

A MESSAGE FROM: James O'Keefe

**I'm frequently asked about the challenges that we face , so I wanted to share a few thoughts. I hope you enjoy. - James**

During his speech at the 2016 RNC Convention, Marcus Luttrell – a Purple Heart recipient and former US Navy Seal – said the following:

*To the next generation: your war is here. You don't have to go searching for it. Your people are afraid. I was allowed to walk with giants and now we're looking for the next generation of giants. Who among you will love something more than you love yourself? Who among you are going to step up and take the fight to the enemy, because it's here.*

*I challenge all of you to fight for this country and for each and every one of us. The world outside of our borders is a dark place, a scary place. America is the light -- and her people are the goodness that grows from that. She'll always be worth fighting for.*

These words really chill the soul and his point is profound: that America needs men and women of Moral Courage – here at home – fighting the culture war for the heart of America. Luttrell makes it clear that our war, the war for the heart and soul of our country, is on our

own soil, but it takes two of kinds of courage to fight a war. The first is from individual soldiers willing brave gunfire; and the second is from leaders willing to do in the public arena what is what is not always popular, but is right. It is this latter virtue that is lacking.

Of course, Project Veritas is doing this. But why are we short on like-minded allies? Why, for example, has no one else built an institution that combines espionage and journalism, an institution that runs on Moral Courage? Why are others too afraid?

Chris Hedges writes in *Wages of Rebellion* that while we have consent of the governed, the "Citizenry cannot take corrective action because it is denied information." He notes that moral courage is always defined by the powers that be as treason:

*"The person who defies the crowd, stands up as a solitary individual, shuns the intoxicating embrace of comradeship, and is disobedient to authority, even at the risk of his or her life, for a higher principle. And with moral courage comes prosecution."*

There's two reasons for this:

1. The challenge of Moral Courage is that conformity is valued over disruption. People are willing to give up their lives for a cause, but not their reputation.
2. The risks of Investigative Journalism – a historically revered method of information gathering became unprofitable for the news networks, so they stopped doing it.

Moral Courage is personally costly because of its disruptive nature. Institutions, especially the state, despise and fight against disruption. For our rulers, politics are public relations.

According to Hedges, the moral courage required for speaking the truth “is always defined by the state as treason... Criticisms, however tepid, are treated as acts of subversion.”

The state will attempt to re-exert its control through fear: “This fear and loss of spontaneity keep a population traumatized and immobilized and turn the courts, along with legislative bodies, into mechanisms that legalize the crimes of the state.”

In other words, fear is paralyzing people and preventing them from fighting for America.

A few years ago, [I had a conversation with my friend, Jack Cashill, about "Fear"](#). He told me that there are three kinds of fear:

- Fear for your life.
- Fear for your freedom.
- Fear for your reputation.

It's that last one – fear for one's reputation – that really paralyzes.

People fear their reputation more than they fear for their own lives.

When I went on the Rush Limbaugh show for the very first time, the first question that he asked me was:

*"Have you ever encountered people, on our side, who've let you down? Who say, 'James you're putting too much pressure on us'? Have you had any people on our side who say 'James, you need to tone it down?'"*

I responded by telling him about my trial by fire. I quoted his past remark that, "Our adversaries circle the wagons and our allies circle the firing squad."

Too often, we only think of courage as having the willingness to lay down one's life. But there's a different kind of courage – Moral Courage – which is far more difficult, the willingness to lay down one's reputation.

In a recent interview, my friend Bill Whittle told me about a Mark Twain story in which a general, during the Spanish-American War, asked his troops to raise their hands if they were willing to lose their lives for their country – and, of course, everyone raised their hands. He then asked them who would be willing to be perceived as traitors for the wellbeing their country – and no one raised their hands.

Common Courage – the willingness to lay down one's life – is rare enough in society. But Moral Courage – the willingness to lay down one's reputation – is even more rare. The true irony is that we, the insurgents, need to be willing to put our reputations on the line *now* before we're forced to lay down our lives.

That's because Moral Courage means "walking towards the fire," as my late mentor Andrew Breitbart would say. It's choosing a path of suffering, of being hated.

We all like to think that we have Moral Courage – that we would be willing to put our reputations on the line for the right cause – but in reality, that's a proposition more commonly spoken *about* than actually acted upon.

Alexsandr Solzhenitsyn wrote in the Gulag Archipelago:

*"If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"*

Moral Courage can help us achieve something beyond ourselves, but often at the core of this is the question of whether or not we're willing to brave the road of suffering.

As Rush Limbaugh recently told me, most people want to be loved, not hated. People don't like to choose the road of suffering, including journalists.

*"There's a good reason for the media hating me. And once I came to grips with that fact, that there's a reason they should hate me, then it makes sense. One of the toughest things I had to do was learn to psychologically accept the fact that being hated was a sign of success. Most people aren't raised to be hated. We're all raised to be loved. We*

*want to be loved. We're told to do things to be loved and appreciated and liked. We're raised, don't offend anybody, be nice. Everybody wants total acceptance. Everybody wants respect. Everybody wants to be loved, and so when you learn that what you do is going to engender hatred you have to learn to accept that as a sign of success. That was a tough psychological thing for me". -- Rush Limbaugh*

Here's how the lack of Moral Courage has impacted undercover journalism:

Mike Wallace once told Steve Kroft about his life at CBS News, and he remarked that he stopped doing hidden videos and ambush journalism, "because it became a caricature of itself... we realized we weren't getting information, we were getting drama." However, our team and I believe that Wallace wasn't being entirely accurate. Most institutions are driven by market incentives, and the lawsuits and liabilities associated with going after big corporations left a sour taste in the networks' mouth. In some ways, you have to be a masochist to engage with an activity so effective that it will result in the resignations of your investigation subjects — which will in turn result in them suing you — costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not more.

Furthermore, as Hedges argued, popular culture and news media hold up the elites as leaders to emulate. If it is cost-prohibitive, difficult, and leaves you liable to frivolous legal attacks to challenge those in power, why do it? It's just easier to have your narratives approved

by government, business, and 'experts' funded and approved by primary sources and agents of power.

When you're over the target, you will get flak. Usually in the forms of defamation and negative publicity - which is psychological deterrent enough.

But worse, it will most certainly result in overzealous prosecutions by out-maneuvering Attorneys General who perceive you as an ideological threat. David Daleiden, who orchestrated the manifestly damning undercover series on Planned Parenthood - had his home raided by the California Attorney General's for having the audacity to investigate a sacred cow.

The Soviet era mantra "Find me the man, I'll show you the crime" rings true. Unjust systems levy capricious penalties against those that the established elites don't like.

Another reason that others don't do this work is because of the field's barriers to entry. Investigative Journalism used to be a "loss-leader," where networks took a financial loss on their balance sheet because they knew it served the public interest. That is unthinkable today, especially following the Food Lion investigation in 1992 that resulted in ABC being fined millions for investigating Food Lion.

Hidden camera journalism and sting journalism is extinct - except in rare cases. Despite a great abundance of political journalists, none are willing to do undercover work inside the administrative state, a branch of

government not being held accountable to Congress. Channel 4 went undercover, not into political campaigns, administrative agencies, government programs or even large Fortune 500 companies; but a relatively obscure data/polling company called Cambridge Analytica - and it wasn't in the United States but the United Kingdom. There seems to be a deeper theme. That Transparency itself is a threat; that anything that disrupts the order of the elite itself is a threat. Why?

So I encourage you think: What are you willing to die for? What are willing to live for? In what ways might the fear of your reputation being tarnished be holding you back?

In Truth,

James O'Keefe  
President  
Project Veritas Action

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