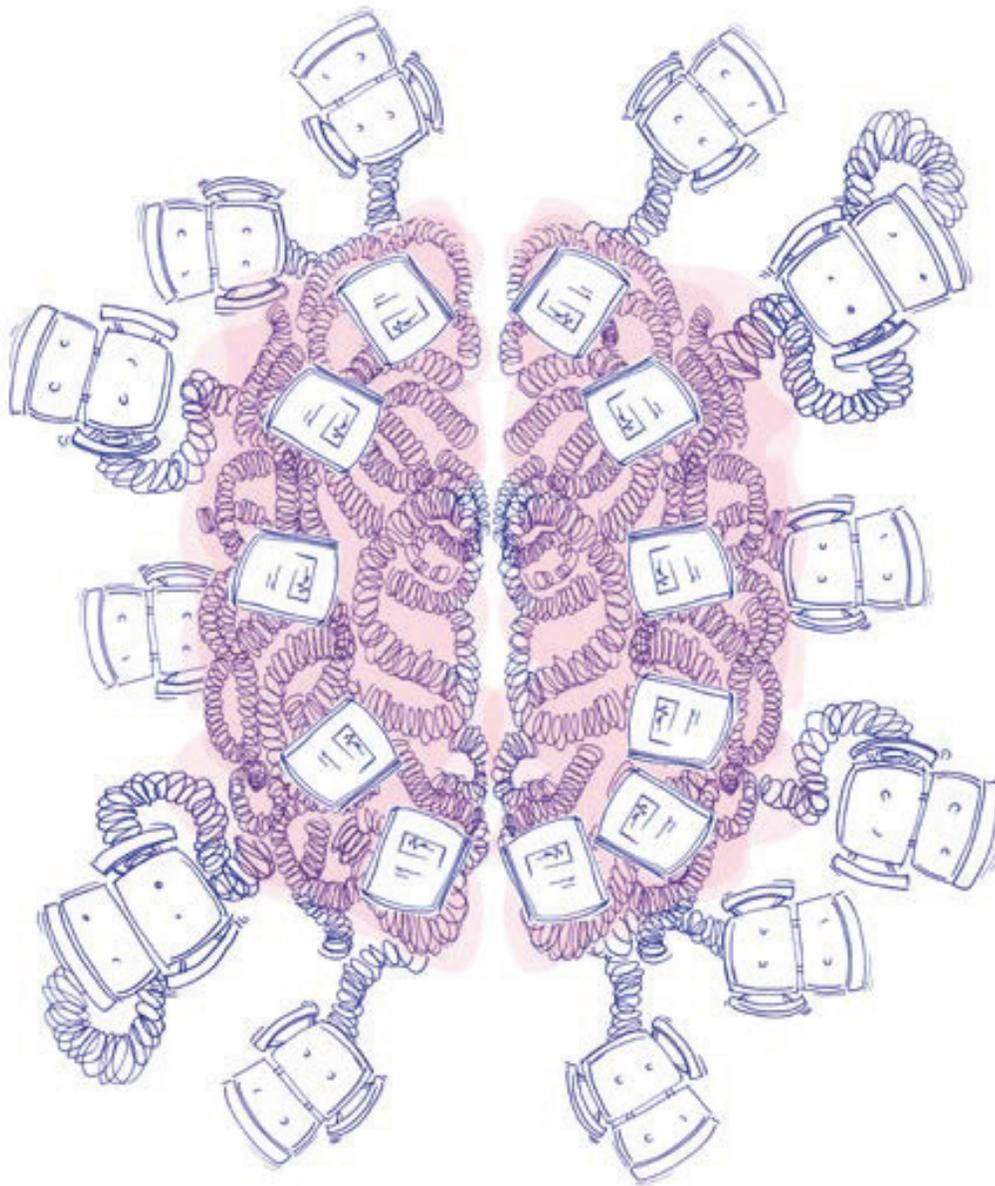


ADVANCING AUTHENTIC CONFIDENCE THROUGH EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY

An evidence-based playbook of insights,
practices and tools to shape your future



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Jacqueline Brassey
Nick van Dam
Arjen van Witteloostuijn

A dream come true

*For my precious Nicholas, Josephine and Samuel,
who accept and love me fully for who I am -XXX-*

Jacqui Brassey

For my students, colleagues, friends and loved ones,

Nick van Dam

For everyone who may benefit from this,

Arjen van Witteloostuijn

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PRAISE FOR *AUTHENTIC PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE*

"In this powerful book, the authors transform confidence from a feeling one must wait for, into a psychological skill that one can produce. Authentic confidence is a stance of awareness, openness, and trust in one's purpose, values, and true capabilities. Instead of running from fear or insecurity, or hiding from one's own weaknesses, it teaches the reader to face them head on with peaceful self-awareness and a commitment to growth. Filled with insights and tools to help you face challenging situations more effectively and mindfully, this book teaches the small set of skills that research shows account for the lion's share of positive life trajectories in your career and beyond. Highly recommended."

Steven C. Hayes, Psychology Professor at the University of Nevada, Reno. Originator and co-developer of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and one of the most cited scholars worldwide on acceptance, mindfulness & values

"I might be only ten years old, but I do have an experience that kind of changed my life. Something happened, and it made me sad and insecure. So my mom told me to take a risk and tell everybody who was involved how I felt about the situation, it worked out very well. My mom inspired me and not only me but other people too. Anybody can be insecure but we all are confident and strong people if we just dig a little deeper. This book that my mom wrote is about Authentic Confidence. It's a beautiful book about how to encourage people to be more themselves and to be okay and confident about it."

Josephine Brassey, 10 year old student of life, I love learning, fashion, hockey and dancing

"This is a book about the Science, Art and Practice of Authentic Confidence. Brassey, Van Dam and van Witteloostuijn carefully and cleverly build bridges between the fields of Neuroscience & Psychology and translate this into pragmatic, action-oriented insights enriched with true stories from senior leaders across multiple sectors."

Susan David, PhD, Psychologist Harvard Medical School, Author of *Emotional Agility*

"Being a leader in a world with no certainties can be very scary. Daring to lead in an Authentic Confident way requires a thorough understanding of what truly matters to your organization, your teams and to you. Living up to this purpose on a daily basis requires an active mindfulness muscle and awareness radar to help you focus and skillfully deal with any distracting and difficult emotions. This book offers you an excellent evidence-based toolkit to contribute to the journey ahead of you. Make the most of it!"

Rasmus Hougaard, Managing Director of Potential Project International. Author of *The Mind of the Leader: How to Lead Yourself, Your People, and Your Organization for Extraordinary Results*

"Courage (or Authentic Confidence) does not come easy and it certainly does not come at a low price. It requires effort and continuously connecting with what is important to you. This book provides you with the tools you need to clarify your purpose, to prioritize your values and to effectively manage ambiguity that potentially challenges your courage. I highly recommend it."

Her Excellency Madam Thenjiwe Mtintso, The South African High Commissioner to The Republic of Malawi

"Authentic Confidence through Emotional Flexibility teaches you how emotions can get in the way of moving towards what truly matters to you and how you can effectively manage these emotions. An insightful piece of work that offers many practical tools to support you in leading your life as opposed to life leading you."

Vikram Malhotra, Senior Partner at McKinsey & Company

"Solid values and principles are the foundation of what guides our behaviours. This includes acting with purpose, authenticity and humility, which are the hallmarks of ethical and lasting conduct. This book simply helps you to become better."

Paul Polman, Chair, International Chamber of Commerce

"One of the many things that my father taught me that you always have to challenge yourself in the things you may find hard in life. By doing this you'll become an expert in areas you once thought were your weaknesses."

Yannick van Dam, Student at IE Business School in Spain

"Too often leaders dismiss words like "self-esteem" as a passing self-help fad, with few if any practical applications at work. But with penetrating analysis and drawing insights from the leading edge of research, Brasseley, van Dam and van Witteloostuijn provide a compelling argument that not only is authentic confidence important for individual development, they also help leaders understand that authentic confidence is crucial for success in the workplace. Leaders around the world will benefit from taking these insights and applying them in companies, government and non-profit organizations in order to help their employees thrive at work."

Tim Welsh, Vice Chairman, Consumer and Business Banking, U.S. Bank

"Our energy is the most important driver of our performance. Workplaces today are very demanding, and it is critical that we find ways to maintain the most important driver of our performance, namely our energy. We can enhance our energy by looking after our wellbeing at all levels, namely physical, emotional mental and purpose. This book provides some excellent practical insights on how we can be our best and thrive in a demanding workplace - bringing energy and joy to all we work with, and in so doing make work a life enhancing experience. A must read for all who want to be at their best and get the best out of their fellow human beings."

Geoff McDonald, Former Global VP HR Unilever, Now Global Advocate, Campaigner and Consultant to enhancing Health at Work

"We all have our insecurities both in our daily lives and in the work environment. This book offers great suggestions and tools to embrace these insecurities, be yourself and get the most out of life. Jacq, I'm proud of you and your ongoing journey that has led to this book."

Anjo de Rooij, Jacqui's best friend since High School

"Simply to survive in today's competitive, unrelenting business environment many of us feel a need, consciously or not, to control our fears and anxieties by adopting undermining numbing behaviors. The problem is that we cannot selectively numb our emotions - we numb them all, even the positive ones like joy and love. We are doing this at a time our businesses and our communities need more caring and human connection than ever. This prophetic book offers profound, yet practical tools and strategies to manage our emotions with greater precision and awareness. With focused application, these lessons can enable us to let go of old patterns and to bring our very best selves to our work, whatever challenges we may confront."

Henry Ritchie, Partner, McKinsey & Company

"In a world of dynamic change there can be nothing more important than the acquisition of skills to support resilience and sustainable high performance. We are faced with the daily reality of VUCA ... where volatility, uncertainty, change and ambiguity are the norm. Turning this to our advantage, sustainably, requires us to dig deep and unlock our unique capability and talent... in short to discover our authentic, purpose-inspired confidence. No doubt this practical playbook will be useful in supporting your journey in this regard... building insights and skills, reducing stigmas and unhelpful dogmas, allowing you to thrive rather than just survive in the turbulence of today and tomorrow. Enjoy!"

Nicholas Brassey, Chief Human Resources Officer Ahold Delhaize, Europe and Indonesia

Disclaimer: Recognition – standing on shoulders of giants

This book is a light mix of academic and practical input, flavored with original research. For that reason, we include references in the text, but tried to avoid an overly academic focus of writing and referencing. It is our intention to recognize and appreciate all the great work, to the best of our knowledge, that has been done in the scope of this book's subject. With our work, we are not only bringing insights from our own extensive research through our surveys and interviews, but we are of course also standing on the shoulders of 'giants': research from many others, and insights from highly experienced practitioners. We were inspired by the work in a wide variety of fields, including organizational behavior, (organizational) psychology and sociology, neuroscience, learning and development, relational frame theory, and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). The toolkit that we present in this book is primarily based on ACT, but translated in the workplace with insights accumulated through our practical experience in leadership development and professional learning. We have, where we thought relevant, enriched our argument with tools and insights that would perhaps fall slightly outside the pure ACT method, but that we have experienced to be very valuable in the workplace.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE LEAD AUTHORS

Dr. Jacqueline Brassey



Picture by Clara Mazèl -
www.mazelphotography.com

Jacqui Brassey brings over 20 years of professional experience in HR (organizational effectiveness, leadership development and learning, employee engagement, diversity & inclusion, and HR & people analytics), customer development, sustainability and academia (leadership and diversity effectiveness). As a pracademic, she enjoys building bridges between business and academia.

For a large part of her business career she has been in global HR expertise roles at Unilever, leading employee engagement, people & organizational insight, organizational diagnostics, learning and leadership development. Following her passion for leadership and talent development, she also has been a career development advisor and a lecturer in diversity and inclusion for international MBA students at Luiss Business School in Rome, Italy.

She started at McKinsey & Company in September 2013 as an expert consultant in the organization practice where she further specialized in transformational change, diversity & inclusion, human capital and leadership development. In 2016, she accepted a role in McKinsey Learning as Senior Manager, Partner Learning and Development responsible for the Senior Partner Portfolio. She recently was appointed Director of Enduring Priorities Learning and is part of the global learning leadership team.

Next to her business pursuits, she also built up an academic career. She has been an affiliated researcher at the University of Antwerp in Belgium and Assistant Professor at Tilburg University, School of Governance in the Netherlands. Currently she is Adjunct Professor at IE University in Madrid, Spain and visiting research fellow at the VU Amsterdam, Faculty of Business and Economics in the Netherlands. As a true lifelong learner, she is also studying for a medical degree (MSc) in Affective Neuroscience at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Over her career, Jacqui has been based in the Netherlands, Italy and in the UK and she has (co-)authored over fifteen books and articles in the area of organizational behavior and leadership development including

Elevating Learning & Development (2018) and *Handbook Learning and Development in Organizations* (2018 – in Dutch).

Since 2017, she is a very proud member of the supervisory board of Save the Children, The Netherlands.

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Prof. dr. Nick H.M. van Dam



Nick is an internationally recognized thought leader, adviser, researcher, author, and facilitator on corporate learning and leadership development. He is passionate about helping individuals reach their full potential and is inspired by insights from positive- and development psychology, philosophy and the neurosciences.

Dr. van Dam has over 30 years of business experience as a former partner, global chief learning officer, HR executive, and client advisor at McKinsey and Deloitte, as well as a business unit director at Siemens. As an advisor he has served more than 100 clients around the world.

Nick is chief learning officer at IE University (Spain), chief of the IE University center for learning innovation, serves on the University executive board and is a professor in corporate learning and leadership development. He is Academic Director of the International Masterclass L&D Leadership and the Executive Master Positive Leadership, Transformation and Change. Additionally, he is part of the Center for Health, Wellbeing and Happiness at IE University. Furthermore, he is a professor at Nyenrode Business Universiteit (The Netherlands), and at the University of Pennsylvania, where he works with candidates in the executive doctoral program for Chief Learning Officers. Nick is the academic director and professor of the UC Berkeley's L&D Leadership Program. He is affiliated with McKinsey & Company as an external senior advisor.

During his career Nick has written articles for various publications and has been quoted by The Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, Fortune Magazine, Harvard Business Review, Business Week, India Times, Information Week, Management Consulting, Chief Learning Officer Magazine, and TD Magazine.

Nick has authored and co-authored more than 25 books and numerous articles on learning and leadership development including *Handboek Organization & Management* (2019), *Elevating Learning & Development* (2018), *Leadership at Scale* (2018), *Handbook Learning and Development in Organizations* (2018 – in Dutch), *You! The Positive Force in Change* (2015) and *Next Learning Unwrapped* (2012). Several of his books have been translated into Mandarin, Portuguese and Dutch.

He is a board member of ICEDR, the world's premier network in global talent management, leadership development and strategic change. Additionally, he is an advisory board member of Inventive, a professional network organization for HR/Talent/L&D Executives. Nick is a member of the Consortium for Advancing Adult Learning & Development (CAALD) which includes 30+ leaders, academic researchers and experts and is convened by McKinsey & Company.

Nick has received the 2012 'Lifetime Learning Leadership Award' for his contributions to innovation and learning from The MASIE Center, an internationally-recognized think tank focused on workforce education and performance. Under the patronage of the European Parliament Federal Ministry of Education & Research, he received the 2013 Leonardo European Corporate Learning Award for 'Shaping the Future of Organizational Learning and Leadership Development.'

He is the founder of The e-Learning for Kids Foundation, which has provided digital lessons for more than 20 million underprivileged elementary school children.

Dr. van Dam is a graduate of the Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam, Bachelor's Degree in Education, Economics and Business Economics, and holds a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Sociology from the Universiteit van Amsterdam. He earned his Doctorate in Human Capital Development at Nyenrode Business Universiteit, Breukelen, The Netherlands. He completed HR Executive Development programs at Wharton and Harvard Business School.

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Prof. dr. Arjen van Witteloostuijn



Currently, Arjen van Witteloostuijn is Professor of Business and Economics at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam and Dean of the VU School of Business and Economics in the Netherlands, as well as Research Professor in Business, Economics and Governance at the University of Antwerp and Antwerp Management School in Belgium. From 1980 through 2019, he has been affiliated with the University of Groningen, University Maastricht, Tilburg University and Utrecht University (all four in the Netherlands), and Cardiff University and Durham University (both in the United Kingdom), and he visited New York University (the US) and Warwick Business School (the UK).

He holds degrees in business, economics and psychology. From 1996–1998, he was Dean of the Maastricht Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. He is (former) member of the editorial board of, e.g., the *Academische boekengids*, *Academy Management Journal*, *Bedrijfskunde: tijdschrift voor modern management*, *Cross-Cultural and Strategic Management*, *Economisch statistische berichten*, *British Journal of Management*, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *M&O: tijdschrift voor organisatiekunde en sociaal beleid*, *Organization Studies* and *Strategic Organization*. Additionally, he was/is member of the Executive Committee of the European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (EARIE), President of the Dutch-Flemish Academy of Management (NVAM), Chairman of the Board of the Council for Economic, Social and Regional Sciences (ESR) of the Dutch National Science Foundation (NWO), member of the Economic Advisory Council of the Dutch Parliament, and member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW).

Apart from many (chapters in) books, and articles in Dutch dailies and journals, he has published widely in such international journals as the *Academy of Management Executive*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Accounting, Organizations & Society*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Economica*, *Economics of Education Review*, *European Journal of Political Economy*, *History of Political Economy*, *Industrial Relations*, *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*,

Journal of Economic Psychology, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Management Science, Metroeconomica, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Party Politics, Personality and Individual Differences, Public Administration Review, Strategic Management Journal and Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv. In 1999, he published a critical analysis of the Dutch "poldermodel": *De anorexiastrategie: over de gevolgen van saneren* (Amsterdam / Antwerpen: De Arbeiderspers) for which he received the Book of the Year 2000 Prize of the Dutch Society of Management Consultants (Ooa) and the Reader Prize 2000 of the Dutch Association of Consultancy Firms (Roa).

On a regular basis, he is involved in consultancy and training activities for private and public organizations. His research interests range from international macroeconomics and personality psychology to industrial economics and organizational behavior.

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This book has been a wonderful co-creation of great minds. We are highly grateful for all contributions we received from:

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SENIOR PROFESSIONALS INTERVIEWED

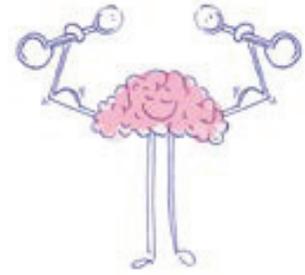
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- Marie-José Blokland, illustrator bringing the creative ideas alive
- Noor Intisar (MSc), University Campus Poet University of Antwerp, she contributed the poems for each of the 6 practices
- Sabine Kal-Hintzen (MSc), creative brain behind the illustrations in this book
- Eileen M. Rogers (MA, MPA), editor and expert advisor
- Matthew Smith, Partner and Chief Learning Officer at McKinsey & Company, pre-final script voluntary editor
- Tasja van der Veen, Bingo! Graphic Design, graphic design of the book

"Whether you manage thousands, dozens, or just yourself, read this book to learn how to create and sustain a workplace where people have no fear of bringing their best selves to work. You may even have a few of those 'aha' moments where you realize you've been driving with the parking brake on for quite some time."

Amy C. Edmondson, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL. Author of *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*



Becoming *Authentically Confident* does not mean that you will be free of insecurities. Rather, it means that you can become *comfortable and effectively manage moments of insecurity*. You can learn to do this. There are a set of practices and skills that you can apply. When you develop these skills, your relationships with your fears and unhelpful emotions change. Instead of being held back by them, they become a positive energy helping you achieve what matters to you. That gives you true authentic confidence.

In this book we bring the science and practice behind this together, with a specific focus on the professional context. We will provide you with a playbook of practices and exercises that you can immediately integrate in your day-to-day life. We include insights from world-leading experts in the field of psychology, neuroscience, leadership development and organizational behavior. We complement this with experiences and stories of professionals and senior leaders from a variety of backgrounds.

Empower yourself and learn how to become okay with moments of insecurity: become *Authentically Confident!*

"We all are complex human beings with talents, dreams, fears and shortcomings. We have the ability to learn many things, but we cannot learn to authentically be someone else. Knowing and understanding one's own self can be a lifelong journey of enrichment. Our individual perspective and insight are unique and therefore one of our most valuable assets."

This book provides excellent tools for self-reflection and self-development. It shares useful practices as well as honest testimonies given by leading business executives regarding their career changing moments. Recommended to anybody who is open to explore their inner world and ready for growth."

HRH Princess Viktória de Bourbon de Parme,
Patron of Save the Children
the Netherlands

"When I clicked with my inner fears, I became a much better professional and person."

Beltrán Simó, Partner, McKinsey & Company, Bogotá, Colombia



Save the Children

All proceeds from this book will be donated to further research and Save the Children the Netherlands.

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