

Heroism and determination at the time of the Holocaust.

Courage, bravery, heroism or fearlessness. No matter what we call them, the meaning and reality of this word will not change. It is a strong and stable will that we all have. It may not seem like it to some, but it is true. We often slumber somewhere in the background before we dare to face our fear. As Paulo Coelho said: "Courage is fear that prays." There will be some truth in that. "He who does not take risks is as if he does not even live. He who does not take risks only survives." There is no need to think deeply about this statement. Courage forces us to change, and fear forces us to be courageous. Everything is interconnected. Once we don't have the courage to take risks, we will never change anything. After all, someone who acts fearlessly has a higher probability of achieving his goal. Fearlessness allows us to overcome fear, maintain willpower and perseverance in difficult situations where it is necessary to defend the good.

My heroes have earned their place in history with fearlessness. Their courage and desire for justice and goodness to prevail forced them to put at stake the most precious thing they had, your life. Their willingness to sacrifice for millions of innocent people propelled them to act and take risks. But their morale was also a helping hand and a crutch of courage.

We know a story that is an endless inspiration to many who seek their courage. Alfréd Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba are a clear example that there is always a way to help. It is enough to find the right motivation, which is worth fighting for and putting your life in danger. A heartbreaking story of two young heroes who did the impossible. In a period of evil and inhumane conditions, they found the courage to resist. But the most important thing about this story is that they were driven to escape not only by the desire for their own freedom, but also by the freedom of others, innocents, whose fates were trapped without hope behind the gates of the Auschwitz Death Factory. Even the intimidation of the essayists did not make them hesitate for a moment in their plan. The desire to save people was greater than the fear of what would follow possible discovery. The flogging and subsequent hanging on the gallows was a clear warning that no one should even think of escaping. Despite all this, they managed to escape on April 7, 1944, the holiday on which Jews commemorate their escape from Egyptian captivity. A new hope was on the horizon. We should not forget the heroes who helped them escape, but they themselves remained behind the gates that separated them from freedom. They entrusted their lives to these two young people. And maybe that's what propelled them forward. They knew that an incredible number of people relied on their rescue and risked detection for

their escape. And so they began a quest for liberation. For the first three days, they hid in fear but patiently. When the situation calmed down a little, they embarked on a long and difficult journey. After 140 kilometres, they saw the light at the end of the tunnel for the first time. They came across honest people and with their help they happily arrived in Žilina, where they wrote their testimony to the world. They managed to save 400,000 Jewish citizens from deportation.

What Wetzler and Vrba have accomplished have earned me recognition. Their story motivates me to fight for what I really desire. It is admirable what they have only done with courage. I am certainly not the only one for whom they are a great inspiration and testimony to how far human courage and motivation go. That's why I chose this story. I do not want to forget what these young men have done. This story is a clear demonstration that if we have the right motivation, and even a little hope and a clear goal, it is always worth fighting for. Even a slight hope gives meaning to our actions.

An equally exceptional example of human cohesion, courage and empathy is the story of the priest Andrei Židisin, who, despite extreme danger, took this risk and saved human lives. Although he was fully aware of the danger that threatened him if the Clay Guard or the Gestapo found out that he was hiding Jews, the solidarity and love for people without distinction was stronger than fear. He had a family that he loved above all else, but his high moral compass did not allow him to behave otherwise. It was not only the duty of the priest to act in accordance with Christian values, but above all it was humanity with a capital No. I had the opportunity to see the recorded online meeting of Mr. Valérie, daughter of Mr. Židišina with the rescued family of Mr. Tomašov and his mother Agnes, who at that time was 14-15 years old. It was full of thanks, warm words and tears. Meeting face to face, even if only at a distance, had tremendous power within it. It is admirable how some good souls are able to go so far in saving one human life, even at the cost of theirs. It is a clear example that human empathy, cohesion, kind-heartedness and, above all, fearlessness have no limits.

I cannot fail to mention one more hero with a precious soul, who excelled in unbridled courage and an infinite desire for good and justice. His deeds were admirable, and few others would have been found with such honest judgment.

Rudolf Löwy – Bardejov Jewish hero – savior of girls. This man decided to use his position and connections to save young Jewish girls and later boys when he heard about the impending deportations to Poland. He acted out of humane conviction and a sense of responsibility to his community. His honor did not allow him to behave otherwise. The instinct

for humanity was stronger, so it overcame and pushed back the fear of endangering one's own life. He took full advantage of his position to delay the date of his first deportation. When he learned that 999 young girls were about to be deported, he couldn't help but think. He headlong set about coming up with a plan. It was a crazy and dangerous idea. He artificially triggered a typhus epidemic by inoculating girls who gradually began to show symptoms. The guardsmen were frightened of possible contagion, so they sent the assembled girls home. They could take advantage of the situation and go into hiding or flee to Hungary. He later applied a similar procedure to boys. However, the guards did not forgive him. Rudolf Löwy had enough money, he could choose to escape or pay for a safe shelter. But instead, he faced humiliation, insults. Finally, his arrest and transfer to Žilina were ordered. There he was subjected to torture and subsequently deported. As a decisive and courageous man, he rightly aroused fear of the Hlinka Guard, which also resulted in the statement "one thousand Jews rather than one Rudolf Löwy. He paid for his unbreakable dedication and dedication to helping the community with his most precious life, his life in a concentration camp

Even though he has been exposed, we must not forget all that he did. He was among those who pointed out that coming out of the crowd and lending a helping hand to defenseless people was the greatest service he could do. Despite evil, God also remained on earth with angels, heroes who were helpful, willing, and ready to help.

Why these stories? Each story was different. A different hero, a different plot, a different background, a different social position in society. But despite all this, they have a lot in common. The power of intrinsic motivation, moral values, resistance to the face of danger, an unwavering desire to save human life. As I mentioned at the beginning, these men have reached the pinnacle of courage, which is why we can rightly call them heroes. They didn't aspire to become them, but they did. They acted out of pure moral conviction that did not allow them otherwise. They did not stand helplessly with folded hands.

The question is whether there would be anyone today who would be willing to risk everything they have, including their life, at the cost of saving someone else's life. Just like that, selflessly? It is their actions, courage and fearlessness that should be a model for us, and we should remember and exalt them. These stories are a mirror of a past that we must never forget, and so even we, the younger generation, cannot take these events as they already were, because we never know on which morning the past will come true again. We have been silent

once before, and that tragic mistake has cost the lives of millions of children, men, women. Let us never again experience such a long, painful, saddening silence.

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