



## 3 Cs: COURAGE

Being a peacemaker isn't about what you do — it's about who you are. Peacemakers stand out because they speak up for their values and make commitments to help the world. There are three values that define peacemakers and peacemaking projects: compassion, courage, and collaboration.

Use this toolkit to help you explore ways to lead with courage in your peacemaking work.



### What is courage?

*Courageous peacemakers take personal risks to help others and to stand up for what they believe is right.*

### Courage in Action: Peace First Fellow Stories

#### Wei

Wei had just moved to the United States from China when he was punched in the back of his head while standing at his school locker. He wasn't the only one — violence was everywhere at Wei's school, and, most often, Asian immigrant students like him were the targets. The school was indifferent, even blaming the attacks on the Asian students. One day, the violence got so bad that thirteen students were hospitalized. When the school refused to acknowledge the problem, Wei knew he had to do something. He decided that if the school wouldn't protect Asian students, they wouldn't show up. He organized his fellow students to walk out and held press conferences to explain what was really happening. Soon, hundreds of students — not just Asian immigrants, but students of all races and backgrounds — were walking out and rallying for a safer school. Because of Wei's courage — telling the truth even when it was dangerous — the school was forced to take action to keep students safe, and he created a lasting community of students committed to advancing justice.

*Courage is about taking reasonable, purposeful risks — standing up for what you believe even when there might be a cost.*



### Mary-Pat

At fifteen, Mary-Pat had been to more funerals than graduations. She was furious about the devastating effect gun violence had caused in her community – and she wanted to make a change. Mary-Pat had a big idea: she had seen “shock ads” on billboards about cigarettes and drugs. What if she were to create ads that used shocking imagery to encourage people to think twice before pulling a trigger? Mary-Pat brought her idea to community leaders in Atlanta and asked for funding, and tried to talk to billboard companies. No one took her seriously – they told her she was just a kid. But the rejection didn’t keep Mary-Pat from trying – and after dozens of calls, she found a company that would display the billboards, and got her friends and family to donate enough money to put up a few around Atlanta. In the areas where they were displayed, the billboards reduced gun violence so sharply that Mary-Pat was able to go back and raise more money – and this time, people listened.



*Courage means believing in your ideas, and not letting anyone discount your voice or deny your power.*

## How to Put Courage Into Action

In your peacemaking project	In your daily life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take a stand.</b> Make a personal commitment to take action to make something better. Know what you believe is right, and don’t be quiet about it. Recognize that the only way you can make it better is by taking action.</li> <li>• <b>Take risks.</b> Take action for the greater good, even in the face of difficult choices or consequences. Do what’s right – even when you worry about what others will think, or worry that you might fail. The “Understanding Risk” tool in the Peace First Peacemaker Manual can help you take smart risks.</li> <li>• <b>Persevere.</b> Peacemaking is hard work, and there will inevitably be setbacks in your project. Facing difficulty and pushing forward anyway is a frustrating process, but shows true courage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speak up for others.</b> When you see someone treated unfairly, get loud. Let people know that it’s not okay, and take action to make sure it doesn’t happen again.</li> <li>• <b>Speak up for yourself.</b> Your voice and ideas matter. If someone tries to discount you or put you down, for any reason – don’t quiet down and don’t go away. Being courageous means asserting your right to be heard.</li> <li>• <b>Speak up for your values.</b> Take time to think about what you believe – what matters to you, and why? Then, be bold about sharing those ideas – it helps you become grounded in who you are and what you care about, and inspires others to do the same.</li> </ul>

## Your Courageous Commitments

Think about a time you’ve practiced courage— or seen someone else’s courage in action. Then make a commitment to practice courage in your daily life.

An example of a courageous commitment might be: “I commit to speaking up any time I hear someone use hateful language.”



Making specific commitments to put your values into action is an important part of peacemaking. Share your commitments with a friend, a mentor, or on your profile on [PeaceFirst.Org](https://PeaceFirst.Org).

As a courageous peacemaker, I commit to.....

1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

3: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Courage in Action: Right Now**

Now it's time to take action and show the Peace First community your courage.

Go to [peacefirst.org/stories](https://peacefirst.org/stories) and write a story about your beliefs, your experiences, or your peacemaking journey.

Why is this courageous? Because sharing your story always involves risk - people may not like it, or you may be afraid to share something that makes you feel vulnerable. But it's important to share your story anyway.

How can you show courage while telling your story? You can speak up for what you believe in, even if it isn't popular. You can share facts and experiences that are difficult, but that others need to hear. You can talk about a time you showed courage, speaking up for yourself or others even when it was hard.

**Little actions have huge impacts, because they can touch people's hearts in powerful ways. By showing courage within a community, you inspire and influence others to show courage as well.**

*"Speak up for yourself and stand up for the right things you believe in. The whole environment we grow up in can be challenging. It will still be challenging until you take action to change that. To accept the challenge is really important because it is helping us to grow up. I always use this quote: 'We have the power to make change.'" - Wei*