



No Fear of Failure: Real Stories of How Leaders Deal with Risk and Change

Gary Burnison

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Candid conversations with top leaders around the world on how they approached pivotal moments in their careers

No Fear of Failure offers insightful, candid conversations with some of the world's top leaders in business, politics, education, and philanthropy, each giving a first-person account of how they approached crucial, career defining moments. Gary Burnison, CEO of Korn/Ferry International, the world's largest executive recruiting firm, sits down one-on-one with a highly select and elite corps, and together they openly discuss how they handled (often very publicly) war, economic downturn, corporate turnover, and even retirement. Together these world-class leaders show the risks one must be willing to take, as well as the vision, resilience, and compassion necessary to lead.

- Includes original interviews with Michael Bloomberg, Carlos Slim, Eli Broad, Indra Nooyi, Drew Gilpin Faust, Anne Mulcahy, Vincente Fox, Lt. General Franklin L. "Buster" Hagenbeck, Coach John McKissick, Liu Chuanzhi, Daniel Vasella, and Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo
- Explores the common traits great leaders exhibit: vision, compassion, resilience, competitiveness, purpose, humility, team-building skills, entrepreneurial spirit, perseverance, self-awareness, empowerment, and being a catalyst

Taking readers into executive suites, government offices, battlefields, and football fields, No Fear of Failure shows how great leaders make lasting impact.

Q&A with Gary Burnison, CEO of Korn/Ferry International, and author of *No Fear of Failure: Real Stories of How Leaders Deal with Risk and Change*



Author Gary Burnison

What does “no fear of failure” mean?

“No fear of failure” refers to the inner strength needed to accept that failure is inevitable at times and that all leaders must be willing to take risks. Success instills confidence, but failure imparts wisdom. It’s what you do after failure that counts—what you learn. The bridge between failure and success is the ability to learn and the courage to try again.

How did you choose the leaders interviewed for this book?

We identified leaders who have shown courage and confidence in a variety of situations and challenges, who possess different backgrounds in business, sports, academics, philanthropy, and public service. With such a broad base of leaders, it was fascinating to discover their commonalities, such as never confusing what they do with who they are and remaining committed to self-improvement to grow as a leader. To lead others; you must first lead yourself.

Which leader surprised you the most in his or her interview?

Every interview had surprises. Michael Bloomberg is a take-charge public servant and highly successful entrepreneur, but he credits the efforts of others to whom he empowers. As president of Mexico, Vicente Fox was in the spotlight on the world stage with heroic aspirations of making lasting change in his country, but never lost his humility and appreciation of where he came from. General Franklin “Buster” Hagenbeck led soldiers into battle, but he spoke with deep compassion and caring for every individual. In fact, every leader revealed surprising vulnerability.

Of all the attributes named in this book, which is the most important, in your opinion? It’s not what you’ve done as a leader; it’s what you’ve learned. Effective leaders are lifelong learners—inquisitive and constantly engaged. Insatiably curious, they are voracious readers, particularly of history and biography. They are forward leaning in their approach.

What are some of the other insights to effective leadership? To be an effective leader, you must listen first, learn, and then lead. Listen more than you speak is good advice for anyone—and it is twice as true for a leader. Some people will seek to be heard, others will be threatened by change going on in the organization, but all will have something to teach the leader. Leaders also know that strategic thinking is perpetual. They look over the horizon, but anticipate and navigate the short-term. They always have a Plan “B.”

What did you take away from the experience of writing this book?

It was a privilege to engage in such candid discussions with leaders who are the outliers of achievement—and yet they retained their humility, humanness, and accessibility. In each instance, it was not what the person said that made the biggest impact; it was how they made you feel when you were with them. Leadership is about grace, the ability to rise above and to anchor yourself in humility by always focusing first on others.

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