

Due date: Saturday, 30 October 2010, 09:05 PM

Last edited: Saturday, 30 October 2010, 10:49 AM (807 words)

In the dictionary there is no definition for inner strength, it is a difficult thing to describe. The best way to think about it is in the words of this poem written by an unknown author. "It is by trial we find, all that we are capable of, the strength which lies beneath. We are not defined by our trials, but how we face them." That is it concisely; when life gives you lemons make lemonade or make grape

juice to make the world wonder how you did it. All of these are anecdotal descriptions of inner strength but it does not show what it

really is. I picked this theme because the women I read about in these

stories touched me with their strength. Being able to say goodbye with

a smile to people who are most likely going to die, helping wounded soldiers and not cracking under extreme conditions not all of these things are in an average day. It is not something that many people, let alone myself get to train for and yet it is possible. It is the type of person I want to be. I can face any obstacle that crosses my

path because of who I am on the inside, just like the women in these

stories.

"I was their wife, their sister, their girlfriend." That is the first piece of Helen Hegelheiner that we get to see. During the war, she was

a flight attendant. Everyday when she went to work soldiers would give

her letters to read that were for their girls back home. The soldiers talked to her and the other flight attendants on the flight over to Vietnam, which is a long flight so it is easy to get friendly with people. Once in Vietnam the soldiers would get off the plane, and possibly never get the chance to get back on another one to head back

home. Helen was the one who said goodbye to them. She looked them in

the eye, smiled and said, "See you later." While other women hid away

in the bathroom and cried, she faced them. She is an example of inner

strength because it took guts to smile at a soldier who may never get

to go home especially when at the end of the day she did. Nevertheless, she chose to be the one to say farewell, even though it was hard and painful. It is something that I am not sure that I could do.

"We saved their lives but what life?" Sylvia Holland was an Army nurse in Vietnam; instead of fighting the Vietcong, she fought wounds, both physical and mental ones. Here, at home in America today many people have a hard time making eye contact with people who are disfigured. This woman, however saw them everyday, she talked with them and touched them. There were those who lost their arms or their legs and even some who had nothing but a torso left. Many people who work in medicine see this type of mutilation often, so what is it that makes Sylvia special? She has inner strength because when the triage and the death started to wear on her she did not give up and go home. She stayed and did her job even though it was a hard one to bear. There were times when men who were close to death or considered "to far gone" to be saved were just left alone to die because there were other people to take care of. I was an EMT for a while and triage is never easy. I respect her because she did it and in the end, I could not.

Truong My Hoa "They tried to make us say 'Down with President Ho!'"

Hoa began participating in the revolution when she was fifteen, she arrested and spent one year (out of eleven) in a tiger cage. No showers, no bathrooms in a tiny space with four other women, they were

all abused by the guards for talking, tortured for information and pressured to denounce her political beliefs. Yet through all of this, she did not give up hope and neither did some of the other women. They

turned their prison into a school whenever possible, learned poetry and evolutionary ethics. Hoa has inner strength because she did not give up even in the face of insurmountable odds. She stuck to her beliefs and her country even though it was completely possible that she would die because of them. I cannot imagine the horrible things that she went through but she made it. I am proud of her for that.

Helen said goodbyes, Sylvia tried to heal soldiers and Hoa was a tigress trapped in a cage. They faced each of their very different trials in individual ways no way consistent with each other but they all stem from the same thing. Those women had inner strength. They had to ability to face the trials that were set before them without giving up and even sometimes with a smile. This is a trait to be admired and I hope that more people can have it especially in this day and age.

Close this window

 [Moodle Docs for this page](#)