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MARGIE WARRELL

Best-selling author of STOP PLAYING SAFE

BRAVE

50 EVERYDAY ACTS *of* COURAGE
to THRIVE *in* WORK, LOVE *and* LIFE



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Margie sets herself apart with a powerful and inspiring message, paired with her energetic, down-to-earth and disarming delivery. Margie's insights helped me bolster my personal vision for a candid, collaborative and forward-leaning workplace. She provided practical advice on how to challenge ourselves and others to be more courageous, take more risks and find more success.

**Kathy Calvin, President and CEO,
United Nations Foundation**

Nothing worthwhile is achieved living timidly and avoiding all risk. *Brave* will help you build the confidence to dare more boldly and live more bravely.

**Carolyn Cresswell, Company Founder and
Managing Director, Carman's Kitchen**

Fear and doubt are the two greatest enemies to success in business and life. Written for busy people on the go, this practical and encouraging book will guide you to achieve your greatest goals in work and life.

**Kate Carnell AO, CEO Australian Chamber
of Commerce and Industry**

Brave will help you grow your 'courage muscles' to achieve your biggest dreams and wildest ambitions. Read it often. Practise it daily.

Emma Isaacs, CEO, Business Chicks

If you have ever doubted your ability to achieve these wildly big goals, you don't need to any longer! *Brave* needs to become your most valuable book as it will give you useful insight, tips and tricks to ensure you live your life fully!

**Paul McKeown, Head of Retail,
The Body Shop**

Many people doubt themselves too much, and back themselves too little (particularly us women!). If you want to live more bravely, more boldly, and more fully, this book was written for you! It's a game changer.

Deborah Hutton, media personality

A unique blend of the practical and inspirational, *Brave* will help you overcome the fears and doubts that are holding you back in your career, business, relationships and life.

**Joe Powell, Managing Director,
SEEK Employment & Learning**

Courage is the basis for all success. Without bravery and courage you can go through life making excuses about why you can't or shouldn't do things. Our first instinct is often to say no as it's easier and feels safer. But true courage comes from saying YES—to yourself, your ambitions and your happiness. Read this book and you'll be on your way to a bigger, braver and more fulfilling life. Enjoy.

**Janine Allis, Founder of Boost Juice and
Executive Director, Retail Zoo**

Courage is more needed than ever in today's 'play it safe' world, where taking the soft option can be all too easy. This book will help you to build the courage needed to do the right thing rather than the easy thing—to go out on a limb, have tough conversations, challenge the norm and risk failing. It should be read widely.

Michael O'Keefe, CEO, Aesop

Brave is better than a book—it's a manual for life full of wise, useful and actionable advice that only an author who has earned her stripes—through triumph and tragedy—could write. Be braver. This book will show you how.

**Bill Treasurer, author of *Right Risk* and
CEO, Giant Leap Consulting**

Brave is the handbook you need to start living your life more purposefully, passionately and courageously. No more holding yourself back or dimming yourself down! You deserve a life you love and this book will help you live it!

**Michelle McQuaid, best-selling author of
*Your Strengths Blueprint***

About the Author



A *Forbes* columnist, best-selling author and media commentator, Margie Warrell is a thought leader in human behavior who is passionate about empowering people to live and lead more courageously.

Drawing on her background in business, psychology, coaching and diverse life experiences, Margie runs leadership, resilience, communication and courage-building programs worldwide. Her clients include NASA, British Telecom, The Body Shop, Australian Federal Police, Wells Fargo Bank and Accenture.

Margie walks her talk when it comes to living bravely. She's had many adventures since growing up on a dairy farm in Victoria, Australia, including having four children in five years while relocating to three countries! She has ventured off the beaten track in over 60 countries through the Middle East, South America, Central Asia and beyond. She also spent three years working in Papua New Guinea.

As the founding CEO of *Global Courage*, a women's leadership organisation, Margie is a passionate advocate for gender equality and emboldening women to be more powerful catalysts for change. She has spoken at global women's events with the United Nations Foundation, Ernst & Young, Oracle and many more. She is also an Ambassador for Beyond Blue.

Best-selling author of *Find Your Courage* (McGraw-Hill) and *Stop Playing Safe* (Wiley), Margie regularly shares her insights with leading media such as *The Today Show*, Fox News, *Sunrise*, CNN, and Al Jazeera. Her expertise has also been featured in *Psychology Today*, *BRW*, *O Magazine* and *Wall Street Journal*. Margie travels regularly between Australia and the USA. For more information visit margiewarrell.com.

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Introduction

How many times have you kept your mouth shut when there was something you really wanted to say? How often have you held back from doing something for fear of failing or appearing foolish? When did you ‘go along to get along’, only to regret it later? Do you sometimes tell yourself that you’re not smart enough, strong enough or brave enough to make that change or take that chance?

If you’ve ever thought to yourself, ‘If I just had the guts’, you’re not alone.

None of us is immune to fear—of failing, criticism, rejection or being ‘found out’ as unworthy in some way. Yet, left unchecked, our fears can confine our lives in countless ways. Which is why living fully is synonymous with living bravely: being willing to back yourself and take a risk, speak your truth and exit your comfort zone to go after what you truly want, change what you don’t and honour yourself fully.

PLAYING SAFE AND AVOIDING
RISK *doesn’t* MAKE US MORE
SECURE, IT MAKES US *less* SO.

The truth is that living bravely is not easy. If it were, we all would be! There’s no magic formula or pain-free, 10-step plan to permanently liberate yourself from fear. The only way to be brave is to act bravely—day in, day out—when times are easy and life feels good *and* when times are tough and it doesn’t. It’s why I’ve written this book: to help you strengthen your muscles for living bravely. Not just because of what you can accomplish when you do, but because of who you will become in the process. Stronger.

Wiser. Happier. More purposeful. More resilient. And more whole. As E. E. Cummings once wrote, 'It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are'.

I discovered the power of 'training the brave' while learning how to ride horses growing up on a small dairy farm in rural Australia. I was six the first time I got on a horse at our local show. It was very exciting but...oh...the ground seemed so far down. With each lap of the pony ring, my fear began to abate, so much so that by the time I was being plucked off the saddle I'd decided that riding horses wasn't so scary after all (at least not small ones).

Being relatively isolated from the activities available to city kids, I decided to try my luck in soliciting my parents to buy me a pony for my tenth birthday. I had no great expectation I'd get one. A drought had meant that money was tight, but my dad managed to get enough dollars together to buy me an old, beginner-friendly gelding named Roby. He arrived on the back of Dad's old cattle trailer the day I turned 10.

COURAGE ISN'T ABOUT *fearlessness*. IT'S TAKING ACTION EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE SCARED.

Always careful about getting value for money, Mum and Dad saw no sense in getting me a small pony I would soon outgrow. Their logic made sense. As I stared up at Roby, 14 hands high, I felt particularly small. However, given that I was now double-digits old, I was determined to make the most of this special birthday present and I set about learning how to ride him.

Every morning before school I'd get up early and head out to the front paddock to catch Roby. A wily old thing, he didn't make it easy on me and I'd often have to enlist the help of my siblings to round him up and put on his bridle. As it so often does, my

persistence paid off. By the time I was 11 years old, I was a half competent rider (albeit a rough one) and signing up to compete in the local gymkhana. The problem was, Roby was too slow for the barrel race and no amount of kicking could prod him beyond a sluggish canter. So, before I turned 12, I was back to lobbying my parents — this time for a horse with more ‘go’. Call it good luck, the law of attraction or the power of a child’s prayer, but just after my twelfth birthday we won a horse in a raffle. Twenty cents a ticket, or six for a dollar. ‘The perfect price!’ Dad said.

Smokey (ingeniously named because he was the grey colour of smoke!) arrived straight from the rugged mountains of the Victorian high country and had only two speeds: zero and a full gallop. Needless to say, he had more ‘go’ than Roby. Much more. So I had to dig deep and dial up my courage yet again. Within a few months, and after numerous falls and close scrapes with trees, I’d mastered Smokey and began winning those barrel races. Yee ha!

THE MORE OFTEN YOU *act* BRAVELY, THE MORE YOU GROW YOUR ‘MUSCLES FOR LIFE’.

I don’t share this story to impress you with my horsemanship. In fact, by the time I was 17 I had largely given up riding because I was too busy finishing my high-school studies and flipping burgers in the nearby village cafe to earn money for university. Rather, I share it because learning to ride Roby, and later Smokey, taught me early on that the more often we act bravely, the braver we become.

Building courage by taking action amid our self-doubts, misgivings and fears is a lesson I’ve learned many times since leaving my parents’ farm — first to study business at university in Melbourne, later backpacking around the globe and starting my first career in

the corporate world, and then forging a second career while raising four young children. Time and time again I've discovered that the only way to tame fear is by stepping right through the raw heart of it. By staring down our fear and pursuing challenges that inspire us even as they scare us (like having that fourth child!), we nurture strengths, hone talents and unlock potential that would otherwise have remained dormant.

EVERY WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOUR REQUIRES MAKING YOURSELF *vulnerable.*

As you look back on your life up to now, I'm sure you can recall having to do things that scared you at the time, but which no longer do. Having done them many times, the fear they once incited was replaced with a quiet confidence that flowed into other areas of your life. Bravery (and courage—I use the words synonymously throughout this book) does that. In fact, clinical studies confirm that by practising new behaviours we build and then strengthen neural pathways in our brain so that, over time, they become our unconscious default behaviours. Likewise, when you consciously choose to say and do things outside your comfort zone, you build your 'courage muscles' for taking on bigger challenges and for responding more bravely to those that land unwanted in your lap...because, sooner or later, they will!

While the lessons and insights I share in the pages to follow are supported by a wealth of psychological research, I had no desire to write an intellectual exploration of risk-taking, the neuro-science of fear or how to overcome it. There are many excellent books written by research psychologists and neuroscientists that do just that. Rather, I wrote *Brave* to help you become more conscious of where fear may be holding the balance of power in your life and to share practical ways for you to reclaim that power so you can make

more conscious and courageous choices to truly thrive in your work, relationships and life (no matter what is going on around you!).

TO THRIVE IN OUR CULTURE OF
FEAR WE MUST NOT LET IT SET UP
residence IN OUR LIVES.

Fear is a powerful emotion wired into our psychological DNA to protect us from pain. Yet left unchecked it can infiltrate into every corner of our lives, erode our confidence, amplify our anxiety and steer us down a path of cautious, comfortable—but oh so vanilla—mediocrity. Our culture, and the media that shape it, thrives on fear. Fear sells. Fear wins votes. Fear feeds on itself. Needless to say, at every turn we're bombarded with reasons to feel afraid, play safe, settle and sell out, batten down the hatches, stock up on canned food and buy that Hummer! Yet in our increasingly anxious, accelerated and uncertain world, it's only by discerning the legitimate fears that are serving us from the imagined and sensationalised ones that aren't that we can forge the deeply authentic, meaningful and truthful lives we yearn to live. Only then can we live powerfully, consciously choosing to move towards the aspirations that inspire us, rather than away from the fears that stifle and diminish us.

COURAGE IS A *habit* AND LIKE ALL
HABITS, IT CAN BE LEARNED.

Just as the way you fold your arms—right over left or left over right—is something you do without any thought (go on, try it now), so too is how you engage in the world around you. The more often you act a certain way, the more habitual that behaviour becomes, until it's second nature and hard to do any other way. And

so it is with living bravely. The more often you ‘train the brave’ that waits quietly within you, the braver you become. One act of raw courage at a time, one day at a time, over the passage of time *you become what you do*: brave, strong, self-reliant and equipped with everything it takes to pursue your greatest aspirations.

Sir Edmund Hillary, who, along with Tenzing Norgay, was the first man to ascend Mt Everest, did not begin his mountaineering career by taking on the world’s tallest mountain. He started by climbing the smaller peaks in his homeland of New Zealand. There, he built up the skill, strength, stamina and courage needed to raise his sights to the most indomitable summit of all. Likewise, as Dr Gordon Livingston wrote, ‘If we aspire to be brave we must practice it in small ways so we are prepared when more is required. Because sooner or later, more will be required’.

Turn on the news today and you’ll find reports of people who seem hell-bent on inciting fear and oppressing freedom. While we’re right to look to our leaders to act with courage, we must first look to ourselves—into our own hearts, homes, workplaces and communities—and ask ourselves, ‘Where am I failing to act with the courage I wish to see more of in others?’ Only when those of us with the freedom to stand up, to speak up and to champion for change find the courage to do so, can we create a more peaceful, equitable and secure world for those who still don’t. Just imagine the world we could create if we each took personal responsibility and all committed to living braver lives driven by what inspired us rather than what scared us.

GROWTH AND COMFORT *never* RIDE THE SAME HORSE.

Brave is not a book to be read only once, nor does it have to be read in any particular order beyond the first part, which outlines the 10 ‘building blocks’ for living bravely. It’s a book to be read

with an open heart, an open mind and a pen in your hand. Pick it up whenever you have a moment to yourself, lay your hand on its cover and trust that whatever page falls open holds a message that's beckoning you to greater bravery in some aspect of your life. At the end of each chapter I've given you a short 'Train the Brave' challenge, which invites you to move from 'thinking' to 'doing'. At the end of the book is an invitation to join my *10-day Train the Brave Challenge* to further help you step boldly into action. Nothing beats it!

Growth and comfort never ride the same horse. I learned that growing up on the farm and I've learned it countless times since. Living a deeply meaningful and rewarding life calls on you to step outside your comfort zone—to stretch yourself and to trust yourself—again and again and again. While it's never easy, it's always worthwhile because while bravery won't always guarantee your success—in work, in love and in life—it will always precede it.

Dare bravely. Work bravely. Love bravely. Lead bravely. Live bravely.

Living your life fully—purposefully, passionately and wholeheartedly—is a life-long journey of learning to embrace your vulnerability and accept your fallibility, all the while trusting in yourself that you were born for a mighty purpose and are stronger than anything you ever face. If this book helps you to see this truth more clearly, even in some small way, then it has served its purpose. In doing so, you've helped me to serve mine. For that I'm deeply honoured and immensely grateful.

—Chapter 10—



LIVE BY
—*design*—
NOT BY DEFAULT

Two months prior to meeting my husband Andrew I'd returned from a year of backpacking around the world. So on our first date I think he hardly got a word in as I regaled him with my adventures. (He'd probably tell you nothing's changed, which would be nonsense!) We were engaged the following year (another time where my intuition served me well) and married 10 months later. During that 'honeymoon' period we talked a lot about the life we wanted to create together. We wanted at least three kids, maybe four. We wanted to share adventures and we wanted to spend time working and living abroad.

At the time, we both worked for large multinationals so we set about speaking with our employers about the possibility of

international assignments. I was thinking London, New York, Hong Kong... somewhere cosmopolitan and pulsing with life. So, I remember the evening when Andrew and I sat down to a pasta dinner and he shared a promising conversation he'd had that day with his manager about a possible overseas posting. I also remember nearly choking on my meatball when he said where: Papua New Guinea. While it wasn't our ideal destination, it was the only offer on the table, so we decided, 'What the heck!'

Four months later we were packing our belongings into boxes to embark on a three-year assignment living in PNG's capital Port Moresby, an adventure that would both shape us and expand the horizon of our life together. Of course, not everyone is excited by the idea of living abroad, particularly not in a city rated as one of the world's least liveable (outranked only by Dhaka). However, unless you take time to decide what you want to paint upon the canvas of your life, how will you know where to focus your time, which opportunities to pursue and seize, which to decline and the sorts of people you want to share your journey with? You won't.

BRAVERY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH.
IT MUST BE CHANNELLED TOWARD
A *bigger* VISION.

Too many people spend more time thinking about what they want to do on their annual holiday than what they want to do with their life. With no clear intention about the life they want to create, they can end up meandering through their days, living aimlessly and passively at the mercy of the circumstances that happen upon them. Any area of your life where you have no vision of what you intend to create lacks a personal compass to help you navigate forward. Without that compass it's all too easy to find yourself living like a ship adrift at sea, at the whim of the winds, tides and currents and you are likely to end up in a place you would never consciously have

chosen. As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote, 'To live is to choose, but to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there'.

I'm not saying that you have to know exactly what you want to be doing or where you want to be living 10 years from now, nor the specific person you'll marry or what you'll call your children or where'll you retire. I'm simply saying that if you aren't clear about the types of pursuits, experiences and relationships that 'fill your cup', you can end up with either an empty one or a full one that leaves you indifferent, despairing or hungry for something else.

Living by design is about being intentional about what you do each day, clear about why you do what you do and why you don't do what you don't do. It's about being willing to take a step back, polishing the lens through which you're viewing the world, challenging your perceptions, cross-examining your choices and reassessing your actions. It's about letting go the fear that you're supposed to be anywhere else than where you are right now, but having the courage to be more deliberate about what you want for your future.

YOU CAN'T *live* INTENTIONALLY IF YOU'RE FOREVER LIVING HURRIEDLY.

So how do you do that? You start by giving yourself permission to slow down. To stop running. Stop hurrying. Stop multitasking. Stop turning yourself inside out in an effort to be all things to all people. Only when you stop with all your busy 'doing' can you reconnect to your 'being' and to what you yearn for most. Then, and only then, will you be able to muster up the courage to say 'no' to whatever you've been doing that doesn't move you towards it and shout a big, brave '*YES!*' to what does.

Whatever the state of your heart, your health or your life right now, there's nothing—*nothing*—stopping you from starting right now to live your life by design, rather than by default. There's nothing—*nothing*—stopping you from taking five minutes right now to make peace with your past and to connect with your heart's deepest longing for your future. And there's nothing—*nothing*—stopping you right now from breathing deeply, really deeply, right to the bottom of your soul, so that you can get fully present to the wonder that is your life. To accepting it, cherishing it, marvelling at it for all that it is, and for all that it isn't, so that you can re-engage with the world more purposefully, more compassionately and more wholeheartedly.

CLARIFYING YOUR HIGHEST INTENTION FOR YOUR LIFE WILL *transform* HOW YOU LIVE IT.

Creating a vision for your life and then working intentionally towards it won't insulate you from life's unexpected trials, twists and turns. (I had three miscarriages and a gun pointed at my head in an armed robbery during my time in Papua New Guinea.) But it will put you in the driver's seat, helping you to see where you need to speak up, push back, step out or forge a different path from the one others want for you. And when your world tilts on its axis (as it inevitably will), living your life intentionally—by design, not default—will help you get back on your feet faster. It will also help you notice beauty you may otherwise have missed and deepen your gratitude for all the experiences that have brought you to where you are right now and have shaped the person you've become. Whether or not you're conscious of it, every intention sets energy into motion...for better or worse. Set your highest intention for your life and you can't go wrong.



TRAIN -the- BRAVE

Everything good in the world once began with a positive intention. So begin something good in your life today by giving yourself a few minutes to clarify your highest intention in each of the following areas of your life (feel free to add to or modify these to work for you):

- *Family and home life.* What are your highest intentions for your closest relationships? What sort of environment do you want to create at home? How do you want to feel about those you live with and love most? How do you want them to treat and feel about you?
- *Other relationships.* What kinds of relationships do you want to invest in, personally and professionally? What would there be more of? What would there be less of?
- *Health and wellbeing.* What is your highest intention for your optimal wellbeing—body, mind and spirit?
- *Wealth and finances.* What relationship do you want to have with money? What do you need to attend to in order to create the sense of prosperity you seek?
- *Work, career and business.* What is your highest intention for the work you do each day and the impact it makes on others? What strengths do you want to nurture? Who are you when you are at your best at work?
- *Recreation and hobbies.* What activities would bring you a greater sense of fulfilment, joy and fun? What will make you feel more whole, healthy and fully alive?
- *Community and contribution.* What contribution do you want to make? What importance do you want to place on kindness, generosity and compassion?

—Chapter 16—



BE WILLING

— *to* —

ROCK THE BOAT

In my ‘first career’ I landed what I thought was a pretty plum job working in marketing for a large multinational. It had been pitched as a really important position, with a lot of exciting opportunities for me to really make my mark. To my dismay, within a couple months of arriving I discovered the reality was very different. I found myself working in a very dysfunctional team with a manager who was clearly either going through a mid-life crisis or just more focused on other things outside our department. I suspect both. Day after day I would show up and try to make my mark on the role with close to no direction and zero feedback.

As the months passed, I found myself increasingly disillusioned. By the time I was nearing a year in the role I decided I could bear it no longer and began looking for a new position outside the company. At

the exit interview with the department director, he asked me why I was leaving. I decided I had nothing to lose and may as well be candid with him. To my surprise he conveyed sincere disappointment and then asked why I hadn't spoken up earlier to share my concerns as he would have appreciated the opportunity to have addressed them. The truth was, I was simply too timid to rock the boat and too afraid of the fallout. The lesson was an important one. When we cower from addressing issues for fear of rocking the boat, we sell out on ourselves and can end up being rocked out of it anyway.

When I look back on some of the not-so-pleasant experiences in my career and relationships, on every single occasion I can identify where I held back from confronting an issue when I shouldn't have because I was afraid someone might think I was being difficult, hard to get along with, uncooperative or pushy. I was trying to be a nice person — agreeable and easy to work with. Alas, I was trying too hard.

CHALLENGING THE NORM CAN BE *risky*, BUT NO LESS THAN BEING OVERLY AGREEABLE.

I like nice people. Who doesn't, right? But, like every virtue, too much niceness can have a downside. Of course, being agreeable, affable and amenable is often a great thing, helping you to build trusting and rewarding relationships. Likewise, no-one likes someone who is forever forcing their opinion, constantly argumentative and overly demanding. However, if you're not willing to push back from time to time, you can find yourself feeling increasingly resentful and frustrated, and unable to accomplish what you want.

Ita Buttrose once shared with me that the world would be a very dull place if no-one ever rocked the boat. Likewise, if all you ever do is 'go along to get along' you'll sometimes diminish yourself and deprive others of the impact you'd make by speaking up and

putting forward your opinion, even if it ruffles the odd feather. Sure, there'll be people who won't always agree with you. Some may think you're being a pain in the butt. Criticism and confrontation may ensue. However, in today's workplace where 'yes-men' (and women) who are quick to take the safe option can seem all too plentiful, those who are willing to speak their mind—courteously, but candidly—not only add more value, but become more valued by those around them. As Margaret Thatcher once said, 'If you set out to be liked, you will accomplish nothing'.

HOW TO *push* BACK WITHOUT BEING PUSHY

There is both an art and a science to knowing how to push back without coming across as pushy. Here are five suggestions to help you do just that.

1. DON'T MAKE PEOPLE WRONG

If you've ever had someone challenge your opinion, even gently, you'll have experienced how quickly it can make you feel defensive, as though you were under personal attack (even if you intellectually knew you weren't!). Likewise, if what you have to say may be threatening to others, be very clear in distinguishing between the opinion you're pushing back against and the person who holds it. When people perceive that you're trying to put them down or lay blame, they instinctively go into the defensive. So instead of saying 'yes, but ...', say 'yes, and ...'. The former may come across as combative while the latter acknowledges their view as valid and invites further discussion.

2. ENQUIRE BEFORE ADVOCATING

We all like to think our way of seeing things is the right way. So before you try to convince someone otherwise, take time

to understand how they came to see things as they do. This moves you from advocating for your opinion to enquiring about theirs. When people sense you're genuinely trying to understand their perspective, they become more receptive to yours.

3. START WITH WHAT YOU BOTH CARE ABOUT

Whether it's a mutual concern for the bottom line or the state of your relationship, make sure you frame your opinion in the context of what you both care about. That way, people won't see you as arguing *against* them as much as trying to work *with* them to create a better outcome. It can subtly shift the emotional space from being combative to collaborative.

4. ARM YOURSELF WITH SOLUTIONS, NOT COMPLAINTS

It's easy to complain. It's why so many people excel at it. It's not so easy to find a practical solution that takes care of everyone's (not just your own) concerns. So whenever you can, come armed with a suggestion that addresses the issue, along with examples of where your idea has worked for others. Since most people tend towards risk-aversion, sharing how others have been successful in similar situations can lessen misgivings and increase buy-in. If you have no solution, then enlist their support in finding one.

5. KNOW WHEN TO LET IT REST

You won't always get others to see things your way so know when to let it go and move on. At least now people know where you stand and you can either accept things as they are or make other plans. Either way, you'll have built self-respect for making a stand and likely also earned the respect of those you challenged for the courage it took you to do so.



TRAIN -the- BRAVE

Saying something that rubs against the consensus opinion can cause friction. However, being too agreeable when you need to speak assertively can put your self-respect at risk. How is your fear of rocking the boat (and being regarded as bossy or pushy or even difficult to get along with) keeping you from speaking up more bravely?

—Chapter 24—



BE THE LEADER

—you would—

LOVE TO HAVE

Sometimes when I'm running leadership programs in organisations, I ask people to put up their hand if they see themselves as a leader. It's always a good way for me to get a read of the room; to learn how many people perceive themselves in terms of their power, influence and ability to effect change.

Of course it's easier to feel like you're a leader if you're in a designated leadership role. It can be harder to feel like a leader if you aren't. But the reality is that everyone, regardless of their position, power or personality type, has the ability to lead others.

All leadership begins within, by owning your power outwards to positively affect those around you.

I've met and worked with many people in senior positions of leadership over the years. Some have been quite charismatic, with a special way of making everyone around them feel valued. Others have been more introverted and less at home in a crowd. Some have been true visionaries; others happier in the details.

What sets the best leaders apart isn't their superior intelligence, charismatic charm, a strategic mind or any of the other traits we often associate with leadership. It's who they are as human beings: authentic, purposeful, trustworthy, unpretentious, reflective and courageous in their own way. Yes, they have healthy egos, but they haven't been run by them. Yes, they are ambitious, but none are arrogant. And while they all hold positions of power, none are changed by it except to be even more purposeful in how they use it.

LEADERSHIP IS THE DOMAIN OF ANYONE WITH THE *courage* TO ACT WITH IT.

The heart of leadership is not about formal power, status or strategic thinking. It's about making a choice to park your doubts and lay your reputation and sense of security on the line for a cause—whether a corporate vision or social value—that is bigger than yourself. Accordingly, all leadership begins with self-leadership. You can't hope to influence and create change in the world around you until you've taken on the hard work of creating change in the world within you. Likewise, it doesn't matter what position you hold or how impressive your résumé is (or not), your ability to positively influence others to do more, dream more and become more begins with your ability to do so yourself.

YOU LEAD BY VIRTUE OF WHO *you* ARE, NOT THE POSITION YOU HOLD.

You lead every time you let your imagination off the leash and connect with a vision that truly inspires you. You lead every time you set a bold course despite your misgivings. You lead every time you speak up about what's important to you. You lead every time you venture onto new ground. You lead every time you stick your neck out for what you believe in. You lead every time you do what's right over what's easy, particularly when it costs you. And you lead every time you encourage another person to expand their own horizon — to dare more, do more, give more and become more. And while people may not see you as a leader right away, when you consistently act like one you'll find they soon start to catch on.

WE AREN'T ALL MADE TO BE A CEO, BUT WE ARE ALL CALLED TO MAKE OUR *mark*.

Great leaders don't get to be where they are because of the power they've been given, but because of how they used the power they've always had. The same power resides in you. Don't get me wrong though. Not everyone has what it takes to be CEO of a large multinational. But then, the vast majority of people wouldn't want to be! That's because we rarely aspire towards that for which we have little natural disposition. But each of us, regardless of our age, position or the authority bestowed upon us, can be a catalyst for positive change in our workplace, family, community, society and beyond. You are no exception.

DON'T WAIT TO BE TOLD YOU'RE A LEADER. ASSUME *leadership*.

If you want to develop the quality of leadership, you must begin by acting as though you already have it. And so, whatever self-limiting story you have about yourself and your ability to lead, know this: *It's just a story*. Within you lies the ability to achieve significant and important things through the relationships you cultivate with others. But before you can lead others to higher ground, you must first lead yourself.

No-one will see you as a leader until you do. So don't wait to be made a leader; assume leadership. Not in an arrogant way. Not in a way that disrespects the position of others, but in a way that lets everyone know that you own your personal power, know your value and want to add more of it. Starting right now, park any old beliefs that limit your influence and admit to owning your innate power to effect positive change. Because, quite simply, that's what is at the heart of all leadership.



TRAIN -the- BRAVE

You don't need a title to be a leader. You don't need approval either. You just need the courage to step up to the plate and lead. So from today, walk as a leader, talk as a leader, think as a leader and act as a leader. Repeat again tomorrow. Over time your influence will spread. Try it!

“MY GREATEST **CONCERN** IS NOT
WHETHER YOU HAVE FAILED,
BUT WHETHER YOU ARE
CONTENT WITH YOUR FAILURE.

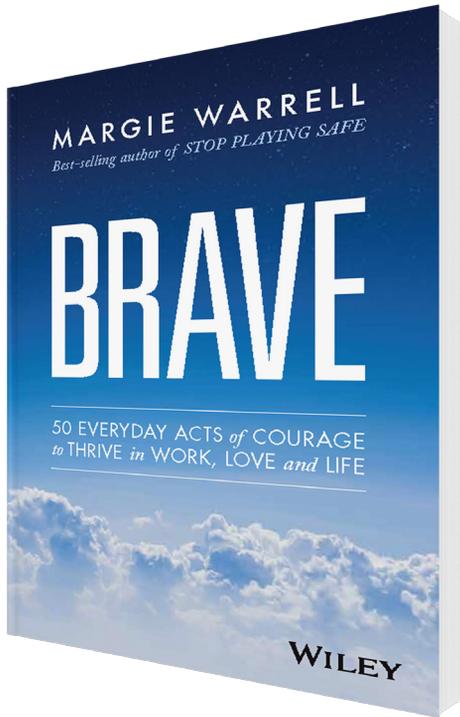


—
Abraham Lincoln
—

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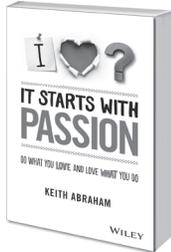
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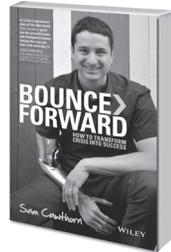
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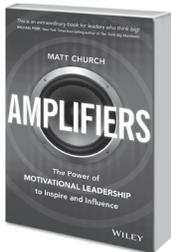
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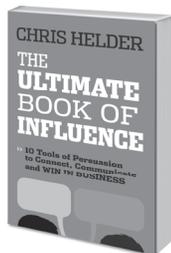
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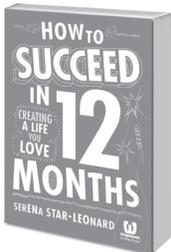
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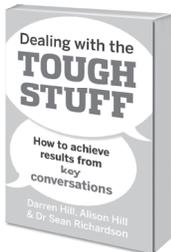
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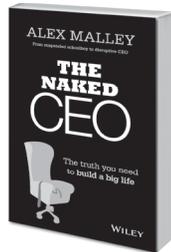
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WHAT WOULD YOU DO TODAY IF YOU WERE BEING BRAVE?

Courage begets courage. It's a habit. Doing something brave every day — no matter how small — unlocks new possibilities and grows your 'courage muscles' to thrive in your work, relationships and life.

Drawing on her background in business, psychology and coaching, best-selling author Margie Warrell guides you past the fears that keep you from making the changes and taking the chances to create your ideal life.

Learn how to shape your circumstances so they don't shape you. The everyday acts of bravery in this book will empower you to:

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- fail forward, risk rejection, and bounce back faster
- be more resilient in tough circumstances and with difficult people
- quiet your inner critic, take more chances and dare more boldly.

In today's uncertain times, fear can unconsciously direct our lives. Start small, dare big, and begin today to live with greater purpose, passion and courage.



MARGIE WARRELL provides leadership, communication, and courage-building programs for organisations including NASA, UN Foundation, AOL and Accenture. As a columnist for *Forbes* and *Huffington Post*, her advice is featured throughout leading global media. Margie is also a mother of four children.

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