

The Way of Oz

A Guide to Wisdom, Heart, and Courage

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Think about Oz! And the love you may have for the 1939 movie, the original book published in 1900 or any of its 13 sequels.

Think about L. Frank Baum and how this author of *The Wizard of Oz*—through his life experiences—crafted one of the most marvelous archetypal stories about journeys, relationships, loving and serving.

Now imagine how the characters of Oz might be cast into a model for wisdom, heart and courage. The Scarecrow relates to wisdom and learning; the Tin Woodman to heart and loving; and the Cowardly Lion to courage and service.

Dorothy? She is the leadership person—the character with a focus on the future—who brings out the best in others through understanding, heart and her own courage—all cast in a spirit of kindness and service. Dorothy's savvy about planning, diversity, sustainability, scientific and political understanding, and personal responsibility allows her to make significant differences in the lives of others—men, women and creatures (including Toto) alike!

The Wizard? He offers a model for humility because he was humiliated in the first book and the movie. Yet in the Oz sequels, he becomes a truly humble and honest servant with the guidance of Glinda, the Good Witch of the South.

Besides commentary on the characteristics and the overall importance of humility, the Wizard in *The Way of Oz* inspires us to think of the wisdom of Confucius, who proclaimed:

Humility is the solid foundation of all virtues.

And through *The Way of Oz*, we understand the power of integrity, empathy and beneficence to guide one's life—all with ethics in the lead.

Now put the story, the characters and the lessons of the author's life together, and you have *The Way of Oz—A Guide to Wisdom, Heart and Courage*. Or, stated differently, a guide for lifelong

learning, loving and serving—all with a future focus and ethics in the lead. And all crafted for adolescents whose aspirations include pursuit of a college degree or degrees.

But *The Way of Oz* may turn out to be equally valuable for just about anyone who wishes to reorganize their thinking about travels down the Yellow Brick Road of Life. So *The Way of Oz* is at once part drama and part history—blended with practical and philosophically sound advice drawn from many and varied sources, and woven with the principles of secular democracies.

The *Oz Way* elements are powerful because they are cast through an archetypal story written by a man who, despite his foibles and frailties, knew how to relate to others in unique ways. In other words, Frank Baum made a difference, and *The Way of Oz* can make a difference in many peoples' lives.

As the 2011 Leonardo da Vinci graduates leave the commencement ceremony, I hope they will consider five parting messages from *The Way of Oz*:

1. *Develop wisdom through learning and caring for others!*
2. *Fill your heart with love for all creatures and our planet.*
3. *Serve with courage!*
4. *Think about your future—every day.*
5. *Strive for honor with humility, honesty and integrity!*

I hope to see you again on the Yellow Brick Road of Lifelong Learning, Loving and Serving!