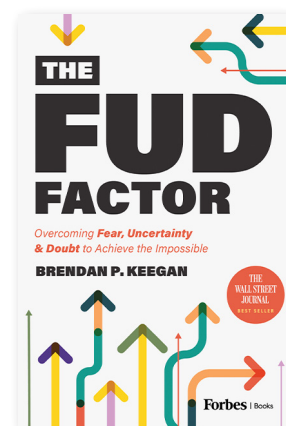


# The FUD Factor

Overcoming Fear, Uncertainty & Doubt  
to Achieve the Impossible

by **Brendan P. Keegan**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Every leader has the opportunity to become fearless. It all starts with overcoming your ingrained FUD or fear, uncertainty, and doubt. FUD is the fear the world puts on our shoulders throughout our life. Being told to be careful, to not take risks, or to try something but be prepared for the fact that you may not succeed: these are all stops along the way on the FUD train. We have heard these types of statements since early life, often from our loved ones. They were actually trying to protect us, but in reality, that narrative instills fear, uncertainty, and doubt and actually hurts our chances. And it impacts your ability to become an effective leader today.

The difference between *good* teams and *great* teams, between *average* performance and *high* performance, and between *winning* and *losing* can be summed up in one single word: leadership. In ***The FUD Factor: Overcoming Fear, Uncertainty & Doubt to Achieve the Impossible*** author Brendan P. Keegan helps people see the Fearless Leader within themselves and accelerate their leadership journey by removing fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why you should choose leadership
- How to become truly fearless
- Three aspects of leadership that increase impact
- Five key tools to create collaboration

## Why Be?

Leadership is the willingness to accept responsibility to organize a group of people to achieve a common goal. With the definition of FUD and leadership in mind, let's talk about six reasons why leadership should matter to you.

### Reason 1: The Leadership Void

In the United States alone, four million workers will retire in a given year, removing nearly fifteen million years of experience from the workforce. This mass exodus is creating the greatest leadership *void* in history.

### Reason 2: The Greatest Opportunity

To run a successful business of any size, strong leaders are required. The leadership void has created the greatest *opportunity* of the past fifty years for individuals to accelerate their careers.

### Reason 3: Leaders are Made

Leaders are *made*, not born. Don't believe anyone who tells you otherwise. Leadership is not a birthright; it's a daily decision. If you decide you want to be a leader, then you can become one.

### Reason 4: Leadership is the Differentiator

Everyone is looking for something that makes them special and unique. Leadership is the *differentiator* you've been looking for. Once you have embraced the leader in you, many doors will open, and opportunities will come forward.

### Reason 5: Leadership is a Gift

Leadership is hard work but being a leader is the greatest *gift* you could ever give yourself. Leadership is a gift that will allow you to pursue your dreams and to create dreams for others as well.

### Reason 6: The Multiplier Effect

We cannot multiply time but we can *multiply* our impact every day by being a leader. When you instill and inspire leadership in others, you are creating multiple waves of success that ripple out and impact the greater world.

Welcome to your Fearless Leadership journey and overcoming the FUD factor.

## Be Fearless

You were born *fearless*. We all were. But as time marched on, fear marched in, eventually followed by uncertainty and

doubt. No one is immune to doubt. The world's greatest leaders, artists, and athletes talk about early and ongoing doubts, even when they have reached the height of success.

By employing thoughts of failure, we are effectively insulating ourselves from being hurt, disappointed, or rejected. This is normal and ordinary. The key is to not allow it to rule our lives.

You can conquer fear, thrive in uncertainty, and shut the door on doubt. You can truly be fearless. Let's find out how.

### Fear

Once we recognize our own fear, we become better able to stop letting our fears become the fears of others. We can begin to learn how to manage them. Our fears are learned throughout our lives primarily through conditioning or negative experience.

The good news is that if we can learn what to fear, we can unlearn it too. We can confront our fears and push ourselves a little more each time we face them, building up our courage. Fear will only build momentum if you let it. Fight it inch by inch, day by day, and instance by instance, and you will strengthen your own power to shut it down.

### Uncertainty

Uncertainty breeds uncomfortableness. When we know an outcome is certain, we feel comfortable and even confident. But as the percentages slip from certain to uncertain, we become anxious, restless, and irritable.

Leaders can harness an unwavering confidence and, perhaps, more importantly, transfer that confidence to every member of their team, steadily easing their fear, uncertainty, and doubt. When you remove employees' fears and feelings of uncertainty they can better focus on serving clients. When confronted with uncertainty, follow these three steps:

- First, focus on the outcome you want. Research has proved you are 50 percent more likely to achieve a focused outcome.
- Next, determine how you will achieve that outcome and begin to build the individual action that will get you that result.
- Third, commit to do what it takes to win.

### Doubt

Those little thoughts of "How can this go wrong? What if it doesn't work?" that pop in our head can sow the seeds

# Making the decision to be a leader is the greatest gift you could ever give yourself in life.

of doubt that keep us from moving forward. These fleeting thoughts of doubt in uncertain situations are normal, and they even happen in situations in which we have already experienced success. Doubt is a part of life; it's how we manage it that matters.

Managing doubt requires resilience and mental strength. Doubt doesn't send us a calendar notice of when it is going to pop up, so we need to be ready for it by building mental strength and resilience every day. Some ideas that work well include exercise, reading, prayer or meditation, good nutrition, spending time with family, practicing gratitude, and getting adequate sleep.

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## Be a Leader

Making the decision to be a leader is the *greatest gift* you could ever give yourself in life. Leadership not only provides you the opportunity to own any fear, uncertainty, and doubt you may have but it also gives you the responsibility to remove fear, uncertainty, and doubt from others.

Leadership is inspiring, exhilarating, and challenging. Managing tasks is straightforward: see the task, do the task, done. Leading people is not so easy. As a leader, you must develop skills to set a vision people can follow, develop relationships so people will want to follow, and set goals so they know how to follow.

As a Fearless Leader, you will have fulfilling days, confusing days, and downright tough days, and the scary part can be that you don't know what each day will bring. But that's what makes true leaders special; they overcome the fear and make the *daily decision* to lead.

You can make the daily decision to be the best version of yourself you can be and share that energy and best version of yourself with everyone around you. That is the magic that propels people in their career and in their personal life because people like that are the kind of people others want to be around.

No matter where you are on your leadership journey,

remember that there is no final destination. There is no arrival location or mountaintop.

There are simply more places to visit, more people to understand, more lessons to learn, and more problems to solve. But despite all the challenges, you have to keep showing up, be willing to lead, to learn, to work hard, and to become the fearless and incredibly successful leader you are capable of being.

When you believe you've arrived, that you've reached your final leadership destination, and that you no longer need to maintain the energy level, the passion, and the stamina that got you to where you are, you don't just sit in the status quo but you also fall behind. The world, people, business, and technology continue to evolve around you. You may retain your title for a while, but it is guaranteed that someone else has taken the reins.

A shiny brass CEO nameplate on the office door doesn't make you a Fearless Leader. It might make you a formal leader, one who tells people what to do and checks the boxes on a management to-do list, but that's not Fearless Leadership.

For a Fearless Leader and their followers, the title is not the motivating factor. People listen to a Fearless Leader because they want to hear what the leader has to say. People follow a Fearless Leader because they believe in them. It's not the title. It's how you show up.

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## Be Good

Being good is all about our core values as a person. Every one of us has a set of core values that has been built from a young age into adulthood. From day one the people who have raised us have been imprinting values of respect, strength, and hard work on us. Being a Fearless Leader requires many traits like intellect, compassion, and perseverance. But if you dig down and look at what's really serving as the foundation for everything else, it's *strength* in all its aspects—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

Without strength a leader cannot act with courage. *Courage* is a value that is acquired over time: the courage to lean

into your fears and confront them, the courage to believe in a positive outcome amid uncertainty, and the courage to channel your mind, body and soul to overcome doubts.

Fearless Leaders have *faith* in themselves and in others and instill faith in those around them. Fearless Leaders have the faith to succeed. They believe in positive outcomes, even when the facts and data suggest otherwise.

Fearless Leaders are willing and enthusiastic servants. They understand the sacrifice of *service* and the rewards for being the person who makes it happen in the background. The intrinsic internal and eternal flame of serving a greater good burns bright inside every Fearless Leader.

*Humility* is a value that shapes our legacy. As a Fearless Leader, you will have the courage to seize opportunities and overcome challenges, and your faith will lead you to exhilarating victories. Fearless Leaders serve for the purpose of their vision in life, to accomplish something bigger than themselves, and do so to benefit the greater good.

*Leadership* is a value that stands the test of time and is a summation of your life's work. The Fearless Leader accepts the responsibility of the goal, builds a team with skills and experience to achieve the goal, and lights the path toward the goal on a daily basis.

It all sounds so simple, but that's what makes it so impactful. Just be a good person and by doing so, you will have a great career and an even better life.

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## Be Impactful

Making an impact in the world, in your community, in a business, and on an individual is one of the most exhilarating feelings you will ever have. And once you've felt it, you don't want it to stop. Fearless Leaders institute three principles—*vision, goals, and productivity*—to be impactful and achieve consistent performance.

Without a vision, you won't know where you want to go, and neither will your team. The best way to articulate a vision is through simplicity, connectedness, and storytelling. First, make the vision simple enough for everyone to understand. Second, demonstrate how every role in the company is connected to the vision. If you are challenged to do this as a leader, your teammates will be challenged, too. Lastly, create a narrative and bring your vision to life with examples and analogies.

When we think of vision, we often think of visionaries who have changed the world—Elon Musk, Bill and Melinda Gates, Mother Teresa, and Steve Jobs to name a few. But every vision doesn't have to save the world. Just like leading, everyone can choose to have a clear vision whether it's for personal development, a community park, or rallying your coworkers to go beyond with every customer. We all have the power to set a vision, share it, and best of all achieve it.

Do you have a vision, and are you holding yourself accountable to it every day? Or maybe you're struggling to define your vision? Here are some tips to get started.

### Define Your Values to Set Your Ground Rules

People can pressure you into compromising your values and philosophies and to act based on what *they* believe instead of what *you* believe. This is why you must solidly connect to your ideals and be willing to stand your ground with kindness. That connection will help you set boundaries and remain true to your vision.

### Stop Focusing So Hard on the Trends

Business people are taught they must pay attention to trends, or they will fail. They must be *agile, adaptable, and flexible*. While there is truth to those teachings, innovation is arguably the willingness to intentionally toss trends out the window. The motivation of a Fearless Leader must have staying power. Your why must be something that can drive *you* regardless of the circumstances around you.

### Pay Attention to Your Emotions

When you truly connect to a dream, the feeling of joy will be so strong that it blocks out fear and erases the word "can't." If you talk about the vision you're trying to build and you don't feel real energy, then you need a new vision. Listen to your gut and use your head to find logical ways to stay oriented toward what makes you happy.

By sharing a clear vision and setting goals to achieve it, you will empower others to follow your vision and you will make an *exponential* impact on the world.

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## Be Collaborative

Now that you know what you want to achieve as a leader, the question becomes how you are going to achieve your vision. A Fearless Leader doesn't go it alone. They build strong teams and leverage the collective power of those teams. How? Through collaboration.

# As a Fearless Leader, you have the opportunity to leave an exponential imprint on the world.

Collaboration requires a continuous and conscious effort to reach beyond yourself and connect with others. Collaboration is reciprocal. It doesn't work if a leader only directs and pushes information, ideas, lessons, and experiences out.

A Fearless Leader must also accept direction, information, ideas, lessons, and experiences *in* from those around them. In fact, they must go a step further and actively seek out the advice, ideas, and lessons of others.

There are five key tools that a leader must employ if they are to create a collaborative environment that will make their vision a reality: *brand, relationships, communication, emotional quotient, and influence.*

Your reputation is your *brand*. Fearless Leaders build a brand that is rock solid because that is the foundation others come to depend on. Your brand is who you are. When others know who you are and when they believe in your brand, positive connections and interactions will develop, building the base for solid relationships.

Leadership is about organizing a group of people. People require time, energy, focus, and investment. Fearless Leaders develop *relationships* and take the required time to invest in those relationships. They are also willing to put themselves out there and network, meet new people, and connect more often.

In order to convey their brand and build relationships, Fearless Leaders must *communicate* with clarity, transparency, and authenticity. Developing your communication attributes is vital to instilling confidence in your audience and removing their fear, uncertainty, and doubt. Communication is all encompassing: it's how you speak, write, listen, and interact.

How well you communicate with those you lead will be directly impacted by your *emotional quotient* (EQ). High achievers and performers have the intelligence quotient (IQ) to achieve their goals and be leaders.

But Fearless Leaders develop the far more important aspect of intelligence known as EQ, the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of

others. This is perhaps the toughest attribute to develop, but it is also one that will get you the farthest in life.

Each of these attributes play a role in establishing your influence across your family, friends, colleagues, and community. If you develop all of them your influence will grow exponentially. Wield it responsibly.

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## Be Legendary

As a Fearless Leader, you have the opportunity to leave an exponential imprint on the world. Your imprint will be your legacy. And your legacy has the power to be *legendary*. There are four pathways to building an exponential legacy of leadership.

First, *lead* others through a clear vision and the resources to achieve that vision—together.

Second, *coach* others to be the best version of themselves. Take time every week to invest a little extra time to show someone how to improve a specific skill or attribute. Daily coaching is one of the easiest and best ways you can leave a lasting impact on the most amount of people.

Third, be a *mentor*. Slow down and take quality time to invest in those around you. Look around your circle of friends, family members, and colleagues and pick a person to take under your wing and send down the path of leadership. Chances are you owe a great deal of your success to the mentors in your life, both personally and professionally.

Fourth, *cultivate*. When you lead fearlessly by encouraging others to do good, to serve, and to be leaders, they, in turn, are motivated to encourage others to do good, to serve, and to be leaders. You exponentially remove fear, uncertainty, and doubt that hold so many of us back from reaching our potential.

Finally, find ways to *give* with no expectation of receiving. Leading means giving time, direction, support, encouragement, and wisdom so that common goals and visions can be achieved. Not only is giving so easy and incredibly rewarding, it is also beneficial to our bodies and mind through increased self esteem, decreased stress levels, and improved moods and relationships.

When you make the decision to lead, you build an exponential legacy of leadership. If you lead ten people and then they lead another ten people who then lead another ten people to achieve a common goal, you will have impacted over one thousand lives on this planet. And simply by leading ten people, you can remove instances of fear, uncertainty, and doubt half a million times over the next ten years.

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### Begin

We've looked at a wide range of attributes and practices that support and nurture Fearless Leaders. Now it's time to start bundling those attributes and practices together and see how they can work in harmony to transform our leadership intentions and our lives.

Doing so leads us on a discovery of how emerging leaders make plans and *launch* careers, how practicing leaders and individual contributors who feel stuck can make the *leap* into a new paradigm, how Fearless Leaders *overcome* and triumph in the face of crisis, and how each of us can build our lives and leadership approaches around a practice that consistently pushes us to *grow*.

A leader can best prepare to *launch*, *leap*, *overcome*, and *grow* by first hitting the pause button and taking the time to recognize the skills they have developed, the growth they have already achieved, and the leadership opportunities that are already present. Pausing to recognize also helps you identify the leadership skills and attributes that you will need to develop to get you where your vision is leading you.

Maybe you don't see yourself as a leader yet or are just not ready for the next leadership level, but if you take the time to sit back and review where you were a year ago versus where you are now, you'll have the opportunity to see your personal growth and how that has impacted your professional skills, attributes, and opportunities.

You may realize that what you are accomplishing today may not have been possible a year ago because you lacked the abilities, and now through your own personal and professional growth, you're able to achieve. Don't forget to pay attention to how you're leading, too. Recognize what skills you are using to lead better and how you can leverage those skills to lead better.

### Launch

Launching your career or any significant life change doesn't succeed by crossing your fingers and hoping for the best. Rec-

ognizing what you want and where you want to go, identifying the steps to get you there, and taking action on those steps do.

### Leap

No one is immune to being stuck at varying points along their leadership journey. We stick with what we know and with what's familiar and wait for external forces to change things for us. It simply doesn't work that way. Sometimes we just have to leap.

### Overcome

Just as stuckness is an inevitable, recurring aspect of the leadership journey, the same is true for challenges. Sometimes as a leader you are called to help others overcome their barriers to success, and other times as a leader, you must find your own inspiration and strength to overcome the challenges you face. Choosing a mindset that aligns with your goals as a leader will help you overcome any challenge put in front of you.

### Grow

Look ahead to the future and ask what it takes to create a practice of constant and continuous growth. If you don't have a growth mindset, your best days are probably behind you. Reach for positions above your current competencies and lean into the opportunity to grow. We all have a chance to grow as long as we remain open minded.

Fearless Leadership is not linear or a "one approach fits all" thing. It is an intentional development of the required attributes and an ongoing engagement of those attributes. We all have what it takes inside us. We just have to harness the power within ourselves with good intentions and learn each day how to channel our fearlessness.

The approach laid out in *The FUD Factor* has cultivated, empowered, and inspired thousands of people to grow as a leader and it can do it for you, too. Just be yourself. Be authentic. And stretch yourself in the directions that instill your values and fuel your passions. Fearless Leadership is a daily decision and a journey that doesn't stop here.



Brendan P. Keegan is the Chairman, CEO & President of Merchants Fleet, the fastest growing fleet technology company in North America and creator of the bFEARLESS movement. Keegan is an award-winning 6-time president and chief executive officer, having raised nearly \$10.0B in capital with experience leading business transformations and corporate turnarounds focused on exponential enterprise value creation with strong liquidity exits. Brendan is a highly sought after speaker, award-winning author, entertaining podcaster, and pragmatic capitalist always willing to share his insights and passions with others.

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