

Mindful Exploration

Courage — Intellectual Courage

Focus Question: What does it mean to be intellectually courageous? How can we develop and apply intellectual courage in our own lives?

Often in our lives we encounter ideas that are different and opposite from our own. These can create a challenge in our relationships and our own growth as thoughtful individuals. It takes courage to see beyond our own perspective. This is known as intellectual courage. It centers around the idea of a changing mindset and involves being flexible and willing to challenge ideas and to question our thinking to effect positive change. It is the courage to challenge old assumptions, act on new understandings and insights taken from experience and research, and to embrace new information as a means to improve.

The following three individuals — Itka Zygmuntowicz, Edouard Bamporiki, and Mohammed Dajani Daoudi — share stories of intellectual courage. Listen to their stories and consider how intellectual courage can affect others and ourselves.

Day 1

Itka Zygmuntowicz



What does Itka Zygmuntowicz' mother say to help Itka understand that although people may have different values, people can still respect one another's differences? How does her mother's explanation help Itka demonstrate a flexible mindset?

What lesson can you take away from her experience that could help you challenge old assumptions and act on new understandings, and embrace new information as a means to improve?

Day 2

Edouard Bamporiki



What helped Edouard Bamporiki strengthen his intellectual courage in order to demonstrate a flexible mindset, or a willingness to change an established set of attitudes?

What lesson can you take away from his experience that could help you challenge old assumptions and act on new understandings, and embrace new information as a means to improve?

Day 3

Mohammed Dajani Daoudi



According to Mohammed Dajani Daoudi, what must one be able to do in order to have a meaningful discussion with someone? How does this quality of intellectual courage demonstrate a flexible mindset, or a willingness to change an established set of attitudes?

What lesson can you take away from his experience that could help you challenge old assumptions and act on new understandings, and embrace new information as a means to improve?

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Day 4

Final Reflection: Now that you've heard Itka Zygmuntowicz, Edouard Bamporiki, and Mohammed Dajani Daoudi share their experiences and reflections with intellectual courage, reflect on your own experiences. **How can we develop and apply intellectual courage in our own lives?**

Think of a situation in your school or community, however minor, where you have exhibited or seen someone else exhibit a flexible mindset, or a willingness to change an established set of attitudes in order to bring about positive change. In the box below, describe the situation in a three- to five- sentence response and explain why it is an example of intellectual courage. After writing, share your response with a partner.