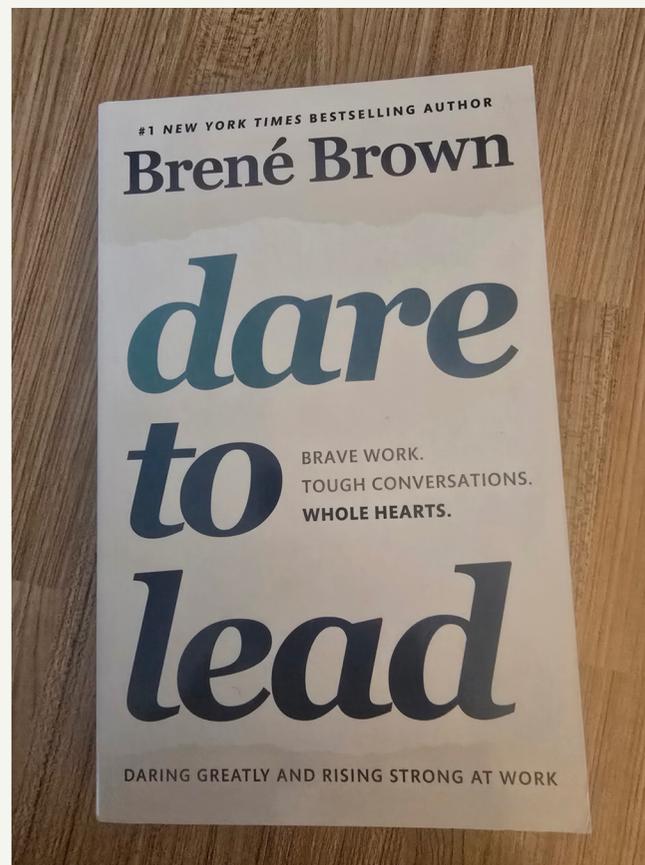


DARE TO LEAD

Brave Work | Tough Conversations | Whole Hearts



What if the real reason so many capable, high-achieving women feel stuck in their careers isn't a lack of confidence, but a surplus of self-protection?

In this article, learn why courage, not confidence, is the missing link for women's career progression and how 'Dare to Lead' can help you move forward in your career.

INTRODUCTION

As someone deeply committed to supporting professional women in overcoming confidence challenges, especially those stemming from imposter syndrome, both in 1:1 coaching and through our group coaching programme, ✨**Elevate Her**✨, I'm always seeking resources that offer practical, evidence-based guidance.

Another book that stands out in this regard is **Dare to Lead** by **Brené Brown** (a bestselling author, and a globally recognised thought leader on courage, vulnerability, shame, and leadership).

Dare to Lead calls for a shift away from armour-plated leadership towards courageous leadership rooted in vulnerability, clarity, and values.

Brené challenges the myth that strong leaders have it all figured out, arguing instead that the most effective leaders are those willing to be seen, ask hard questions, and have uncomfortable conversations

This is a must-read if you want to lead with authenticity, build trust without burning out, and stop letting fear, perfectionism, or self-doubt quietly dictate your career decisions.

*Courage
is
contagious.*



KEY INSIGHTS

- Courage is not confidence - it's the willingness to show up, even when the outcome is uncertain
- Vulnerability is a leadership skill, not a weakness
- Clear values and boundaries are essential for sustainable leadership
- Brave cultures are built through conversations, not charisma

Here I share my take on each of the chapters from the book:

Rumbling with vulnerability - leaning into uncertainty strengthens trust and decision-making. It means openly acknowledging what you don't know, rather than pretending to have all the answers.

I remember being in a standalone HR role in my early career riddled with self-doubt and imposter syndrome and felt like I had to have all the answers or people would think I didn't know what I was doing. However, I found that by admitting uncertainty, it signalled honesty and authenticity, making others more trusting of my intentions and judgements.

People feel safer to share their own doubts, ideas, and feedback, which strengthens psychological safety and collective trust. Leaders and teams are more likely to seek input from others, strengthening decisions through diverse perspectives and shared ownership.



KEY INSIGHTS

Living into our values - translating abstract values into everyday leadership behaviours. This means making your values explicit, actionable, and observable and an ongoing effort to embed them in routines, model them consistently, and create systems for accountability and recognition. This approach builds a culture where values are truly lived, not just stated.

Tailor the translation of your values to fit your team's context, challenges, and goals. Involve team members in the process to ensure relevance and buy-in. When you consistently model the behaviours you expect from others, recognise and celebrate when team members demonstrate values in action, and provide constructive feedback when there's a gap.

A key insight for me here was that we don't have a different set of values for work and home. Brené also advocates that we only really have 1-2 core values, everything else leads off from these.

Core values are the deeply held beliefs that guide your decisions, attitudes, and behaviours. They act as your internal compass, shaping what feels right, meaningful, or in conflict. When you know your values, you can consciously design a life and career that honours them, leading to greater fulfilment, clarity, and resilience.



KEY INSIGHTS

BRAVING trust - a practical framework for building and repairing trust at work:

Boundaries - you respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.

Reliability - you do what you say you'll do. This means staying aware of your competencies and limitations, so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.

Accountability - you own your mistakes, apologise, and make amends.

Vault - you don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.

Integrity - you choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.

Nonjudgment - I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment.

Generosity - you extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.



KEY INSIGHTS

Learning to rise - use failure and feedback as data, not personal verdicts. Using failure and feedback as valuable information about your current strategies means seeing them as sources of insight, not as reflections on your abilities or worth.

This growth mindset fosters resilience, adaptability, and continuous growth. By asking learning-focused questions, tracking progress, and embracing feedback, you demonstrate a growth mindset, turning every setback into a springboard for future success.

I find reframing really helpful. For example, Instead of thinking “I’m not good at this,” asking “What can I learn from this?”. I’ve learnt to accept the natural feelings of disappointment or frustration after failure and acknowledging these emotions but not letting them dictate my actions.

*When we have
the courage
to walk into
our story and
own it, we get
to write the
ending.*



MY MAIN TAKEAWAYS

1. **Courage over perfection** - waiting until you feel 'ready' often keeps you invisible and holds you back. Courage creates momentum whereas perfection stalls it.
2. **Clear is kind** - avoiding difficult conversations erodes trust faster than having them imperfectly.
3. **Values create confidence** - when decisions are anchored in values, self-doubt loses its grip

🧠 PERSONAL REFLECTION - *why these lessons matter*

Women are often socialised to equate leadership with approval, likability, or flawlessness. Dare to Lead disrupts this narrative by reframing leadership as a daily practice of courage, boundaries, and self-trust. These lessons matter because they free women from performing competence and instead invite them to embody it.

I've particularly seen the power of 'daring to lead' through our women's coaching programmes, both our ✨**Reset Retreat: The Next Chapter**✨ and ✨**Elevate Her**.✨ Through group discussions, self-reflection, and peer support, participants develop rapport and trust, learn to have more courage and become each other's cheerleaders. It's a joy to behold. ❤️

The book's actionable advice provides a shared language for growth, helping female leaders re/connect with their values and lead more intentionally.

YOUR INVITATION TO REFLECT



- ? Where are you choosing comfort over courage in your career right now?
- ? Which values do you say matter, and how consistently do you act on them?
- ? What conversations are you avoiding, and at what cost?
- ? How does perfectionism show up in your leadership style?
- ? What would change if you trusted yourself a little more?
- ? What else is coming up for you?



ACTION PLANNING

✓ **Name your values** - identify your top two leadership values and define what they look like in action.

? **How visible are these values in your daily decisions?**

✓ **Practice brave conversations** - choose one conversation you've been postponing and approach it with curiosity, not control.

? **What's the worst that could happen, and what's the cost of staying silent?**

✓ **Drop the armour** - notice where you're over-preparing or over-explaining to prove worth.

? **What would 'enough' look like here?**

✓ **Redefine failure** - treat setbacks as information, not identity.

? **What is this experience teaching you?**

✓ **Build your courage circle** - surround yourself with people who challenge and support you.

? **Who helps you stay brave when self-doubt creeps in?**

CONCLUSION

Dare to Lead is not about becoming fearless; it's about becoming honest, grounded, and brave enough to lead without armour. For women navigating imposter syndrome, career transitions, or leadership growth, this book offers more than inspiration. It offers a practical roadmap for leading with courage, clarity, and self-trust, and for moving forward without leaving yourself behind.

Remember, you're not alone and you don't have to do it on your own. ❤️

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