

When Courage Speaks, Hope Refuses to Fade

I was not alive in 1986. Like many students my age, I only learned about the EDSA People Power Revolution through textbooks, documentaries, and stories told by my parents and teachers. At first, it felt distant—something important, yes, but far removed from my daily life as a student. But the more I learned about EDSA, the more I realized that its message is not locked in the past. It continues to speak to young Filipinos today, including me, especially when courage feels difficult and hope feels fragile.

From February 22 to 25, 1986, millions of Filipinos gathered along Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, not knowing exactly what would happen next. They did not carry weapons. Many carried rosaries, food, flowers, and their faith in one another. They stood together against a dictatorship that had ruled the country for many years under President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. It was a moment when ordinary people chose to face fear together rather than enduring injustice alone.

Before the revolution, the Philippines was under Martial Law, which was declared in September 1972. During this time, the government had absolute power. Congress was shut down, the media was controlled, and many Filipinos who spoke against the administration were arrested, tortured, or went missing. People were afraid to speak, afraid to ask questions, and afraid to stand out. Freedom, which should have been a right, became a risk.

What eventually led to the People Power Revolution was not just one event, but years of suffering, corruption, and silence. Filipinos grew tired of being powerless in their own country. EDSA happened because people reached a point where fear was no longer stronger than their desire for truth and justice. Their courage did not come from knowing the outcome, came from believing that staying silent would be worse.

As a student, I often ask myself: What does courage look like for someone my age? I am not expected to lead a revolution or stand in front of soldiers. But that does not mean courage is no longer required of me. The challenges my generation face may look different, but they are just as real.

Today, our country still struggles with social inequality, corruption, and political division. One of the biggest challenges we face now is disinformation. False information spreads quickly, especially online, and it often becomes difficult to tell what is true and what is not. Many young people choose to stay silent, not because they do not care, but because they are afraid of being judged, corrected, or attacked.

I see this often on social media. When someone shares an opinion about national issues, there are always comments that mock, insult, or silence them. Because of this, courage today sometimes means simply choosing to speak or even choosing to learn first before speaking. It means asking questions instead of accepting everything we see online as truth.

For me, courage also shows itself in school. It is speaking honestly during group work, even when it might be easier to agree with everyone else. It is admitting mistakes instead of making excuses. It is refusing to cheat, even when pressure is high and others say it is “normal.” These may seem like small things, but they reflect the same values that EDSA stood for—honesty, responsibility, and integrity.

Being part of the school publication has helped me understand this better. Writing requires honesty. As a student contributor, I am expected to verify information, choose my words carefully, and think about how my writing affects others. Sometimes it is tempting to exaggerate or oversimplify issues, but doing so would betray the truth. Choosing accuracy over attention is not always easy, but it is a form of courage I am still learning to practice.

Hope is another important lesson that EDSA teaches us. Many people think hope is just being positive or believing that things will somehow work out. But the People Power Revolution shows us that hope is not passive. The Filipinos who stood at EDSA hoped for change, but they also acted. They showed up. They stayed. They protected one another.

In our time, hope works the same way. Hoping for a better Philippines means choosing to act with honesty even when corruption seems common. It means caring about issues even when they feel overwhelming. It means believing that our actions matter, even when we are told that we are “too young” to make a difference.

Sometimes, it is discouraging to see the same problems repeat themselves in our country. Every election season, many young people feel frustrated watching unqualified or questionable leaders win positions of power. It can make us feel powerless, as if the lessons of EDSA were forgotten. I admit that there are moments when I feel this way too.

But EDSA reminds me that change does not start with leaders alone. It starts with people. It starts with citizens who refuse to forget history and refuse to accept injustice as normal. Even if we cannot vote yet, we can still learn, question, and prepare ourselves to become responsible citizens in the future.

If EDSA were to happen today, it might not look like millions of people gathering on one road. It might look like students educating themselves about history instead of believing distorted narratives. It might look like young people correcting misinformation respectfully. It might look like choosing empathy over anger in discussions about politics and society.

Courage today is often quiet. It does not always come with applause or recognition. Sometimes it is simply the decision to stay informed, to care, and to keep hoping even when it feels easier to give up. These quiet choices matter more than we realize.

The spirit of EDSA lives on not because we commemorate it every year, but because we choose to live out its values. It lives when we remember that freedom was

not given easily, and that democracy requires participation and responsibility. It lives when young Filipinos decide that honesty still matters, even in a world that often rewards shortcuts.

As a young Filipino, I may not fully understand everything about politics or history yet. But I understand this: courage and hope are choices we make every day. They are not reserved for heroes in textbooks. They are practiced in classrooms, homes, and communities.

The EDSA People Power Revolution teaches me that even in the darkest times, courage can speak—and when it does, hope refuses to fade. By choosing to act with honesty, speaking up for what is right, and continue hoping despite challenges, we keep the spirit of EDSA alive—not just in memory, but in action.