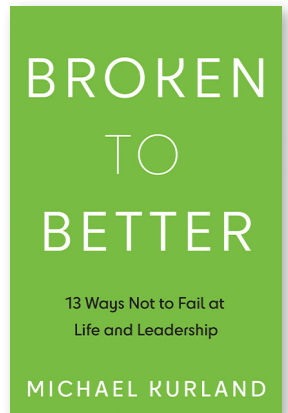


# Broken to Better

13 Ways Not to Fail at Life and Leadership

by **Michael Kurland**



## Contents

Introduction

Page 2

1. Be Connected

Page 2

5. Be Future-Driven

Page 3

13. Be Better

Page 4

Conclusion

Page 4

## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Being a business owner is not for the faint of heart. It takes a firm resolve, the ability to persevere and pivot during challenging times, the humility to admit mistakes, and empathy for the people around you. Understanding who you are is critical to that journey.

In *Broken to Better: 13 Ways Not to Fail at Life and Leadership*, CEO of Branded Group Michael Kurland candidly shares every step of his own entrepreneurial odyssey—selling everything he owned, driving across the country to launch his new business, and ultimately building a purpose-driven culture that aligns purpose with profit. Along the way, Kurland distills a lifetime of experience down to its purest essence. From key principles of organizational strength to the secrets of profitability and growth, *Broken to Better* offers up all his triumphs and mistakes in the same spirit of perseverance, fearlessness, empathy, and gratitude.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- 13 principles that will inform and inspire you to Be Better in all aspects of your life.
- How to invest time and effort into your company's culture.
- How to create a work environment that's welcoming, nurturing, and empowering.
- How to lead with emotional intelligence.
- How to approach each day with gratitude and the Be Better mantra.

## Introduction

Being a business owner is not for the faint of heart. At a minimum, it takes a person with a firm resolve, the ability to persevere and pivot during challenging times, the humility to admit mistakes, and empathy for the people around them. Self-reflection should come long before setting pen to paper for a business plan. Understanding who you are is critical to being a leader who seeks to align purpose with profit.

This book is for business leaders who are seeking to Be Better in their company, for their employees, clients, and community. Putting time and effort into your company's culture is an investment that will reap rewards for years. Creating a work environment that is welcoming, nurturing, and empowering will keep your team engaged and ready to service your clients with excellence.

This book consists of 13 principles that will inform and inspire you to Be Better in all aspects of your life—to be a better CEO, manager, employee, friend, coworker, or whatever shoes you fill. If you walk away from reading this book with only one lesson, it is to lead with emotional intelligence.

---

## 1. Be Connected

To launch and grow a business, you're going to need help—a lot of help. If you think you can do it on your own, you will quickly learn that is a recipe for feeling frustrated and overwhelmed. Unless you're a young kid, it's likely you know hundreds, if not thousands, of people. Be connected. Each of them has or will have something to offer at some point in your journey.

Even if you plan to be a solopreneur, you need to have an internal “board of directors” that includes, at minimum, a lawyer, a banker, an accountant, and a trusted friend or colleague. These advisors can help you get through the myriad of tasks that will get your business off the ground and help it grow through its various stages.

This chapter covers practical tips on how to Be Connected and expand your network. From showing up well to communicating and listening, knowing what you want, expanding your horizons, and diving into digital connections, you'll learn everything you need to know to speak up, become a thought leader, guard your reputation, and be prepared to fail.

## 2. Be Teachable

There are so many tasks you have to do when you start a business, and most of the time, you don't know what you don't know. Having an experienced business owner, a mentor who can offer advice in these areas can jumpstart the initial stages of your business. Once you get past the startup phase, mentors can help with things like hiring, deciding if you should use cash or accrual accounting systems, or even figuring out payroll and payables.

Being teachable will help you avoid many common mistakes made by new business owners. I'd recommend having two to three mentors. More than that and you will be overwhelmed with all of the ideas and advice you'll receive.

The practical tips in this chapter on how to Be Teachable show you how to find your perfect match, be open-minded, gather and prioritize questions, find mentors with complementary skills, understand your responsibilities, and expect change.

---

## 3. Be Fearless

Fear of failure can be a great motivator. When you decide to start a new business or expand an existing one, it can be scary—especially if you have never done it. You have to check your fear at the door; you have to be fearless. Being informed so you can make good decisions is just as important as not letting your fear get in the way.

This chapter walks you through the tips you need to Be Fearless when launching your business. It starts off by explaining the importance of knowing who you are and determining your “why.” Then it shows you how to fill a gap in the marketplace, develop a business plan, and secure funding for your business. Finally, you'll learn how to let go of your ego and evaluate your relationship with money.

---

## 4. Be People-Centric

As a new entrepreneur, you will hire people who will simply help you get the work done at first. However, eventually, the primary tasks of each position will need to be identified so that you attract and retain the best talent.

Creating future leaders begins with hiring the right person for the job. You can teach almost anyone the job-related skills needed to be successful in a role. However, other skills such as the ability to be a team player and to step in when

the need arises are part of a person's DNA, rather than a bullet point on their resume.

Creating an inclusive culture includes being able to recognize the strengths and talents of your team. Inclusivity means ensuring every voice in your organization is heard and everyone has equal opportunities to advance.

From analyzing how you're spending your time to identifying the company's goals and defining the skills you need for your business, this chapter covers all the practical tips you need to Be Inclusive to build a diverse team. You'll learn how to ask the right questions, evaluate your interviewing skills, refine your onboarding process, and invest in your employees.

---

### 5. Be Future-Driven

Your business needs to be future-focused, even before you have your entire team in place. There will come a time when your business grows enough that you will need to separate your employees into functional areas or teams.

This chapter provides the tips you need to Be Future-Driven while navigating organizational growth. It shows you how to hire experts, be fair and generous, look for shared values, learn from the little mistakes, and balance your team.

---

### 6. Be Purposeful

You have to ensure your team feels valued, that they know their contributions are making a difference and that you care. You will be able to attract and retain people if you have a thriving company culture. The keys to engagement and retention are inclusion, appreciation, flexibility, and trust.

This chapter walks you through the practical tips you need to Be Purposeful and create brand champions. You'll learn how to define core values, make a culture that's more than words on a wall, and create a positive change.

---

### 7. Be Engaging

New habits start with a decision to make a change. Perseverance and commitment make habits stick. Bad habits arise when we lose that commitment or simply quit. There's really only one way to reverse the trend: make a decision to change and put a plan in place, being mindful of distractions or naysayers that try to derail your success.

I'm not suggesting CEOs have to be bodybuilders, but they

do need to pay attention to their health and mental well-being because many people are depending on them. Employees, clients, vendors, and colleagues want to know you are doing all you can to remain at the helm. I want to Be Better for myself, but I also have a growing workforce that relies on me. I need to be around for them. While it is important to develop a healthy mindset for your personal wellness, it should translate into your business. Creating a culture of wellness in your business requires the same level of commitment.

Practical tips like learning how to create a culture of empathy, make your vision come alive, provide wellness resources, secure regular feedback, and cultivate your culture will help show you how to Be Engaging while creating.

---

### 8. Be Profitable

If you think about it, you're selling something to someone every single day. You sell yourself at a job interview. You sell an idea to your boss. You sell a project to your team. At its foundation, sales is about people. If you don't like people, you're not going to be a successful salesperson. Solid social skills are a must-have in building lasting relationships with your clients. Likeability, passion for your product or service, and relationships are key to selling successfully.

This chapter teaches you how to manage your time, be flexible, be selective, build and mentor a diverse sales team, and sell with integrity. You'll get plenty of helpful tips on how to Be Profitable and sell for success.

---

### 9. Be Service-Oriented

Ensuring that your customers or clients have a memorable, personalized, and enjoyable experience is an important differentiator, whether you are an e-commerce or traditional brick-and-mortar business.

This chapter provides practical tips on how to Be Service-Oriented and create a memorable client experience. It explores topics like taking care of your employees first, building trusting relationships, identifying your ideal client, improving your customer service, being honest, and integrating operational processes and technology.

---

### 10. Be Efficient

You may be able to piecemeal processes in the early days of your business, making it up as you go along. However, in or-

der to scale for future growth, you need to be efficient. You need a comprehensive operations function that is continuously evaluated, so you are delivering top-notch service to your clients, as well as enabling your team to work seamlessly and avoid duplication of efforts.

This chapter walks you through everything you need to know to Be Efficient and scale your business for future growth. It shows you how to be detail-oriented, establish procedures, evolve, delegate and let go, and analyze your time.

---

### 11. Be Generous

A lot of research explores the “high” that you get when you volunteer. It makes you feel as good as the person you are helping. Maybe it’s a little selfish to get something out of volunteering, but it’s a good selfish, I think. Being generous is about doing something to make someone’s life better.

Tips on how to Be Generous and build a social impact program with purpose begin with finding or creating giving opportunities and establishing a nonprofit partnership. The chapter also explores the ideas of sharing the giving spirit with your clients, participating consistently, and being open to recommendations.

---

### 12. Be Inspiring

Everyone reacts to challenges differently. Some crumble, but for others, it’s an invitation to dig in. A crisis, whether personal or professional, leads you to reevaluate your situation. At least it should. If your organization is hit with a sudden challenge, you take steps to improve your operations so you can stay in business.

If you’re not continuously evolving as a leader, you become stagnant, and your team will be disengaged. Strong leaders should always be pushing their teams to avoid complacency at all costs. Being an inspiring leader starts with the willingness to change.

This chapter provides some practical tips to Be Inspiring by being a better leader, such as how to examine your motivation, be transparent, be resilient, cultivate a continuous improvement mindset, and maintain your reputation.

---

### 13. Be Better

Before you decide to step out and share your expertise, whether it’s by writing LinkedIn posts or launching a

podcast, you need to identify your message. It takes time and patience to build a following and rise above the noise. Otherwise, you’re just another voice in the crowd, and people will eventually tune you out, hurting both you and your company’s brand. You need to provide valuable content that you believe in and can speak to expertly, on whatever platform is best for you. Building your personal brand is a process, and you have to be prepared to ramp up slowly. It doesn’t happen immediately, and you may need a team of people to help you.

It’s important for any business owner to identify their “why” for launching a business. What you do impacts your team, your clients, and your reputation. The decisions you make are hinged on what you deem is important, the vision for your business, and the vision for yourself.

---

### Conclusion

I’ve shared a lot of information about what it means to be a Be Better leader and how, because of this commitment, my business, my team, and even I have become successful. This is what has worked for me and my company. It may or may not work for yours. This is why I stress the importance of being authentic and being yourself.

Be authentic. Be vulnerable. Be gentle when you’re delivering hard messages. Be kind. Be willing to do the same jobs you’re asking your team to do. Learn from your mistakes, and don’t be afraid to make hard decisions. You must always strive to be a better version of yourself every day.



As the CEO of Branded Group, Inc., an award-winning facility maintenance company, **Michael Kurland** is committed to leading with purpose. His determination to Be Better was the driving force in the launch of his company and has led to its exponential growth, cultural transformation, innovative social impact programs, and cultivation of a highly-regarded team of industry experts. With a diverse background in sales and marketing, Kurland's vision is to create a conscious business that inspires future humanitarian leaders.

*Broken to Better: 13 Ways Not to Fail at Life and Leadership* by Michael Kurland ©2022 by Michael Kurland. Summarized by permission of the author, Michael Kurland. ISBN 978-1544529721. Published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries® Copyright ©2022 by Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. 45SS03C