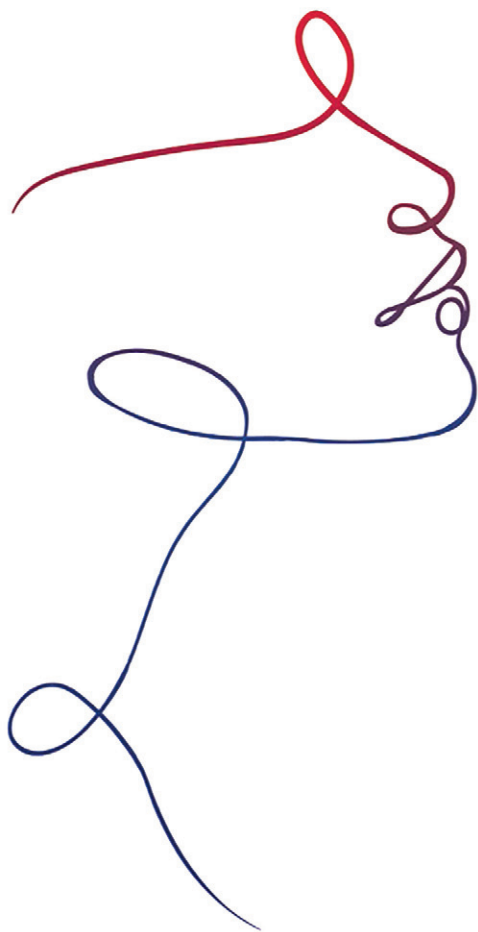


WOMEN COURAGEOUS

Leading through the Labyrinth



Jennifer Moss Breen, Madeleine van der Steege,
Suzanne Stigler Martin, and Judith L. Glick-Smith

WOMEN COURAGEOUS

More acclaim for Women Courageous: Leading through the Labyrinth.

Courageous leadership and heroism often come with an unconscious bias as “masculine” traits. *Women Courageous: Leading Through the Labyrinth* is a major contribution toward the recognition of the extraordinary courage, leadership, and heroism of women every day. Many of the chapter authors did not realize their roles as courageous leaders, but this very fact speaks to their often-overlooked contributions, and helps other women recognize the depth of their own courage.

— *Allan Combs, PhD, Author of Thomas Berry, Dreamer of the Earth; Changing Visions, etc.*
Professor of Transformative Studies
California Institute for Integral Studies

The authors challenge the reader to deepen and expand the definition of courage as they present compelling stories of crisis and opportunity across personal, interpersonal, social group, and organizational contexts. *Women Courageous* is emergent reading for women and men.

— *Kevin Kane, EdD,*
Creighton University

Women Courageous invites practitioners and scholars to enter their stories of courage, vulnerability, and in some cases triumph. This is not a “how to” book but instead, a welcome companion for women who journey through the labyrinth. These stories remind us that sometimes courage roars, but more frequently courage is that steady heartbeat to try again tomorrow.

— *Leah Georges, PhD,*
Creighton University

In a world where so much of leadership seems driven by the cowardice of excessive self-interest, *Women Courageous: Leading through the Labyrinth* proves that

courage is the element that can change the world. In a packed field of women's leadership books that argue for the mere equality of women leaders, this book breaks through that ceiling by revealing the innate courage of women leaders—and not by arguing the point, but through compelling stories of some of the most courageous women in the world. The authors that share their stories in *Women Courageous: Leading through the Labyrinth* help us see the world through the eyes of courageous women—a rare blessing for all readers. The global character of the authors of *Women Courageous: Leading through the Labyrinth* handily reveals how the important elements of leadership are broadly cross cultural.

— *Thomas A. Kolditz, PhD, Brigadier General, USA (ret)*
*Author of Leadership Reckoning: Can Higher Education
Develop the Leaders We Need?*
*Founding Director, Ann & John Doerr Institute for
New Leaders Director,
Doerr Institute for New Leaders
Rice University*

This is a major contribution to our understanding of real women leading across the globe and the role courage can play in a VUCA world where there are many challenges that at times go unforeseen. The “real” stories provide a true picture of the amazing capacity and perseverance at the core of each woman. For practitioners, scholars and leaders everywhere, this book expands our current paradigms about leadership, while deepening our understanding about the cultural context from to lead. Leading in a volatile world does require courage, and with this, courageous women!

— *Almarie E. Donaldson, PhD,*
Associate Professor of Leadership
Indiana Wesleyan University

The authors of *Women Courageous* use powerful stories to convey and contextualize leadership by women

through the labyrinth of life. Each chapter guides the reader through applicable leadership concepts and theories that come alive in every engaging personal story. This book is a must read for those who study and practice leadership.

— *Gill Robinson Hickman, PhD,*
Professor Emerita, Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond

Women Courageous has its foundation fascinating and powerful women's stories from around the globe. It doesn't stop there. The authors analyze the stories using research theories and in doing so bring deeper learning from the stories. Each chapter is structured just like good teaching. It begins with key takeaways and an introduction, tells the story, introduces relevant theories, and helps the reader internalize the learning. Consequently, lessons from these courageous women will stay with readers for a very long time.

— *Susan M. Fritz,*
Executive Vice President and Provost and the Dean of the
Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

This is a great read, particularly for those who feel that the glass ceiling is virtually impenetrable. The stories of women who have overcome significant challenges in forging their own path of influence and purpose are captivating. Their demonstrable courage and leadership are an inspiration for the many women—young and old—who find themselves needing to draw on their own reservoirs of strength in the pursuit of personal and professional goals, and in service to others.

— *Pauline van der Meer Mohr,*
Supervisory Board Chair and Deputy Chair of EY
Netherlands and DSM N.V. respectively,
Independent non-executive director, HSBC

This book is a treasure! Its tales of courage are original and inspiring. It is, however, not only a book about overcoming adversity. It's about the courage to be fully alive—to say yes to life!

— *Grant Ashfield,*
CEO Leadership Works
South Africa

This very timely and uplifting collection of stories inspires people and women worldwide to lead through their careers and their lives with passion, conviction, courage and purpose—a must-read for anyone navigating the complexity of managing oneself, others and organisations.

— *Eric Cornuel, PhD,*
Professor, General Director, and CEO of European
Foundation for Management Development (EFMD)

When you read this book you accept an invitation to witness beautifully told journeys of remarkable, yet deeply human women. As much as this book is about them, it is a book for all of us. Their accounts inspire not only reflection, but the mindset and heartset that we need to encourage us to take our next steps forward.

— *Professor Nicola Kleyn, DBA,*
Dean of Executive Education
Executive Director RSM B.V.
Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University

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WOMEN COURAGEOUS

Leading through the Labyrinth

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

In memory of Professor Dianne Bevelander, a lioness of women's empowerment and fierce advocate of gender equity, even while fighting a battle for her own life. She will be missed.

*For my beautiful daughters PK and JAX and my very courageous mom Barbara.
Peace and Love always.*

Jennifer Moss Breen, PhD
Creighton University

I would like to dedicate this book to all the women in my life – each being amazing, unique, and deeply cherished by me. Specifically, my sister Wilma – a beacon of light in a dark tunnel. My wonderful daughters Arianne and Mariq! My timeless girlfriends – you know who you are. And to my female colleagues – may we tower in mutual connection and strength.

Madeleine van der Steege
Webster Leiden Campus
The Netherlands

To all women who believe they are “just doing what is necessary” and don't know that we see you and your courage making this world more bearable and beautiful.

Suzanne Stigler Martin, PhD
transform.

To all the brave women in Fire & EMS. You inspire me with your dedication, your strength, your beauty, your ability to get the job done despite the obstacles often deliberately put in your way, and your commitment to flow-based leadership.

Judith L. Glick-Smith, PhD
MentorFactor, Inc.
The Center for Flow-Based Leadership®

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We wish to first thank our authors and the women who shared their courageous stories. Knowing that vulnerability and courage work hand in hand, we are grateful that you caringly offered hope and strength to women across the world who also face wonderful opportunities and difficult challenges. We are also inspired by the collaborative work we shared in crafting, contributing to, and editing this book. As an editorial team, we hoped at the onset that our work together would not only yield an important book but also that we would have grown as colleagues and friends. This proved to be true. We thank Dr Rob Elkington for his invitation to foster this book through to completion. He opened doors to us and empowered us to create a book that builds both community and knowledge. We are forever changed through *Women Courageous: Leading through the Labyrinth*. We acknowledge the hard work of our Emerald partners who create the structure and outlets for our collective words. And, finally, we are most grateful for you, our reader, who found this book, had the courage to invest in it, and who will see themselves or someone they love somewhere in its pages. We honor you and your courageous walk through the labyrinth.

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INTRODUCTION

Jennifer Moss Breen and Suzanne Stigler Martin

WHY THE LABYRINTH?

A labyrinth is a spiritual, wisdom-seeking tool found all over the world. The classical Cretan labyrinth is at least 4,000 years old. The essence of the labyrinth is that one cannot get lost, but stays on the path and keeps turning. The path includes elements of *release* upon entering the labyrinth, *reception* or *illumination* at the center, and *return*, or *integration*, on the path out. One may walk the labyrinth alone or with others.

A labyrinth looks like a maze on its surface. As seen in the photo, a labyrinth is a winding, circular form where one might seemingly walk at random. But the labyrinth is not a random shape. The labyrinth is spiritual but not based in any singular religion or practice. Entering the labyrinth requires vulnerability and courage because where we are going is unseen, others can see us along the way, and what we may experience is unknown¹.

The labyrinth is typically formed on the open ground and the pattern is generally the same in each. There is a starting point and ending point, which is, ironically, the same place – the door. The labyrinth is a metaphor we use in “Women Courageous” because it depicts our meandering through life. Women hold great responsibility for the well-being of families, organizations, communities,

¹Artress, 2019.

and society. With responsibility comes both ups and downs, and often, we feel like we are lost on our path. But, through the labyrinth, and its purposeful and consistently designed structure, we can find a useful metaphor for women's lives. In this book, you will see and vicariously experience the leadership labyrinths our authors have traveled (Fig. 1.1).

A NEW DEFINITION OF COURAGE

The most prevalent meaning attributed to courage is that it is a trait that one possesses.² In this view, people are either courageous or they are not. War heroes, astronauts, and firefighters are considered to have the trait of courage. But more often, we think we attribute courage to these individuals because they were put into a dire situation that required great courage. These are the stories we see in the news and, to these people, we attribute great courage.

Researchers enhanced the notion of courage, reframing it as a process.³ This notion of courage includes four major components including intention, deliberation, risk, and noble intentions. The



Photo Credit: Owen Stayner.

Fig. 1.1. Labyrinth.

²Peterson & Seligman, 2004.

³Rate, Clark, Lindsay, & Sternberg, 2007.

last component, noble intentions, has been adapted to include a prosocial orientation, or wanting to do good for others.⁴

We see that courage might be a trait one is born with. But more likely, courage is the result of life experiences that required it. Behavioral courage, that which we can develop throughout our lives, also has numerous definitions worthy of discussion. Three forms of courage typically found in the literature include physical courage, moral courage, and social courage. Physical courage is an intentional act through which the courageous individual places themselves in a high state of risk to help another person or people.⁵ Moral courage is broadly defined in many ways, but includes actions such as taking a stand, verbalizing a wrong done to someone else, following their own personal values amid controversy, and addressing societal norms that hurt others. Social courage adds to our definition of courage and moves moral courage to the next level. We think that social courage is our deepest form of courage in the broadest sense because the reason social change and societal advances stall is because people are afraid of how others will judge them when they speak on behalf of others.

With this, we propose a new definition of courage. For women, and perhaps for people of any gender identity,

Courage is pushing forward, step by step, while everything is holding you back. Often unnoticed by others, courageous acts come with great emotional challenges, but also with a sense of purpose. Courage is an act that must be done when there are no alternatives other than giving up. It is how we transform, not only ourselves, but those we support and love and the work to which we have dedicated our lives.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

The book is divided into sections according to themes. Each theme contains chapters we felt belonged together because of the nature of the story being shared. Below, we share the logic of each section's name.

⁴Howard & Alipour, 2014.

⁵Clancy, 2003.

The Color of Courage

In our first section, entitled “The Color of Courage,” we noted each author wrote about an element of diversity, equity, and inclusion. What is notable about this set of chapters is that their story included notions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in very different ways.

Courage does not have a color. But in courage, we can find colorful depths held within human beings. At times, we shrink from difficulties. Other times, we eagerly embrace challenges with anticipation. Most often, courage asks us to move forward despite our own discomfort, lack of clarity, and fear.

In Chapter 2, “An American in Uganda: Sharing Power and Living to Learn,” Alisha Damron Seruyange and Suzanne Stigler Martin describe experiences of a white woman living and working in Uganda. Learning was unexpected and shaped perspectives on color not only in Uganda but also across the world.

In Chapter 3, entitled “Leadership that Liberates,” Jen Tilghman-Havens explores the notion of self-promotion and skill that requires not only talent but also courage.

Finally, in Chapter 4, “The Effects of Collective Trauma and Redefining My Relationship with Russia,” Yulia Tolstikov-Mast shares the ebbs and flows of a cultural shift when moving from Russia to the United States. Often, culture is invisible, and Yulia courageously navigated this poignant life change.

The Depths of Courage

The book’s second section, “The Depths of Courage,” includes stories of women who fought their way to success, and doing so, had to dig deep into their own strength and perseverance. Why is this section entitled “The depths of courage”?

In Chapter 5, “Dianne Bevelander: A Courageous Woman of Passion and Resilience,” Diane Coetzer and Mike Page share Dianne’s story of navigating depths by challenging a male-dominated status quo while also battling cancer.

In Chapter 6, named “Leadership as Courageous Practice,” Linda Sibanyoni, Trisha Gott, and Mary Hale Tolar tell Linda’s story of running for elected office as an independent candidate, effectively challenging the status quo.

And, in Chapter 7, titled “Courageous Dreams and the Leadership Power to Build a Better World,” Madeleine van der Steege, Lisa Kinnear, and KarenOrtlepp offer the story of Marie, a woman who successfully pursued not only an education but also the role of a South African member of parliament.

The Boundarylessness of Courage

Next, we share three stories that each reminded us of how boundaries are spanned through courageous acts.

The labyrinth provides boundaries by design. All who walk the labyrinth walk the same path, and so we may presume that each labyrinth traveler shares the same experience. Despite the consistent formation of the labyrinth path, those who walk it may escape its boundaries through the pace of their walk.

At times, courage requires us to span our own boundaries or the boundaries we perceive exist, and that is the case for the story shared in Chapter 8 called “Not Enough Space for Everyone: The Courage of NASA Astronaut Jeanette Epps,” written by Karin Botto. Karin shares Jeannette’s journey which provides both a literal and figurative example of boundary spanning.

Chapter 9, “Battalion Chief Jodi Gabelmann’s Journey to Peace and Pride,” written by Jodi Gabelmann and Judith Glick-Smith, allows us to walk alongside Jodi, who not only spanned boundaries of power within a traditionally male work environment but also strengthened and embraced her own identity.

Claire Tucker-Reid shares her life strategies in Chapter 10, “Seven Courageous Keys to Navigate the Labyrinth.”

The Mandate of Courage

The Mandate of Courage highlights chapters in which authors proceeded courageously because they felt obligated to do so to

serve. Mandates imply obligation. If we recall our definition of courage, we act on the behalf of those we support and love and through the work to which we have dedicated our lives, we can envision our own obligation. When we enter the labyrinth, we must walk the path.

In Chapter 11, titled “Courage: A Seven Letter Word that Saved a Non-Profit,” by Janice Cardwell, we witness a woman who faced her mandate to serve despite dysfunctional and power-based actions of those serving a nonprofit organization.

Chapter 12 follows a similar mandate of courage as Jenni Frumer tackles a dysfunctional board of directors in her role as CEO of a nonprofit organization in “The Courage to Roar: Leadership Without Remorse.” This chapter is coauthored by Jennifer Moss Breen.

In Chapter 13, called “Lessons in Courageous Leadership,” Jill Lindsey shares her journey as a United States Air Force Officer. Through her story, we learn how self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the taking and giving of power shape leadership.

The Choice of Courage

The chapters in this section include stories where courage is part of life and death. Sometimes, our lives are threatened at such a deep level, we can only survive through courage. Imagine standing on top of a labyrinth resting on top of a steep rock that was once placed on solid ground. Suddenly, earth beneath the rock erodes and we find ourselves soaring high above without warning, without tools to take us to safe ground, and alone. We entered the labyrinth when it was secure, and now it is toppling down underneath us. This is where we choose courage to reach out for assistance, navigate the rocky terrain to safety, and begin to find ourselves. When we are safe at last, we know we will never be the same as we once were.

Chapter 14 is a personal story of courage through which Jennifer Moss Breen shares her own mandate of courage as she encounters and survives emotional abuse and suicide in “Harnessing the Courage to Survive.”

Donnette Noble similarly shares her story of choices that must be made when the one we love is nearing death in “A Labyrinth of Pain and Peace” in Chapter 15.

Carly Speranza and Catherine England tell us of Carly’s 20-year career as a woman serving in the United States Air Force, finding herself as the sole female senior leader in the male-dominated environment in “Courage to Navigate a Man’s World.”

The Shaping of Courage

The stories in the final section each share how they were being shaped in some way. Like a flower pushing its way above the ground, courage asks us to push ourselves into who we are meant to be. Just like the flower that was deigned to be a beautiful color and shape but that can experience drought, floods, and harsh footsteps, we need to persevere despite not knowing if we have the strength and tenacity to do so. We need to courageously become that blooming flower, shining on the sunny day, with battle scars, scarred petals, and all.

In Chapter 17, we hear the story of Sylvie Raver in “Transitions and Identity” who found herself shaping and reshaping her own identity. Her coauthor is Celeste Raver Luning.

In Chapter 18, titled “Rock to Recovery,” Constance Scharff and Caroline Heldman write about Constance’s leadership role that morphed quickly when one of her colleagues died of a drug overdose. Her organization specializes in addiction treatment and support for musicians (and others). She led the company through their pain and loss, ultimately helping the group to thrive.

In Chapter 19, “Choosing Authenticity – A Daily Practice,” we hear ClaireWyneken’s story of shaping and embracing her authentic self.

As you read each chapter and reflect upon them, consider you own life’s courageous story.

You are women courageous.

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