

Real Leaders Risk Messing Up

Having an ambition to lead is great, but it doesn't produce actual leadership. Taking risks does. The best leader in the room isn't the one with all the answers. The leader is the one who volunteers to *go first* and *show* the way. Every great leader I know has been scorched by the pain of making the hard, and sometimes wrong, decisions.

But **the only way to change the world is to take the risks of leadership**, such as the risk of:

- Casting a bold, impossible vision.
- Writing the first check.
- Releasing people before they're quite ready to fly.
- Opening up and getting nothing back.
- Opening up and getting slammed.
- Losing consensus.
- Praying the bold, public prayer.
- Choosing a conviction over compromise.
- Confessing a wrong turn.
- Wasting time on a failed endeavor.

Real success stories are never built out of an unbroken chain of successes. They're pieced together with wins and losses, tough seasons, temporary setbacks, and half-dead dreams.

Successful leaders push through. They keep going. They *trust* one more time. They *try* one more time. **They take the risk, embrace the pain, and celebrate recovery along the way.**

Stop thinking of leadership as synonymous with continual victory. As long as you define leadership this way, you'll do whatever it takes to *not* mess up. **And if you can't mess up, if you can't bear to take the risk of messing up, don't bother volunteering to go first.**

> [Read more by Brandon.](#)

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