

BRAIN FOOD

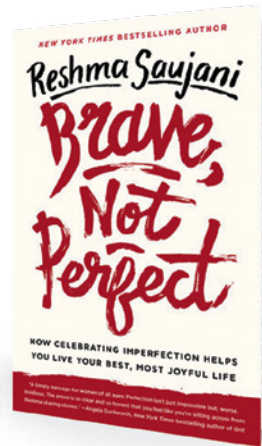
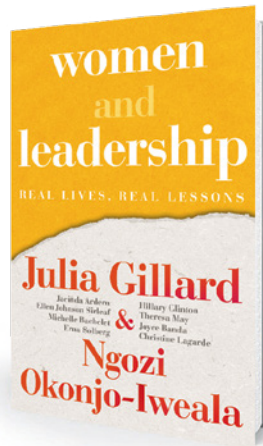
These books and this podcast speak to our current time, offering executive knowledge, lessons in leadership and permission to fail. *By Lisa M. Bouchey*



COURTESY PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

“Who we are as leaders is as important as what we know and what we can do.”

—Penny de Valk, Author, *Grit In The Oyster*



LEADING WOMEN

(From left) Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala discuss their unique paths to positions of power in the compelling book *Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons*.

Women and Leadership: Real Lives, Real Lessons

By Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Vintage Australia
July 12, 2020

Both Ms. Gillard and Ms. Okonjo-Iweala have smashed glass ceilings—Ms. Gillard as the first female prime minister of Australia and Ms. Okonjo-Iweala as the first woman to serve as both Nigeria’s finance minister and its foreign minister. Both now chair various organizations, including the Global Partnership for Education (Ms. Gillard) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Ms. Okonjo-Iweala). In *Women and Leadership*, the co-authors present a lively analysis of women’s access to positions of power, how others perceive them as leaders and their paths to leadership. A repository of knowledge and lessons learned, this book includes an action agenda for change as well as interviews with female leaders such as Jacinda Ardern, Michelle Bachelet, Hillary Clinton, Theresa May, Erna Solberg and more.

Brave, Not Perfect: How Celebrating Imperfection Helps You Live Your Best, Most Joyful Life

By Reshma Saujani
Currency (an imprint of Crown Publishing Group)
May 5, 2020

From an early age, girls are taught to be perfectionists and people-pleasers, but boys are encouraged to make mistakes and get their hands dirty. Ms. Saujani, founder and CEO of Girls Who Code, encourages women to embrace imperfection in pursuit of a daring and authentic life. Many women feel overwhelmed by the pressure of their own expectations, but failing is a vital part of life and teaches valuable lessons. **That’s what the author learned after an epic failure while running for Congress. Perfection wasn’t what she needed—bravery in the face of criticism was much more important.** In *Brave, Not Perfect*, Ms. Saujani shares the insight and behaviors she’s learned along the way to help readers let go of the need for perfection and make bravery a lifelong trait.

Grit in the Oyster

By Penny de Valk
Podcast
March 2020

In leadership positions for more than 20 years, including a couple of stints as a CEO, Ms. de Valk is an experienced senior executive and leadership development expert. **“I have always believed that who we are as leaders is as important as what we know and what we can do,”** she wrote on her website. “And we need to be working on all three of these things constantly in our career.” In this half-hour segment of her *Grit in the Oyster* podcast, Ms. de Valk talks to Dame Inga Beale about her learning and her legacy as CEO of Lloyd’s of London. Ms. Beale made headlines several times during her five-year tenure at the iconic British brand. In 2014, she became the first female CEO in the company’s history of 300+ years. She is openly bisexual. She banned drinking alcohol during working hours—and she took Lloyd’s digital. Here, she shares her thoughts on leadership and the importance of inclusion in the workplace. **IQ**