

[FADE INTO THEME MUSIC PLAY FOR 7 SECONDS, MUSIC: Artist, Title]

[COLLAB INTRODUCTION]

[INTRO INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS FOR 5 SECONDS]

Mariah: A leader is a trailblazer, someone who is described as an individual who has excellent communication skills, can influence others, has the ability to create harmony in teamwork, has confidence and above all is fearless. They are endowed with courage and are expected to have the natural ability to steer people in the right direction. What people do not expect is for leaders to be cowardly in their role, but many leaders often too fear the role they assume. I asked a few people what word describes a leader to them and here is what they had to say.

Mariah: What's a word that describes a leader?

Interviewee #1:

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS FOR 3 SECONDS]

Mariah: What's a word that describes a leader?

Interviewee #2:

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS FOR 3 SECONDS]

Mariah: What's a word that describes a leader?

Interviewee #3:

[INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYS FOR 3 SECONDS]

[FADE OUT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAY FOR 5 SECONDS, MUSIC: Artist, title]

[INTRO MUSIC FADES IN FOR 5 SECONDS, MUSIC]

Mariah: None of them mentioned words like fearful, cowardly, shy, or even skeptical. A leader to most is not the typical person. They are expected to have all the answers, always know right from wrong, and be able to handle all responsibilities without ever dropping the ball. We have all had to assume a leadership role one time or another whether it may have been in group work in an office setting or at in school. For some, this role may have seemed easy and their ability to shine in it came naturally but for me it has always been terrifying.

If you looked up the definition of leader in the dictionary my name by no means would appear. I am meek, and shy, timid, and skeptical. I am not a natural leader in no way shape or form. I fear the responsibility of leading because it means I risk the chance of letting others down. I risk the chance of being the one who drops the ball and having to answer the questions that I cannot, or even finding a solution to a problem I cannot fix. Being a leader is a characteristic many employers seek in a potential employee.

They want a person who can take charge and or even has the potential to be—I was neither of these things.

I grew up in a culture where girls' opinion was not asked of, ever. I was expected to follow and I fell into that role well. I let my voice go unheard for such a long time that when I was given the opportunity to speak and take charge in simple tasks such as group work in grade school I became filled with fear. I knew my place and it was not as a leader, and because I was told I couldn't be one so many times over and over and over again I feared having to take that place. Fast forward 10 years and I am no in grade school; I am a graduating senior in college. I have seen and heard many leaders act, speak, and inspire others to help and change situations and because of this I recognized my fear.

I recognized that if I continued to be fearful or this role I would never get my ideas heard or I would never show my true potential. So in my second semester of college I started doing the smallest things that I thought a leader would do. I asserted myself; I sat in the front of the class and raised my hand every chance I got. I told my story; I painted a picture of myself which I hoped would inspire others. I took small steps into sharing who I was and placing myself in situations where I had to assume the role of a leader and before I knew it, I was the person signing up to be president of a national honor society, lead meetings in my Peer mentoring community, and pitch ideas on the board in my classes. My fear of being a leader drove me into assuming the role. I knew that I could fail in the eyes of others as a leader but I grew to see that the fear of not trying at all made me weaker leader than a leader who failed.

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Mariah: If you are listening to this podcast, you probably did it for a few reasons. First, you searched for help in overcoming your fear of leadership, or you just stumbled across this by luck, or my voice has captivated you and you got sucked into listen to me talk about fear and the fear of leading. But for those of you who have sought out this podcast for help you have taken the first step in facing your fear of leadership. You have addressed the problem and you are looking for ways to shine in the light of a leader.

Now that you have listened to my story and possibly found some connection to your own here are five of my strongest suggestions based on research of how to face your fear of being a leader.

First, according to Dorothy J. Gaiter, Author of *Facets of Leadership*, she states, "The leadership role requires courage and willingness to take risk, because challenge and change are characteristic traits for the leadership position." (pg.326) Take the risk in the smallest way that you can this will give you courage and confidence to face bigger challenges.

Secondly, in the *Himalayan Times*, the article "How to Become a Leader?" encouraged its readers by stating, "It's the fear...that holds them back from becoming a leader. The main thing to conquer fear is to participate in various activities." It is important to

spread wings and explore who you are and what is offered. Moving out of your comfort zone gives you the ability to become more aware of what you are capable of and in due time helps to overcome the fear of taking charge of a situation which you may not be comfortable with.

Thirdly, Amanda Perscio, author of “Leadership innate, then developed, author says”, writes bluntly “Leaders follow their gut.” So the next time you know you are right follow that thought, assert yourself and assume the leadership role that you innately have.

Next, Warren Bennis author of “On Becoming a Leader”, he says “To become a leader, then, you must become yourself; become the maker of your own life. Knowing thyself is the most difficult task any of us faces: but until you truly know yourself, strengths and weaknesses, know what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most superficial sense of the world.” Knowing what exactly scares you about leading helps you address the fear. It means you are taking responsibility and becoming the leader of your own life.

Lastly, this suggestion comes from no scholar but me. The fear of leading is all but a fear. You have been choosing and taking chances in your life all along. It’s what has gotten you here. Recognizing what you are capable of gives you the confidence to realize you are more than just a follower. You too are a leader.

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Mariah: Thank you all for listening on my podcast on fearing leadership. Until next time, trust in yourselves and remember that living means being fearless. We are all leaders so take a chance and be the leader you were born to be. Stay tuned for more from us at the Real Estate of Fear – where we build from our fears.

Works Cited

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