

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE NUMBER 62**. On today's episode, we are going to talk with life coach and bestselling author Kate Swoboda about making courage a habit and what that actually means for each of us.

Welcome to the *Do It Scared* podcast. I'm your host, **RUTH SOUKUP**, and each week on the show we will talk about how to face your fears, overcome obstacles, and, most importantly, how to take action and create a life you love.

Hey, there, and welcome back to the show. As always, my name is Ruth Soukup, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the *New York Times*' bestselling author of six books, including my newest book, *Do It Scared*.

In today's episode, we are going to be talking to life coach and author Kate Swoboda about what it means to make courage a habit in your life, something that you actually practice daily. Kate is the creator of [yourcourageouslife.com](http://yourcourageouslife.com), director of the Courageous Living Coach Certification program, and the author of *The Courage Habit*. She is dedicated to helping people see where their old fear-based habits are keeping them stuck and then create more courageous lives by getting into what she calls the courage habit.

You, guys, let me just tell you how excited I am for this episode because I think there are so many parallels between the work Kate is doing and the things that we talk about here at Do It Scared. She has so much insight to share, not just on what it means to be courageous, but how to actually practically apply the habit of being courageous to your life on a daily basis.

And ultimately, that's exactly what this podcast is all about. It's about taking the steps that will help us make the necessary changes every single day so that we can create a life we love, because in the end, courage doesn't mean we're never afraid; instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It's putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path is going to lead.

All right. So, just a couple more quick things before we dive into today's episode. First, you can get all the show notes for this episode and links to everything we're going to talk about by visiting [doitscared.com/episode62](http://doitscared.com/episode62). Once again, that's **[doitscared.com/episode62](http://doitscared.com/episode62)**.

Also, if you have any questions or you want to share feedback on this episode or request something for a future episode, a future guest, message me on Instagram, or better yet, tag me in your story, and if I share your post, we will send you a "Do

It Scared" T-shirt.

All right, guys. So, without further ado, I am so honored to introduce you to Kate Swoboda.

**RUTH:** Kate, welcome to the *Do It Scared* podcast. Thank you so much for being on the show. It is awesome to have you here today.

**KATE:** Thank you for having me. I'm really, really thrilled to be here.

**RUTH:** Good. I think you might actually be the first person that I have ever met who is as obsessed about helping people overcoming their fear as I am. Seriously, there are so many parallels to the work that you've been doing and to what we talk about here at *Do It Scared*, what I'm talking about in my new book, and I am excited to dive in with you.

First, because I think it's always super important to understand where people are coming from and where they've been before they're here to wherever you are right now, can you just tell us a little bit of your story? Where did you come from? How did you get interested in this topic of courage and overcoming fear?

**KATE:** Hmm. Well, you know how it's one of those things in hindsight, it's like, "Oh yeah, it was always brewing"? But I'd say it really came together for me—before I was a life coach, I was a teacher, and teachers, of course, don't make a lot of money. Living in the San Francisco Bay Area, where rent is really high, somehow I got this crazy dream that I wanted to go spend the summer in Italy. I began trying to figure out how I could make that happen. I wouldn't be able to teach summer school, which means a loss in income. How was I going to, like—I can't just not pay my rent while I'm in Italy, all the things. And I scraped and pinched and took on odd jobs and did all kinds of things to make it happen.

So, I'm in Italy, and I totally had fear about going. Like, "What if I'm the first person in the history of the world who puts all this money and time into doing this, and what if I hate Italy, and I'm the first person in the world who isn't happy walking around, looking at the Duomo and eating gelato?" Fear gets very irrational, as I know you talk with your people about.

So, I'm in Italy, and I'm having the time of my life, and I say something about that on social media. And in what I call now "the great gift" to me, I got this wet-blankety person who was like, "Well, not everybody can *duh duh duh duh dah*." The reason it was a great gift is because I happened to know this person well enough that I knew ballpark-ish how much their income was. It was double

mine. They were in a dual-earner household with no kids, so we're easily talking six figures of income between her and her partner; living in a part of the country where real estate and rent were half, at least, of what it is in the Bay Area; plus, this person would have had three or four weeks of paid vacation each year; whereas, I was totally operating at a loss to go.

So, I call it "the great gift" because in that moment, it hit me that I had just been willing to take the risk to lean into the discomfort. I began looking back over my life and going, "Oh, my god", like courage and leaning in and going after what you want. It's not like you wait until you're not afraid anymore before you go after it; you do it scared. Courage is feeling afraid—

**RUTH:** Yes! I've heard that before somewhere.

**KATE:** Somewhere, right? Somewhere, yeah. So, that was the moment when it coalesced, when it really came together that there's an actual way of living that I had been choosing, and in fact, then, it was like, "Oh, I want to get even more conscious about how I choose this," because I can see that this person who made this wet-blanket comment, they're not a bad person. That's their fear saying, "You can't do this anyway," even though this person had, like, triple the income as me; not as much overhead as me; paid vacation, which I did not have. So it was just like, "Oh, where else in my life am I not conscious in this moment the way this person is not conscious in this moment?"

**RUTH:** Yeah, oh, that's so good. So, it was just this moment you decided to go to—you were actually doing it scared and seeing other people, not realizing that there was this fear. And so, then, how did that get you from being a teacher to now doing what you do, being an author, a life coach, coaching other people?

**KATE:** Oh, goodness.

**RUTH:** That's a big shift.

**KATE:** Well, yeah. It was a huge shift. I'm the poster child for did all the right things, checked all the right boxes. I didn't come from a rich or well-resourced family, but I came from a family where we didn't have things so we had to be scrappy and DIY and get those scholarships to go to college, and so I did. I got the scholarships, got out of college, went to grad school. Got out of grad school, got into the job I had intended as a teacher. It's how I opened my book *The Courage Habit* is at the time, was very pragmatic and very practical. I grew up in the Midwest, came to California, didn't want to be too "woo", air quotes. That was a derogatory term. Now

I embrace it.

But I was sitting in this meeting that I think it was the last day before Christmas break, and I'm sitting in this meeting. My colleagues are talking about everybody taking on a project over Christmas break that they would have done by the time we got back to Christmas break. There was infighting and politics and all that, and this voiceless voice came up, which I think of my wisest intuition, "I don't want to do this anymore." And at the time, I'm sitting in this meeting, and I'm panicking a little bit, like, "Can anybody else tell I don't want to do this anymore?" Like, since when? Like every choice I've made—

**RUTH:** Yeah. Like every choice a revelation. How long after your Italy trip was that?

**KATE:** Gosh, let's see. So Italy was a summer, and this was Christmas, so probably about six months, and—

**RUTH:** Oh, so pretty soon after. That was—

**KATE:** Well, the Italy trip was the connection I made about courage and really seeing that it was like a lifestyle orientation to decide that you wanted to... I define courage as feeling afraid, because nobody gets out of that part; diving in anyway, because you don't want to be stuck; and transforming, and transforming is always what happens when we feel the fear and do it anyway, when we do it scared. That was a realization about an orientation to life that I wanted to have. The big realization I had after sitting in that meeting and going, "I don't want to do this anymore," was that I couldn't outwit my fear. I couldn't out-logic it, I couldn't outrun it, and in fact, that pushing it away was really a waste of time and really counterproductive, that the fear could kind of ride sidecar, and what I wanted to do was not let it dictate my choices and that I needed to actually feel more of the fear. I needed to cry, I needed to scream into pillows, because fear is not logical, it is primal. We feel it, so we need to actually feel it instead of trying to constantly clamp it down.

**RUTH:** Yes, oh, so good. Okay, so your book is called *The Courage Habit*, which right away I just love because I am completely obsessed (a) with overcoming fear, and (b) obsessed with overcoming habits or creating habits in your life, also. So can you just start by explaining exactly what you mean by the courage habit? How does that work?

**KATE:** Well, it's a four-part process, and process is really important because it's not steps, for being with fear. I'm actually not into

overcoming fear. I think fear is a wound that doesn't know how to express itself in any way other than telling you either, "Don't do that, people will laugh," or, "You suck." It's risk management is all it's doing, and if you heal a wound, that's really all that fear is seeking. It's your best friend with really lousy communication skills.

So, the book is about, "Okay, you're going to have fear. Let's just accept that that is a fact of life." But what is not helpful is to try to either avoid your fear by trying not to feel it, ignore it, to placate it by trying to do everything right so that it won't come up; or to attack it, like all the memes about kicking fear's ass and stuff like that. The research bears out that those approaches actually do not work.

What does work, I found in the research, were four specific behaviors that if you can interrupt your fear-based habits and replace your fear-based habits with these behaviors, you will create a courage habit. Those four behaviors emerged from the research as being accessing the body, so getting into the feelings, which we've kind of already touched on; listening without attachment, so this is the big thing. You don't do it scared by just, "Tell that fear to shut up and do it anyway." It's like, "No, you actually need to listen to the fear and what it's trying to say and do it anyway." Reframing limiting stories, which is not positive affirmations, and I can go into more of each of these in a little bit, but it has a ton of clinical backing in dialectical behavior therapy, narrative therapy, reframing limiting stories; and then, reaching out and creating community.

So those four parts together form a process that you can utilize to engage with and stop getting stuck in old, unconscious, fear-based habits and start creating courage as your new habit, your new way of orienting to life.

**RUTH:** Yeah. I love that. And I love it because one of the things that you, and you just said it, you're careful about explaining is that you don't believe in being fearless or trying to get rid of your fear. And I also did not mean when I said "overcoming fear," like, to me that's not getting rid of it; to me that's learning how to—

**KATE:** Not let it keep you stuck.

**RUTH:** —do it scared and not let it keep you stuck, yeah, absolutely, because I absolutely agree with you there. But that begs the question, then, because if we're not getting rid of it, what do we have to be doing with it instead?

**KATE:**

Yeah. Well, we're not letting it control our lives, and then we're also trying to heal it. I love taking, by the way, audience examples whenever people ask me about this question, so if there's anybody listening live on Facebook and you're like, "Raised hand here. I got, like, a thing," because I learn best through examples, and most people do. So let's just take the example of a big dream is you really want to start a business, a photography business, let's say. And every time you have tried to start this dream photography business and let go of this old sucking job and all of that, it's like you feel the fear in your body, you feel panicky, you feel nervous. You feel excited, too, but then the fear comes in and this voice in your head starts saying, "There are already a million photography businesses out there."

I am the director of a life-coach training program, and I get this with people like, "Aren't there too many life coaches? Aren't there too many..." And so your fear starts kicking up with, "Oh, there are too many, and it's already been said and done. What's the point, *duh duh dah*," so then you back down.

So that's an actual habit that you've gotten stuck in. Habits in the brain, the way they work, is on a cue-routine-reward loop. So we're talking not just, like, you're sitting down, taking out these component parts. This is just happening subconsciously all the time in the background.

So the cue of fear pops up, you go into a routine, and there are four specific fear routines that I find are most common, and you get a reward. People might go, "Well, what's the reward if I back down from my dream? That's not a reward." But it is in the short term to the part of your brain that is monitoring stress and going, "I need to get to less stress as quickly as possible here." When you back down, that part of your brain is like, "Whew, okay, we got this."

So what you're trying to do instead is you're trying to actually recreate that entire process so that instead of feeling fear; going into pessimism, perfectionism, self-sabotage to get that temporary reward, which always ends up in you not really going after the long game in your life; you're feeling that fear pattern; then you're going, "Wait a second. I feel afraid. Let me access the body. Wait a second. I feel afraid. Let me reach out to a member of my community. Wait a minute. I feel afraid. Let me listen without attachment. Let me reframe limiting stories."

**RUTH:**

So good, so good. I actually found that so fascinating about your book and the work that you're doing because you talk about these

four common fear patterns that tend to keep people stuck. This is right along the same lines as the research that we've been doing for Do It Scared, and what we discovered is that the way fear manifests itself is a little bit different for everyone, but there are definite patterns. For us, in our research, we called it the seven fear archetypes. So can you describe your four common fear patterns? You actually mentioned a couple of them: the saboteur, the pessimist to the procrastinator, which is so funny because those are actually the exact same names for two of our fear archetypes. And then, what's the last one?

**KATE:** Well, the four are perfectionism; people pleasing, or martyrdom; pessimism; and self-sabotage. And we would put procrastination under—I put it under the umbrella of self-sabotage. So pessimism, people pleasing, perfectionism, self-sabotage. I always say we do all of them at some point, but usually there's one that like hooks us the most, so I'm raising my hand, perfectionist here. Going to overwork because it feels vulnerable to go, "What if this fails?" Total perfectionist behaviors. And I think the more we recognize what our patterns are, that is what actually keeps them from running on autopilot and continuing to be habits that just get reinforced over and over in that cue-routine-reward loop in the brain.

**RUTH:** Yes. Yes! That's exactly what I say about the seven fear archetypes. And I call it the procrastinator/perfectionist because the way that I describe that is perfectionism is another word for procrastination. The martyr was exactly like our people pleaser. The saboteur sounded very similar to the outcast. I'm just so curious. I know you took the fear assessment, right? You took our fear assessment?

**KATE:** I did, yes.

**RUTH:** And you said you were a rule follower, which that is one of the ones, and then we also have the self-doubter and the excuse maker. Where do you think those would fit into those different patterns?

**KATE:** Well, it depends on what's at the root because for me putting procrastination under self-sabotage instead of perfectionism is that there are procrastinators where it's not about trying to get it perfect; it's about they're just too scared to even start, you know?

**RUTH:** Right.

**KATE:** Rule followers? I probably under... maybe under perfectionism, now that we're talking about it. I feel like it's nuanced about... it's about how people are engaging with their fear in particular that for

me sets up the different designations, and I think about the things that people tend to say, the behaviors people tend to avoid versus the ones they gravitate to within each of these frameworks. But yeah, definitely, there's overlap. I was surprised to get the rule follower one because I don't... I know my husband would be like, "Are you kidding me? Kate is like, 'Oh, you said that couldn't be done? Oh, well, then, you watch me now. Here we go.'"

**RUTH:** Actually, when you were talking earlier, I was like, "Oh, gosh, that's such a rule-follower thing to say when you were saying, 'I did all the things the way I was supposed to do it.'"

**KATE:** Oh, yes. Yes, yes, yes.

**RUTH:** "And I followed the path that I was supposed to take." That is classic rule follower. Rule follower wants to have the path, and for the rule follower, it's almost this fear of stepping outside. And it sounds like you had this epiphany, and so my guess is that your percentage on the rule follower is probably fairly low because our assessment scores the extent to which it's probably affecting your life. So maybe there as a time in your life where it was probably more prevalent, but you've done all this work on courage, so I would say it's probably affecting your life less. But yeah, there was some definite rule-follower patterns there.

**KATE:** I got to say, anybody who's watching or listening to this right now, get your butt over to Ruth's website and do the assessment, because it's really interesting. I did notice on the assessment, too, that for the majority of the questions, I felt like I was either totally agree or totally disagree. There were very few where I was just kind of like in the middle. I was like, "Yeah, it could go either way." You know? So I did notice that because usually... yeah.

**RUTH:** It's funny. I mean, the assessment, I don't know how much you know about the stuff we've been doing with Do It Scared, but we actually did this huge research study. We surveyed over 4,000 people to develop the fear archetypes and really started finding all these patterns of the way that fear was manifesting itself, and then also worked with this research team and psychologists to develop the assessment so that it was... There's so much science that goes into creating an assessment like that, it was crazy. We could talk about it forever. I don't want to take up your time, but it was just... you have to ask all the questions in multiple ways, positive and negative, in order to confirm the results. You have to make sure that there's no bias in the questions. It's crazy how much goes into it.

But yeah, it's been really fun to see the results for people and to

see how it's impacted because, exactly like what you said, those fear patterns, it's all about identifying how fear is manifesting itself in our lives and seeing what... because so much of it happens, and I don't know if you feel this way, too, but I feel like so much of it happen subconsciously, without us even realizing it. It's these habits that are ingrained in us that we haven't recognized. We're just doing it. We're doing it on autopilot, which is exactly why I love the Charles Duhigg references, and that's exactly what happens.

**KATE:** Well, they become identities.

**RUTH:** Yes, exactly.

**KATE:** Like, how many times have you heard someone say, "Oh, I'm a total people pleaser"? It's like, "No, you actually were not born a people pleaser. This is a behavioral habit that you have practiced for so long that you've taken it on as an identity." Same thing, perfectionists. That is a behavioral habit that you have done for so... And it's like you can change a behavioral habit.

If anybody has ever changed the time they wake up in the morning, the route that they take to drive to work or to school, you can change these. I'll use that as a continued example. The first time, maybe in the first couple of weeks that you take a new commute to get to work—maybe it's like a highway or a road is closed, you have to do it for a little while—it feels weird, you feel gritchity. "Why do I have to go this way? Oh, there's *duh duh duh dah*." But then, you might start to see some of the interesting things about doing it a little bit differently, and then, after a while, it's kind of like it's just as if I've always done it this way. Behavioral habits really can become that way.

**RUTH:** It's so, so true, but it starts with really starting to see them and spot them and go, "Oh, okay. Now this is something that I want to start to change." So good, so good.

**KATE:** I love that you're into the research of it, too. I totally feel like you and I could geek out over coffee, and I could slide my textbook on *The Psychology of Courage*, which is actually being studied within psychology, like, what's the difference between moral courage versus emotional courage? Emotional courage is more like Brené Brown. Moral courage is more like if you see someone stuck in a burning building, is it part of your moral code to run in and try to save them? I would totally talk to you about that all day long.

**RUTH:** Well, now, we're going to have to go out for coffee and geek out on this.

**KATE:** Exactly. A Google Scholar date.

**RUTH:** Exactly. Okay, so one of the things that I really love about what you're doing with *The Courage Habit* and what you're teaching is that it's so practical because basically, and you kind of touched on these, these four specific behaviors that you can start practicing to live with more courage. So can you go deeper? You touched on them all, but I want to hear deeper, how do you actually implement that in your life?

**KATE:** Okay. So, again, think of these as a process, not steps. Steps go in a linear order process. You might double back, you might start with one but not the other, you might only use one, you might use them all, although, from what I see of the research, when you use them all, that is the most effective implementation.

First, access the body. We've been talking about it already, about how fear is primal. You feel it in the body so you have to deal with it in the body. It's not logical. And there's a way in which our culture tries to promote this mythology of keep a cool head and think logically about what needs to be done when a challenge comes your way. I find that to be very machismo, patriarchal, and not actually very beneficial, especially as more and more research comes out that says when you subvert your emotions, you end up doing damage to yourself. Emotionally and psychologically, it's not good for your health. So access the body.

That can be your standard meditation practice if you want it to be, but it can also be deciding to do what I call conscious crying, so in the same way you sit down for 20 minutes. When I am reading the news headlines about yet another school shooting, and I'm worried about my daughter going to school, and I've got stress or I've got this or that coming in, it's all kind of piling up, you alleviate some of that stress by going, "Okay, for 20 minutes I'm going to put on a playlist of the saddest music, and I'm literally just going to, like a meditation practice, sit down and think about the things stressing me out, and cry." It's conscious crying, and then the timer goes off—

**RUTH:** Really?

**KATE:** Yeah, totally.

**RUTH:** Does that work?

**KATE:** Oh my god, I—

**RUTH:** I'm not a crier, so crying—

**KATE:** Oh, I swear by it. Yeah.

**RUTH:** —makes me very uncomfortable.

**KATE:** Oh, yeah. I swear by it.

**RUTH:** So I'm absolutely fascinated by this. In fact, it's like kind of a joke on my team because if anybody cries, I'm like, "Don't do that. Don't cry." I just do not like it. But maybe I need to try that. Maybe I need to just have a moment.

**KATE:** Yeah, I think it's vulnerability. And it's not just crying. The metaphor that I love is one from the Challenge Day organization, and they talk about how if you imagine that there's a balloon that is within you that captures emotion, and what happens to a balloon that gets too full of air? Eventually, it's going to either leak, and that's where we get road rage and we get snippy comments. We get resentment. We get not really feeling very passionate or fulfilled. Feeling kind of meh. Or it explodes, and that's where we get people just completely losing their temper and stuff like that.

So what we need to do is we need to actually release some of the air from the valve consciously, and that's how I see a practice like conscious crying. I'm really proud of you \_\_\_\_ (28:09) now because another practice that I promote and do myself is anger discharge, so screaming into pillows, hitting pillows, things like that. We are emotional creatures, and we could learn a lot from toddlers, frankly. We shouldn't take our emotions out on people, but toddlers don't suppress emotion until they're taught to by the culture around them. I think there's a way in which... I cry at least a couple of times a week when I'm frustrated. It's a way of not keeping that stress inside of ourselves.

**RUTH:** I'm more of a yeller. I could get onboard with that one, actually.

**KATE:** There you go, yeah.

**RUTH:** Screaming into a pillow, I could make that happen.

**KATE:** Well, accessing the body can be anything you're doing to really get connected and accessed into your body.

**RUTH:** I got it. I got it. I'm going to consciously scream into a pillow and make that work.

**KATE:** I love a good clean and jerk at CrossFit. CrossFit's my jam. Throw around some barbells, lift some weights, running, exercise. It's what gets you into your body and what gets you mindful.

**RUTH:** I love that. That's so good. Okay, so that's number one, physical stuff. You had a much better way of putting that.

**KATE:** Accessing the body.

**RUTH:** Accessing the body.

**KATE:** You can call it physical stuff, too.

**RUTH:** Physical stuff.

**KATE:** Physical stuff, yeah.

**RUTH:** The show notes, it'll all be on there. So, what's number two?

**KATE:** Listening without attachment. So we need to stop abusing our fear. Speaking of habits, if it is a habit within someone to tell your fear to "F" off or shut up or go away, that is something you were taught to do with your own feelings, and it was abusive. And if you abuse your internalized critic, you become the abuser. You are becoming what you practice.

And one of the ways I like to really send this one home is to imagine for any mother, if you talk to yourself like, "God, you're so stupid. Why did you even bother?" you might talk to yourself like that or allow your critic to talk to you like that. What would you do if you found a teacher at your kid's school was talking to your kid like that? Me, I'm like, "Mama Bear is on lock, and we are driving to school right now to have a conversation. You do not talk to my child like that."

So, why do we do it to ourselves? If a teacher did it to a child, we'd go, "That's an abusive way to talk to someone." But we do it to ourselves all the time. So, you've got to stop with the abuse. You've got to stop telling your critic "Shut up, go away, 'F' off, I don't want to hear from you." That is (a) it's not effective. None of the research bears out that that's an effective approach. And (b) it just wounds that wounded aspect of yourself even further. Only a part of ourselves that has been hurt in some way is going to lash out like that. We need to heal that part of ourselves, and we do that by listening but not getting attached.

A great example of what it looks like to listen but not get attached would be if you're walking down the street and a drunk person, clearly drunk guy, looks at you and is like, "Your hair is blue. Your hair is blue." You will hear the words. You might feel some discontent that a human is speaking to you that way or some worry about kind of what's going on because of the surroundings,

but do you actually walk away thinking your hair is blue? No. You're like, "I'm listening to the words, but I'm not attaching to them as truth."

**RUTH:** That's a really good example.

**KATE:** And that is a really important thing to be able to start doing in order to unhook from getting controlled by fear.

**RUTH:** So, how does guilt play into that, then? Is that kind of the same thing? Feeling guilty or feeling like you don't deserve something, is that part of the same messaging? Or is that something different?

**KATE:** I've always loved Brené Brown's delineation between guilt and shame. I think the critic is very shaming, and guilt is more about a misalignment with our own integrity and our own internal compass. When she talks about the difference between guilt and shame, she'll talk about things like—and I hope I'm accurately representing her examples here—but if you have a night of heavy drinking, you wake up hung over the next day, guilt is going to go, "I did a bad thing. A thing that wasn't aligned with my values." Shame is going to go, "I am a bad person. I'm a piece of crap." And usually, the critic is using shame to try to control someone's behavior, to tell them they are not enough, not worthy, incapable, that they'd be a selfish jerk if they did something they wanted to do for themselves, all those sorts of things.

Even when people don't go after things because of pessimism, like, "It wouldn't work out anyway," or, "Who am I to...," I think there's an element in there of feeling shame about kind of the state of the world as it is and watching people fail, watching people not succeed, and feeling a sort of fruitlessness around that. So I differentiate between guilt and shame in very much the way of Brené Brown. I'd say the critic is more shame based.

**RUTH:** But then it's the same thing applies, is to listen without judgment or without attachment.

**KATE:** Yes.

**RUTH:** Gotcha. Okay, so that's number two.

**KATE:** And because this is process based, it's like if that becomes too intense, you go back to, "Let me access the body. This just feels like I need to cry for a minute. I need to take a walk. I need to meditate. I need to..."

**RUTH:** Yeah. So, what's number three?

**KATE:** Reframing limiting stories, which—

**RUTH:** Ah, I love this one.

**KATE:** Yeah. —which is not law of attraction. I don't knock positive affirmations if that's what works for someone. If it does, if that's what jams for someone, then great. Do what works. But most of the people I've coached, and I have to say myself, trying out positive affirmations as they are traditionally taught of like if you don't have any money in the bank going, "I have a million dollars," it's like some little part of me is like—

**RUTH:** You don't believe it.

**KATE:** —no, you do not. Stop." And what I did find in the research was that—and this is why I call it reframe a limiting story. Fear is inherently a story of limitation, so we're reframing it. And with the psychotherapeutic technique of cognitive reframing, which is backed by acceptance and commitment therapy and narrative therapy and dialectical behavioral therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy, we're really talking about, "I don't have any money in the bank," and probably the critic saying, "And you're a total failure. When people find out you don't have any money, they're going to judge you." And you being able to go, "Okay, that's an actual thing I'm afraid of. Deep breath. How do I reframe somehow there's a way out of this?" That's the reframe.

So it's not going from, "I have no money" to "Everything is perfect." It's "I have no money" to "I'm at least willing to look at what my options are." Or "I have no money" to "It's time for me to reconcile how I got here." That might mean asking hard questions. Or "I have no money" to "I'm going to talk to a friend and ask them how they got out of a similar financial situation."

**RUTH:** But reframing it into something positive that is something that you can believe and that you can help yourself believe.

**KATE:** Yes. I think of it like lily pads. If you have a pond you're trying to cross, and it's a long way across the pond, if you get just one little stone or lily pad across the pond at a time, that'll get you there.

**RUTH:** Yeah. So true. Okay, so, what's the last one?

**KATE:** Reaching out and creating community. It is the same thing.

**RUTH:** Yeah. So good.

**KATE:** If you access the body, and you're like, "Oh my god, I'm doing the

ugly cry, and I'm kind of scared," that's when you text your friend, "SOS. Can we talk?" It's a process, so you can move around, but reach out and create community. I consider community, like, anyone who shows up for this Facebook Live or watches this Facebook Live, listens to the *Do It Scared* podcast. That is a form of reaching out and creating community. You're trying to put yourself in a community of people like Ruth who are up to "Hey, there's a vision here for where you want to go, and I support that vision." That can also be people in real life. That can also be 12-step meetings. That can also be a whole load of things. But fear thrives in isolation, and it diminishes in community.

Some of my favorite research was really about goal setting. When you enlist other people, even if they just know about the goal, there is some research that says that you're more likely to achieve the goal and that you're more satisfied with the process no matter the outcome. To me, that's the ultimate win.

**RUTH:**

Absolutely. That's so interesting. That's something I talk about so much is accountability and putting people in your life that are going to pour into you, speak truth to you, and hold you accountable in those kind of ways. Form your truth club is what I call it, and that's exactly, actually, what our Doing It Scared community is all about. It's about creating that community, because what I hear back from my audience so often is, "Ruth, you talk about having a community of like-minded people who are pushing you to be better, but I don't feel like I have that in my life. I have a hard time making friends, or I have a hard time finding those people. Where do I find those people?" And so that's why we started doing... it's called Doing It Scared, our members-only community, which is exactly for that purpose, to be that place where you can go and find other people who can be that support for you. It's so good.

**KATE:**

That's a huge component of the coach-training program that I run. You could teach people the skill set of coaching and the certification and all of that and just go, "Here you go, this is mirroring. Here you go, this is asking powerful questions. Here are the ICF Core Competencies." But I really believe that the community component of it all has to be really central to how people learn and move through their own experiences of fear, and I love that you provide that. And it's so true. The reaching out and creating community piece is big. Big, big, big.

**RUTH:**

Huge. Huge, huge, huge. So, can you talk a little bit about the role that fear has played in your own life? We talked about it a little bit, but I'm just curious. What is something that has really scared you,

and how did you move past that fear or work with it so that you could do what you wanted to do?

**KATE:**

Well, I'm thinking of... It's interesting, because I kind of categorize them a little differently. It's like things that scare me more than anything in the entire world would be like losing my daughter, losing my husband, right? That's not necessarily a fear that one works with on a regular daily basis, right? We're being completely vulnerable, that's the depth of it.

But then there's the stuff you work with. I would say that I get into a lot of fear that I have to work with around business stuff. It's like the... And I don't know totally all the details of your business, but over here for me, it's managing a team. For my coach certification, we have a number of lead coaches who help me to facilitate my answer in everything, but they help. So it's a team of basically 13 people, and feeling the fear of, "If I have a launch that doesn't go as expected, if sales slow of one of my programs," it doesn't feel like it's just me. It also feels like this can impact someone else's bottom line, and I don't want that to be the case.

**RUTH:**

I can understand that.

**KATE:**

And then sometimes there's interpersonal stuff, where someone else's communication style on the team... 80% of the time things are good, but there's that 20% of the time where things aren't clicking, and I feel out of my depth with the skill set because I don't have formal HR training in management and all the different types of personalities. I just know kind of how I show up, and I meet someone and we work together. It's very duct tape and glue a lot of times, and that's—

**RUTH:**

The entrepreneur life, making it up as you go along. So true.

**KATE:**

Yeah. And that's when you figure out, "Oh, this piece isn't working, but I don't necessarily have a framework for what I want to do next." For me, that's where I keep coming back to the tools. It's like, "Okay, what am I feeling right now? How do I access the body during this tough conversation with this person about a work deliverable?" I really do believe that often when people talk about feeling your energy, what they mean is that who you are tends to walk about 10 feet in front of you into any room. So if I walk into a conversation with someone where a deliverable wasn't met, and I'm just sitting there pissed and resentful but I'm going, "Now, let's talk," and I'm sounding all... They're not dumb. They're going to figure out that I'm pissed. So I want to try to do something about that before I'm in the conversation with them.

It's also like listening without attachment. One of my fears about if I can't have this conversation or that deliverable wasn't met, how do I reframe it? How do I enlist them as a team member? When I fail at that, perfectionism totally comes up. It totally comes up as like, "If I had been more patient, if I had been nicer, if I had thought about it more, if I had worked harder to figure out what was needed." And there you go again, there's the work all over again. I've got to access the body and all the things. It has to become a life orientation.

**RUTH:**

I mean, it was interesting as you were talking because you were... it's funny because as you were talking about your business, you're like, "I don't have a framework," which is such a rule-follower thing to say. Like, I would love to have a framework. I would love to have a path to take. But what's so interesting to me is that you've worked so much on this stuff that you have really overcome that internal tendency of yours, of the rule follower tendency, to want things to be just so. And so that begs the question then, are you living proof that you can kind of not fully eliminate fear but greatly lessen it in your life?

**KATE:**

I think so. I think the most courageous thing that I do is, that anyone can do, is to let the truth of who they are on the inside be how they actually live on the outside. The paradox is that the more you are willing to be with the fear, the less it controls you, even though it still is going to show up. So it's like I'm sitting here right now, and I know that right now as we're recording this, I have a situation with someone I work with right now who they are not happy with me, and I'm not happy with them. At the same time, I'm sitting here, and I know that I'm messing up certain parts of conversations that we're having, and I also know that I'm being great in certain parts of conversations that we're having, right? Like, I'm doing my very best. I'm being as conscious and intentional as I can.

And I also know that who I am on the inside is I love this person. I'm totally able to separate there's a working piece here that's not working for me, but there's like who you are as a human being, and I love you, and it's fine. And so that is the truth of who I am. I am a mixed bag. You're going to hang out with me, and you're not going to like some of my opinions, and you're going to hang out with me, and you know what? That self-righteousness that you might not like when I get on my political soapbox, it's the same self-righteousness that if anybody messes with you, I'm in your corner. You are good enough. I don't give a shit what they said to you. I believe in you. And there's a ferocity to that that I don't think I was as willing to claim. There was a long time where

I was just really like, “I can’t let that part come out, or that part will come out.” Or, “Yeah, I can’t show up to the conversation until I have the perfect framework.” This rule-follower thing is so interesting to me. I love that I’m learning more about myself just by coming on your podcast.

**RUTH:**

Isn’t it so true? And now you’ll start to see those patterns. It’s so funny. It’s kind of like rocked my world over the last couple of years in realizing things about myself that I don’t know I wanted to learn but have been really good.

So, just a couple rapid-fire questions here. First of all, how do you personally practice self-care in your life and business? Is there anything that you specifically do to help build and protect your confidence?

**KATE:**

Yes, a couple of things. One, keep people around you who know the truth of who you are. They’ve seen you be out of integrity before, and they’ll call you on that, but they don’t think that one time you’re out of integrity defines who you are. That’s one thing.

**RUTH:**

That’s a great way of putting it.

**KATE:**

Yeah, yeah. Two, meditation. And I’m at the point with meditation daily where it’s like people do the thing, “Well, I didn’t do my meditation practice today, but I did it yesterday. It’s fine.” It’s like, no. You would not eat yesterday and then be like, “I’m good for the week. I don’t need to eat again.” No, no. And then people would go, “Well, food is different. If you don’t eat, you’ll be starving,” and I’m going, “No, meditation is no different.” If you are not doing it daily, you are spiritually starving. There is just a space that has to be carved out for that. And I’m very adamant and self-righteous about that, apparently.

**RUTH:**

Very self-righteous. Well, that’s another rule-follower trait, you know—

**KATE:**

Oh, is it? Oh, \_\_\_\_\_(46:44)

**RUTH:**

—being self-righteous.

**KATE:**

—another thing. Yeah. And then, the other thing that I would say is a big self-care piece is actually some kind of physical-catharsis deal. I mentioned CrossFit. CrossFit’s my thing. I go almost every day, so it’s a good way to—

**RUTH:**

Those CrossFit people... you CrossFitters are like real gung-ho about that. I know several people who are into CrossFit. I’m like,

“Oh, more power to you. Not my thing.”

**KATE:** I find it, like, really... it's the thing I talked about, like screaming into a towel. It's kind of the same thing. When you're really picking up a heavy weight, it's this kind of like aggression, and I like having a space where it's just like you can just, I don't know, throw things around or jump on things or kick things. I don't know, it works for me.

**RUTH:** That's awesome.

**KATE:** I used to do triathlon, and—

**RUTH:** Oh, wow.

**KATE:** CrossFit, though, has my heart now.

**RUTH:** That's amazing. So what are you working on right now that has you really fired up?

**KATE:** Oh, this a great time to ask this question. I'm working on sitting with an in-between space and not having a new thing thing thing to work on.

**RUTH:** Is that scary?

**KATE:** Yeah, yeah.

**RUTH:** I can see that.

**KATE:** Totally. *The Courage Habit* came out in 2018, and people don't necessarily... Getting a book published through a traditional publisher, it's a glacial process compared to self-publishing or DIY. It took two years from signing to actual publication, which I'm not complaining about or knocking. That's just the process. And then it was like, the book came out, I went on book tour, I did a ton of podcast promo. Even just a couple months ago, Book Riot was naming it—yay—one of the top books on habits. All these great things still happened, and I love having a good project, but I really want to sit with the fact that like, “Oh, this is my baby still.” It's not like even a toddler yet. It's a baby. So that's the space I'm sitting. I was like, “How do you just be in the in between?”

**RUTH:** That's food for thought for me, for sure.

**KATE:** Maybe somebody else who likes a good project I'm talking to here?

**RUTH:** Well, no. It's just food for thought because I have... my book is coming out in two weeks, and I understand exactly what you're

saying. It's such a lengthy process, especially when you're doing all this research in it, and that's kind of how I feel, too. What's next? Do I even think about what's next? No, I don't think I can yet. But for somebody who's futuristic and driven, I'm like, "But I want to think about what's next." So that's been interesting.

**KATE:** Well, it's excellent timing for your book to come out in May. I vote take three months off after you're done with the initial month of promo.

**RUTH:** Well, thank you. I think I'm going to take that advice, or at least taking it somewhat easy for a couple of months.

So, we ask this question every single time: What is the best piece of advice that you've ever received, and why?

**KATE:** Don't take it personally.

**RUTH:** Ah, I love that. It's so good.

**KATE:** It's the hardest advice for me to follow because nine times out of 10, I'm pretty intentional. If I'm mad, I didn't usually just get mad and *duh duh duh*. You knew mad was coming, so it kind of is personal. And if I wildly adore you, I don't just wildly adore anyone. If I wildly adore you, there was thought put into that, too. It's personal. I wildly adore you. So it's hard to kind of go, "Oh," when other people do stuff. It isn't necessarily personal.

**RUTH:** That's a hard one for me, too. But I'm an outcast, so I tend to reject—my deepest fear is rejection, which means I reject other people before they can reject me. But I find I do take things personally, and that's where one of the really big lessons that I've had to learn is that it's not all personal and it's not all about me, so I love this. Really good advice. I'm going to remind myself.

So, finally, last question, where can we find you online?

**KATE:** [Yourcourageouslife.com](http://Yourcourageouslife.com). You want to learn about the Courageous Living Coach Certification, that is at [teamclcc.com](http://teamclcc.com). And I'm [katecourageous](https://www.instagram.com/katecourageous) basically everywhere, like on Instagram and Twitter and Pinterest, except on Facebook, where I'm "Your Courageous Life" again.

**RUTH:** Perfect.

**KATE:** So, if you search for "Kate Swoboda, Courage Habit, Your Courageous Life, or Courage Living Coach Certification," you're going to find me.

**RUTH:** Or you can go to the show notes, and we will link to all of those things in the show notes.

**KATE:** Yes, that's the better part. That's the better thing to do.

**RUTH:** Probably just as easy.

All right. Well, Kate, thank you so much for joining me today. This was so great, so helpful, and you're doing such good, important work, and I know it's going to help a lot of people, so thank you.

**KATE:** Thank you for having me.

Okay, guys, so don't forget that if you would like to get all the show notes for this episode, along with all the links to everything that we talked about, you can find it all at [doitscared.com/episode62](https://doitscared.com/episode62). Once again, get all the show notes and links on our website at [doitscared.com/episode62](https://doitscared.com/episode62).

And then, before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I love, love, love, love, love, love, love, love hearing from you. So if you have any questions about what we talked about today or any other questions that you would just like to ask me, any topics you would like to see addressed on the *Do It Scared* podcast, any feedback about the style of podcast episode that you like to hear, please feel free to reach out either via email, you can email me at [ruth@ruthsoukup.com](mailto:ruth@ruthsoukup.com), or by messaging me on Instagram. I want your feedback. I'm asking for it, so lay it on me, people.

All right. That about does it for this episode of the *Do It Scared* with Ruth Soukup podcast. Thank you so much for joining me today. And if you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes, or better yet, share this episode on your Insta story and tag me to let me know. In fact, the best thing of all would be if you want to do both. And if I repost your story, we will send you a "Do It Scared" T-shirt just for fun. Also, be sure to subscribe either on iTunes or wherever you like to listen so that you are always notified of new episodes, which, by the way, in case you're wondering, come out first thing Monday mornings.

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we continue our "summer of courage stories" with another amazing interview. We will be talking to author and business coach Michael O'Brien about realizing your own potential and declaring your last bad day. It's something he knows all too well, and his story is absolutely incredible and so, so inspiring. Definitely one you do not want to miss. And I will catch you then.