would always have something to say when "a man pretended to be someone he wasn't". I didn't like that the young females in my family and I were being told to help my mom and aunts make the food and clean while my uncles and male cousins sat around, just talking. I didn't like that I was being told that I look prettier when I was quiet. That's something I regret tolerating. I regret not questioning their way of lifestyle. I feel like if I have had the courage to call them out they would have been embarrassed, as they would have been called out by a child. Now that I'm older they just see a moody, disrespectful teenager who is too lazy to help. Maybe I wouldn't be so mad at them now and just maybe would they see me as more than a pretty face.

Someone I have and will always look up to is Selena Quintanilla. She was a Mexican-American singer, songwriter, spokesperson, businesswoman, model, actress, and fashion designer. She was also known as “The Queen of Tejano music”. Selena understood what it was like to be judged on both sides of the border, especially as a woman. "Tejano music was hard for us because I was a girl. My dad had a lot of problems while trying to set up shows for us or presentations because there are a lot of men who don't think that women can get the attention of the public. But... wrong!" Usually as Mexican-Americans we're judged by our American friends because we are “too extra” and by our Mexican families saying we aren't “true Mexicans”. Selena had the courage to go into the Tejano music industry knowing that it was male-dominated.

Something I hope to enact change in the Latinx community is the machismo, colorism, homophobia and so on, still going on in our households. I feel like it's common sense to not treat people badly because of their sex, skin color, and or sexuality but “that's just how they are”. Moral courage will be something really big that we will need in order to solve these problems in our Latin communities. I believe that it is our responsibility as the next generation to educate not only ourselves but the people around us whether that be our families and or peers.

"What I don't like are arrogant people. We're all equal. I don't like it when a person assumes to be better." - Selena Quintanilla

Work Cited

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