

Courageous Leadership: It's Always Game Seven

By Rick Denley

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Leaders today face a world of constant change. Markets shift overnight, technology evolves faster than we can adopt it, and teams look to us not just for direction, but for courage.

Courageous leadership isn't about being fearless. It's about **acting despite fear**. It's about leaning into uncertainty, knowing that growth lives on the other side of discomfort.

I learned this lesson years ago on the ice. My son once tapped my shin pads after a reckless rush to the net and said, "*Dad, it's not Game Seven.*" My response? "*Son, it's always Game Seven.*"

That mindset — showing up with full commitment, even when the stakes feel overwhelming — is what courageous leadership demands.

Three Traits of Courageous Leaders

- **Authenticity over appearance:** Courageous leaders don't hide behind titles or masks. They show vulnerability, admit mistakes, and earn trust through honesty.
- **Adaptability in motion:** Change isn't the enemy. It's the energy source. Courageous leaders harness it, rewire habits, and turn resistance into reinvention.
- **Conviction in the "Why":** When your reason is clear and rooted in service, courage follows naturally. People rally behind leaders who stand for something bigger than themselves.

Exercise for Leaders

Take five minutes today and write a short letter to yourself:

- What fear is holding you back?
- What courageous action could you take this week that would inspire your team?
- How will you remind yourself that *it's always Game Seven*?

Call to Action

Courageous leadership isn't about waiting for the perfect moment. It's about choosing to act now, with grit, clarity, and conviction.

Remember my formula:

$$(\textit{Skills} + \textit{Knowledge} + \textit{Tools}) \times \textit{Grit} = \textit{Success}$$

Apply it to your leadership journey, and you'll not only reinvent yourself — you'll empower others to do the same.

Cheers for now,

Rick