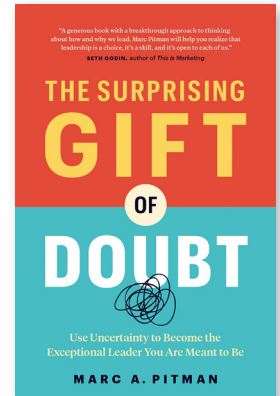


The Surprising Gift of Doubt

Use Uncertainty to Become the Exceptional Leader You Are Meant to Be

by **Marc A. Pitman**



Contents

Introduction

Page 2

Listening to the Inner Nudge

Page 2

Accepting Your Gifts

Page 2

Knowing the Strengths of Your Motivation

Page 3

Organizing Around Your Goals

Page 3

Honoring Your Integrity

Page 4

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

No matter how many milestones we hit or career successes we achieve, we all struggle with lingering feelings of doubt—doubt in our abilities, doubt in our leadership, and doubt in what we're capable of achieving. In *The Surprising Gift of Doubt*, author Marc A. Pitman doesn't just help readers conquer that ever-present imposter syndrome. He goes even further to help leaders and future leaders harness those feelings of inadequacy and turn them into a rare level of leadership. Along the way, Pitman reveals that the feelings of doubt we experience at various stages in our careers are actually signs that we're on the verge of a major breakthrough.

In the end, readers will emerge from this summary with more confidence, more courage, and increased self-assurance as they face the challenges of leadership with an unshakable strength that has emerged by harnessing their doubt to become something more powerful than ever.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to move from imitative leadership to a more confident leadership style that brings together the best of your aspirations and your unique traits and skills.
- How to become 'more yourself' as a leader rather than emulating what you've seen succeed for others in different scenarios.
- How to turn doubt into confidence again and again in your leadership career.
- How to set and achieve impactful goals using the MagnetGoals methodology.

Introduction

It's hardly surprising that so many CEOs and other top executives feel like lost children looking for a teacher to explain the rules. In our information-saturated world, there are no shortage of volunteers to explain them. Bossy board members, mostly well-meaning, will dictate tasks. Staff irritated by lack of direction will impose their views on the boss. Opinionated customers will tell leaders all the ways they're wrong and how they should fix the problems.

There is a second choice. You can choose your own 'curriculum.' You can write the rules yourself, determining your own way of measuring success. This can be messy at first, involving some trial and error. But the strategies that result are based on who you are and how you operate.

Listening to the Inner Nudge

Most plans or formulas force you to fit into their molds, imposing their structures on you. They fail to build upon who you are, so they fail when your enthusiasm for them wanes or when the fear that you will not succeed diminishes.

The secret to growing as a leader is that you have to do some inner work, none of which can be done for you. And there are no guarantees. The good news is that once you learn the tools that will help you listen to and trust your inner nudges, you'll be able to use these tools for the rest of your life. You'll be able to help your staff and your entire organization use them, too. If you have experienced success in the past—perhaps so much so that everyone seems convince you'll keep pulling a rabbit out of the hat despite the fact that you have no earthly clue how you'll do it—you're in the right place. You can do it. You can become the confident, exceptional leader you want to be. You'll have to do the work, but you don't have to walk this path alone.

Taking the Leader's Journey

Leadership is a journey divided into four stages, or quadrants. They are Observe, Experiment, Focus, and Analyze.

You begin in Quadrant 1, where you are full of confidence because you have been promoted to a level of leadership. If this is not confidence in your own ability, then it is confidence in the fact that others say you can lead. This is where you 'observe' leaders you wish to emulate.

In Quadrant 2, you begin to experiment. When your confidence falls, you find yourself worrying that something about

you must be broken. So, you look for ways to fix yourself. With all the available books, blogs, webinars, podcasts, seminars, and courses, you think surely one of those will fix you. But having read the book or taken the course, you notice that it doesn't quite work the way the reviewers said it would.

When you realize that other people's systems give you only one perspective on leadership but not the complete perspective. In Quadrant 3, tentatively at first but with increasing awareness, you begin to 'analyze' what you have learned from watching people and studying systems. You get in touch with your strengths and your limitations, with your values, and with your own goals. You stop assuming that you are irreparably broken if systems don't work for you.

That growing confidence leads you to Quadrant 4, a stage of 'focus' and quiet confidence. Here, you have learned how to listen to both external suggestions and internal cues. And you are leading in a way that comes from within. You are humbly confident in your ability and free to lead with grace and flexibility as well as bring others along the path of the four quadrants.

Accepting Your Gifts

Despite the mistakes people make with personality or aptitude tests, a healthy exploration of hardwiring is crucial for leaders. The trick is to move from a Quadrant 2 perspective where hardwiring is an externally imposed system forced on people and teams to 'fix' them, to a Quadrant 3 perspective where you and your people internally explore hardwiring as a way of understanding yourself, your habits, and your patterns. The Quadrant 2 way labels people in order to pigeonhole them. The Quadrant 3 leader uses these indicators to better appreciate people and the perspectives they bring to the table. Rather than placing limits on you, understanding your hardwiring helps you discover your unique way of interacting with and making sense of the world.

Using the DISC model, you can determine whether you're Active/Task Centered, Active/People Centered, Reserved/People Centered, or Reserved/Task Centered. This doesn't restrict you to only acting within your 'model,' but can help you understand a bit more about your innate abilities and patterns.

As helpful as it is, behavior-based assessment just scratches the surface of hardwiring. Looking at the other types of hardwiring—abilities and motivations—will help you grow into the leader you've wanted to be.

Realizing the Benefits of Your Ability

As a leader, digging beneath learned skills to uncover your hardwiring—the strengths that come easily to you—gives you a much clearer picture of your unique, natural abilities. These come to you easily, without stress. Learned skills are the ways you learn to compensate for a lack of natural abilities. One helpful result of learning the difference between your natural strengths and your learned skills is that you can transfer the skills, applying them to other areas.

Most often, stress comes from operating either in areas that do not come naturally to you or in ways that don't call on all your abilities. If you're not aware of your hardwired abilities, you might take on roles that are out of sync with your nature. This explains why so many leaders live in a state of constant, low-grade stress despite looking like they're combining the ladder of success. They mimic what the previous leader did without realizing that those strategies could be sabotaging their own ability to lead effectively. A leader will always have tasks that aren't life-giving, but learning your natural abilities frees you to test accomplishing these responsibilities in ways that are more in line with your innate talents. This reduces stress and fills your work with renewed energy and purpose.

Knowing the Strengths of Your Motivation

When you're struggling with doubt because you don't yet have a firm grasp on what makes you tick as a leader, the third area of hardwiring—why you do what you do—will immeasurably support you. Here, you are not looking for an explanation about how certain tasks or behaviors come easily to you. This is a deeper why. One based on motivation.

How do you describe your motivation? One helpful system is the Enneagram. The Enneagram suggests that human beings are motivated by one of nine stories, or ways of seeing the world. These nine approaches to life are presented as different personality types. According to the Enneagram, personality is developed when, early in childhood, we learn that the world is not entirely safe. So, we adopt personality, a habitual orientation to life that protects us and helps us relate to others.

A deep dive into hardwiring, whether through Enneagram assessment or other methods, can be transformative in developing your own leadership style. Knowing how you do things, what things you do easily, and why you do them gives you more command of your choices and actions as

well as a much richer understanding of how different people operate. But hardwiring is just one part of the journey you will take from the stuck uncertainty of Quadrant 2 to the rich expiration of Quadrant 3.

Learning the Stories that Serve You

Working on identity usually catches leaders off-guard. They like that assessments give data. But identity seems too 'touchy feely' to be effective. But clients often find it produces some of the best lasting insights.

Current neuroscience is showing what ancient civilizations already knew: human beings are wired by story. When something happens, we want to know why. If you're given a set of incomplete details, you try to make sense of them by weaving a story to hold each detail together. As you work on identity, your story, you will discover clues about yourself in three different types of stories: stories you tell, stories you like, and the stories you hear from others. Follow this route, and you will be blown away by how much you will learn about the role you can play in your own story.

Organizing Around Your Goals

Despite the variety of ways that each system approaches goal setting, they are right about one thing: there is power in writing down your goals. Writing goals focuses your mind and helps you create a clear plan for accomplishing them. Often people read goal-setting systems as fixed systems that you have to work within. Hopefully, MagnetGoals and cascading goals will serve as tools for you, not the other way around. Give them a try and take what works, then discard the rest.

MagnetGoals is a process that involves four steps to more effective goal-setting and goal-reaching.

Step 1: Your Top 100

The first step in the process is to brainstorm a list of 100 things you want to do in the next twelve months. The best part about the length of this list is that it forces you to get creative, and even a bit fanciful. Focus on areas such as health, finances, life-long learning, travel, and relationships. This step may take time, as much as a few days or weeks. That's okay. Take the time to expand your list.

Step 2: History of the Future

Once you've completed your list, let it sit for a few days. If you did nothing else and just reviewed this list a year

later, you would be shocked at how many of these goals you had accomplished.

But your next step is to write a History of the Future. This is a description of what life will be like after you've accomplished everything on your list. It can be as short as a paragraph or as long as a few pages. This step is designed to propel you toward the life you dream of achieving.

Step 3: Narrowing the List

The third step is to narrow the list to three to five goals. These are your MagnetGoals. All the goals on your list are important. But there's no way you could focus on a hundred goals in a year. Goal-setting experts often warn people that five is pushing the limit.

Try to focus on goals that influence many other goals on the list and goals that seem to 'jump' off the page.

Step 4: Get Yourself There

Now that you have dots next to a few of your goals, it's time to review the list with the intent of choosing three to five of them. Some choose a professional, a relational, and a self-improvement goal. Some choose goals that match up with their roles at work. Others choose the goals that seem to 'speak' to them. Whatever process you choose, once you've identified those three to five, circle them and move on to the final step: creating a road map for each goal. This includes a list of all steps needed to accomplish the goal, all strategic alliances and resources that will be helpful, a list of potential obstacles, and an accountability partner who will help you accomplish this goal. Finally, clean up your road map and get to work.

Relating with Your Time

Feeling like you are not prepared for the next meeting, let alone reaching your major targets, because you are constantly trying to tame your schedule into a controlled system can be soul crushing. But if you can glance at your weekly plan and your daily focus sheet and instantly recall how your smaller objectives fit into the big picture, you build quiet confidence in yourself and your leadership abilities. Advanced planning will help you get through the unpredictability of the day without losing track of the most important priorities.

Honoring Your Integrity

Leadership really is all about becoming more yourself. This is precisely why Quadrant 2 approaches fail to completely change you—they are not about being you. Pressing into Quadrant 3 gives you the tools to make any approach yours, because you will process new strategies and advice from others through the filters of your hardwiring, your identity, and your goals. You will be able to eat the chicken and spit out the bones.

Quadrant 3 tools are already yours. You find them for yourself. You can have the help of an executive coach, spiritual guide, or therapist. But the tools are in you. Welcome to your leader's journey.



Concord Leadership Group founder **Marc A. Pitman, CSP®** helps leaders lead their teams with more effectiveness and less stress. His latest book is *The Surprising Gift of Doubt*. He's also the author of *Ask Without Fear!*®— which has been translated into Dutch, Polish, Spanish, and Mandarin. Marc's expertise and enthusiasm engages audiences around the world both in person and with online presentations. And has caught the attention of media organizations as diverse as The Chronicle of Philanthropy, Al Jazeera, Fox News, SUCCESS magazine, and Real Simple. Marc tweets regularly at @marcapitman.

The Surprising Gift of Doubt: Use Uncertainty to Become the Exceptional Leader You Are Meant to Be by Marc A. Pitman. © 2021 by Marc A. Pitman. Summarized by permission of the publisher, Page Two Books. 160 pages, ISBN 978-1989603994. Summary copyright © 2022 by Soundview Book Summaries ®