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Why Learning is an Act of Courage

The best leaders love to learn. And the greatest organizations are learning enterprises – places where ideas are the currency of success. Yet, so many amongst us resist learning and embracing the new ideas that change brings with it. The deeper question is why?

What I've realized, as I travel across the world helping people Lead Without a Title, is that the very act of learning something new means you must also disrupt your thinking of yesterday. To accept or even just to entertain a new idea means you must leave the safety of your former way of perceiving the world and open up to something foreign. And that means you'd have to leave the protection of your comfort zone/Safe Harbor of The Known and sail out into the unknown – even for just a moment.

The unknown is a pretty scary place for most people. Ordinary people get threatened there. Victims get frightened there. And so the average person in business (and within life) avoids learning and exposing themselves to any idea or influence that might cause them to have to rethink the way they think and re-behave the way they have always behaved. But the fascinating paradox is that trying to avoid new ideas to stay safe is actually enormously dangerous – and infused with risk.

On the other hand, those who make the choice to Lead Without a Title have a lust to learn. They remain blindingly curious. They read books daily. They drink coffee with brilliant people. They have long conversations with role models whose ideas provoke/challenge/irritate them. Real leaders truly get that learning and ideation is the fuel of life. And that all it takes is a single idea to change the game at work (and rescript the story that is your life). Sure they too feel uncomfortable or even scared when faced with an idea that confronts their most closely cherished beliefs. But they understand that to resist the idea is to resist growth. As well as their next level of Mastery+Progress+Leadership. And so they move forward. Into an uncertain yet gorgeously exciting future.