



Soul Matters

March 2017

*What Does It Mean To Be
A Community of Risk?*



What Does It Mean To Be

A Community of Risk?

To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger.

~James Baldwin

Risk is usually associated with the dare devils and thrill seekers. The real danger, we're told, is a life of boredom. The battle is between the bland and the bold.

Yet, as James Baldwin reminds us, it's not quite that simple. He places commitment, not thrills, at the center of the game. For him, the ones to be admired are not so much the dare devils as the dedicated ones. And that Holy Grail? Well, he suggests, maybe it's not "the exciting life" as we've been told. Maybe it's the faithful life.

And that turns everything wonderfully on its head.

From this perspective, the important question about risk (and about life) is not "Are you willing to jump off?" but "Are you willing to jump in?" Not "Are you willing to put yourself in danger?" but "Are you willing to give yourself to something bigger?" Not "Will you be daring?" but "Will you stay true?"

And the message changes too. Suddenly, it's not "Run to what's thrilling!" but "Don't run away!"

It's all about remembering not to let the thrilling trump the faithful. As exciting as roller coasters and jumping out of planes might be, let's remember to remind each other that the most deeply rewarding risks are the ones that involve jumping into causes and putting our hearts in the hands of others. As the poet David Whyte puts it: "We are here essentially to risk ourselves in the world. We are meant to hazard ourselves for the right thing, for the right woman or the right man, for a son or a daughter, for the right work or for a gift given against all the odds." Bob Marley's take is equally compelling. He writes, "The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for."

And here's the twist: It's not just Baldwin's dangers, Whyte's hazards and Marley's suffering that come at us when we take the risk of living faithfully. Grace and gifts slip in there too! As the Scottish writer W.H. Murray explains,

"Concerning all acts of creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one could have dreamt would have come their way."

How thrilling is that?!

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A:

Risk Letting Your Counter-Cultural Self Loose

Each of us have counter-cultural commitments that we don't lean into as fully as we wish. Often this has to do with a lack of courage. It's risky to be labeled "a radical." And so we downplay our pacifism. We don't make a big deal out of our veganism. In order not to be seen as the "weird parents," we've given up on those "silly" efforts to limit TV, put phones away at dinner, or just not buy cable at all. Our closest friends don't really understand what UUism is because we don't want people to think we're "evangelical." We deeply believe in racial reparations but we rarely mention it because the backlash leaves us not only angry but with an even more devastating sense of mourning and isolation.

It's not simple. And it's never easy. But not letting our counter-cultural self loose comes at a cost. So this month take the risk of letting it all hang out, or hang out to the degree that feels right to you. Maybe it's wearing your Pride Parade t-shirt to the gym. Maybe it's inviting your friends over for a vegan dinner, or even a vegan dinner with UU prayers at which you discuss the merits of drastically reducing the military budget (ok, that's a bit overboard, but you get the point.) Or how about asking a friend to come to church--not to recruit them, but just so they get a better sense of this piece of your life that is so important to who you are. Or maybe it's even time for you to let your friends at church know you voted republican and why.

Come to your group ready to talk about the cost of "letting loose," but our hope is that you also can come with a story of how the gift so out-weighed the price.

Option B:

Figure Out Your Edge

[The Edge Is Where I Want To Be](#), by Lisa Martinovic, pulls no punches. It's audacious, urgent, impatient, even pushy. Simply put, Martinovic wants us out of the middle, or "the uncooked vanilla pudding of life," as she puts it. It's dangerous to stay there she says. So, she wants to shake us awake and get us to run as soon as possible to "the edge," where true living lies.

But what's *your* edge? That also is what the poem is all about. Don't just run to the edge; Figure out which edge is yours.

If you're ready for *that* challenge, then here are your instructions:

1. **Read** Martinovic's poem: <http://slamatrix.com/the-edge-is-where-i-want-to-be>
2. Ask yourself, "What's the message in there for me?" (And write down your thoughts)
3. Watch Martinovic's poem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSjhfJVXyYA>
4. Ask yourself, "What's the message in there for me?" (And write down your thoughts)
5. **Have a friend** read you Martinovic's poem.
6. Ask yourself, "What's the message in there for me?" (And write down your thoughts)

After three different "hearings," some of the fog should be lifted. That edge of yours should be a bit more clear. Figure out a few steps to get yourself closer.

Option C: **Resist Standing Up and Risk Sitting Down**

*“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”
- Winston Churchill*

Winston Churchill’s words are indeed a celebration of the “quieter” acts of courage. Yes, the more assertive risks get most of the attention: speaking up, defending, pushing back, demanding your voice be heard. And yet, sometimes that instinct to “let them have it” isn’t the brave thing to do; it’s just the easiest. Sometimes speaking up is simply a way to avoid courageously listening to the other side. Sometimes putting yourself on the line to “change them” is just a sneaky way to avoid them changing *us*. Or a tragic missed opportunity to grow. Yes, we should urge each other to “bravely keep going” and “courageously take control.” Yet, there are also times when what’s most needed is the risk of letting go of control and just sitting with unknowing.

And so, maybe a bit more space it needed. Maybe it would do us some good to make some room for a “spiritual time out” before we leap into the louder acts of bravery. Maybe it’s good to risk “letting a little more in” before we “let them have it.”

And so, here’s what this spiritual assignment invites us to do:

**Find three opportunities to “sit down and listen”
when your first instinct is to “stand up and speak.”**

Yes, that’s *NOT* going to be easy. But it will be worth the risk!

Come to your group ready to share not only what it was like to try to listen better, but also (and maybe more importantly) what it was like to better monitor (and understand) your instinct to stand up and speak.

Option D: **The Resource with Your Name on It**

Sometimes none of the exercises speak to us. Or maybe this is an extra busy month and you need an exercise that is less extensive. If so, consider this more reflective option. Simply, take the time to read through the “Recommended Resources” section of this packet and pick the one or two of them that “have your name on it.” Similar to how we work with the question section. Treat the resources as spiritual companions trying to help you hear the holy in your daily living. Come to your group and share which of the Recommended Resources lit up in neon lights as you read, watched or listened to it. And share what you think it was trying to get you to see or hear.

Your Question

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what Risk means in the abstract, but to figure out what being a part of a community of Risk means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?

1. **Are your commitments deep and big enough to put you in danger?** (To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. ~James Baldwin)
2. **Who in your life needs their vulnerability affirmed? Who near you is taking a risk and needs reminding that others are watching with admiration and awe? Who needs help seeing that they aren't simply exposed, but radiant?** ("What makes you vulnerable, makes you beautiful." – Brené Brown)
3. **How breakable is that heart of yours? Is it more "carefully wrapped" than you noticed? What one small risk this month might help it get some "air"?** ("Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to keep it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable." - C.S. Lewis)
4. **How might it hurt less if you reminded yourself you picked well? If you took the time to remember that you've "found one worth suffering for"?** ("The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for." – Bob Marley)
5. **Have you fallen into more "vanilla pudding" than you thought you would? How's "the middle" feeling to you these days?** ("Brothers and sisters,...Lose the edge and all you've got is middle - middle aged, middle class, middle of the road, middle management. Lose the edge and you're dribbling along in the uncooked vanilla pudding of life." - Lisa Martinovic)
6. **Have the adventures gotten a bit out of hand?** Is there a bit too much "living boldly" going on for you right now? Might it be time to take the risk of turning some adventures down?
7. **How might that struggle of yours change if you took the risk of sitting down and listening rather than the risk of standing up and speaking?** ("Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." - Winston Churchill)
8. **What about the risks of letting go? What about the boldness of taking a pass?** Sometimes deciding to walk away from the cliff is as courageous and bold as jumping off.

9. **Are you (or someone you love) being reckless and calling it “freedom”?** (“We mistook violence for passion, indolence for leisure, and thought recklessness was freedom.” – Toni Morrison)

10. **Are you scared? And if so, why aren’t you telling someone?**

11. **When was the last time you referred to life using the phrase: “The thrill of it all?” Where is there room this month to make life a bit more trilling?**

12. **Are you putting up with recklessness?** (“Don’t be reckless with other people’s hearts, and don’t put up with people who are reckless with yours.” - Kurt Vonnegut)

13. **How does it feel to be an “intelligent lady”?** (“[She was] an intelligent lady: a little too mature for recklessness, a little too young for caution.” - Connie Brockway)

14. **What’s your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find your question.

Recommended Resources

As always, this is not required reading. We will not analyze or dissect these pieces in our group. They are simply meant to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started, and maybe open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be *a community of Risk*.

- Janet Rand

Risk

The Latin word comes from a Greek navigation term *rhiza* which meant “root, stone, cut of from firm land.”

Wise Words

To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. ~*James Baldwin*

We are here essentially to risk ourselves in the world. We are a form of invitation to others and to otherness. We are meant to hazard ourselves for the right thing, for the right woman or the right man, for a son or a daughter, for the right work or for a gift given against all the odds. ~
David Whyte

To laugh is to risk appearing a fool,
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out to another is to risk involvement,
To expose feelings is to risk exposing your true self.

To place your ideas and dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return,
To live is to risk dying,
To hope is to risk despair,
To try is to risk failure.
~*William Arthur Ward*

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing. He or she may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he or she simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love – live. Only a person who risks is free.

“Let’s think about [the risk of] love. Waking up every day and loving someone who may or may not love us back, whose safety we can’t ensure, who may stay in our lives or may leave without a moment’s notice, who may be loyal to the day they die or betray us tomorrow—that’s vulnerability.” –*Brene Brown*

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.” – *C.S. Lewis*

Fear

Barnabus Browning
Was scared of drowning,
So he never would swim
Or get into a boat
Or take a bath
Or cross a moat.
He just sat day and night
With his door locked tight
And the windows nailed down,
Shaking with fear
That a wave might appear,
And cried so many tears
That they filled up the room

And he drowned.
~ *Shel Silverstein*

The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for.
~ *Bob Marley*

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.
~ *T. S. Eliot*

I love the recklessness of faith. First you leap, and then you grow wings.
~ *Rev. William Sloane Coffin*

When we walk to the edge of all the light we know, and step out into the darkness of the unknown, one of two things will happen: there will be something solid for us to stand on ... or we will learn to fly. - ~ *Anonymous*

Most reckless things are beautiful in some way, and recklessness is what makes experimental art beautiful, just as religions are beautiful because of the strong possibilities that they are founded on nothing. ~ *John Ashbery*

A sheltered life can be a daring life as well. For all serious daring starts from within.
~ *Eudora Welty*

To not risk is to play the game we have already won. ~ *Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan*

We have arrived at a moment of decision. What is at risk of being destroyed is not the planet itself, of course, but the conditions that have made it hospitable for human beings. ~ *Al Gore*

Do we risk our environment and the health and property rights of American citizens to export a product for financial gain? Do we endanger a fragile diversity of wildlife to support finite fossil fuel rather than look for alternatives?
~ *Ann Whitner Pinca*

Only a person who risks is free.
~ *Janet Rand*

Masks

She had blue skin
And so did he.
He kept it hid
And so did she.
They searched for blue
Their whole life through,
Then passed right by - And never knew.
~ *Shel Silverstein*

What makes you vulnerable, makes you beautiful. ~ *Brené Brown*

She threw away all of her masks and put on her soul. ~ *Anonymous*

When we were children, we used to think that when we were grown-up we would no longer be vulnerable. But to grow up is to accept vulnerability. To be alive is to be vulnerable.
~ *Madeleine L'Engle*

The day comes when remaining the same becomes more painful than the risk to grow. And when that happens there are many goodbyes. We leave old patterns, old friends, old lovers, old ideas, and some cherished beliefs. Loss and growth are so often one and the same.
~ *Phoebe Eng*

The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks. ~ *Mark Zuckerberg*

Even to me the issue of "stay small, sweet, quiet, and modest" sounds like an outdated problem, but the truth is that women still run into those demands whenever we find and [risk using] our voices. ~ *Brene Brown*

I've found what makes children happy doesn't always prepare them to be courageous, engaged adults. ~ *Brene Brown*

The risk I took was calculated. But, man, am I bad at math! ~ *Anonymous*

An intelligent lady, a little too mature for
recklessness, a little too young for caution.
~*Connie Brockway*

“Don’t be reckless with other people’s hearts,
and don’t put up with people who are reckless
with yours. ~*Kurt Vonnegut*

We mistook violence for passion, indolence for
leisure, and thought recklessness was freedom.
~*Toni Morrison*

And in all this continual risking, the most
profound courage may be found in the simple
willingness to allow ourselves to be happy along
the way. ~ *David Whyte*

Here’s how to break through the perfectionism [and
become a person of life-giving risk]: make a LOT of
mistakes. Fall on your butt more often. Waste more
paper, printing out your shitty first drafts, and maybe
send a check to the Sierra Club. Celebrate messes —
these are where the goods are. Put something on the
calendar that you know you’ll be terrible at, like
dance lessons, or a meditation retreat, or boot camp.
Find a writing partner, who will help you with your
work, by reading it for you, and telling you the truth
about it, with respect, to help you make it better and
better; for whom you will do the same thing. Find
someone who wants to steal his or her life back, too.
Now; today. One wild and crazy thing: wears shorts
out in public if it is hot, even if your legs are milky
white or heavy. Go to a poetry slam. Go to open mic
and read the story you wrote about the hilariously
god-awful family reunion, with a trusted friend, even
though it could be better, and would hurt Uncle Ed’s
feelings if he read it, which he isn’t going to. Change
his name and hair color — he won’t even recognize
himself. At work, you begin to fulfill your artistic
destiny. Wow! A reviewer may hate your style, or
newspapers may neglect you, or 500 people may tell
you that you are bitter, delusional and boring. Let me
ask you this: in the big juicy Zorba scheme of things,
who cares? ~*Annie Lamott*

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead
where there is no path and leave a trail.
~*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Whatever you can do, or dream you can do,
begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic
in it. Begin it now.“ ~*Goethe*

That's what I want, that kind of recklessness
where the poem is even ahead of you. It's like
riding a horse that's a little too wild for you, so
there's this tension between what you can do and
what the horse decides it's going to do.
~*Li-Young Lee*

It’s a shallow life that doesn’t give a person a
few scars. ~*Garrison Keillor*

A ship in harbor is safe — but that is not what
ships are for. ~*John A. Shedd*

The Edge is where I want to be

Brothers and sisters,...Lose the edge and all
you’ve got is middle
middle aged
middle class
middle of the road
middle management.

Lose the edge and you’re dribbling along in the
uncooked vanilla pudding of life
Baby, if you’re not on the edge, you’re
sleepwalking... you’re watching reruns of
somebody else’s life...

On the edge you don’t know what anybody is
going to do or say or think. The edge is not
available on your cell phone, iPod, satellite dish
or anywhere in the googleable universe. The
edge does not twitter, it THUNDERS!

~*Lisa Martinovic*

Full poem at: <http://slaminatrix.com/the-edge-is-where-i-want-to-be>

When I think about risk, what strikes me most is
the ordinariness of it all. That’s right. Most of it
is pretty ordinary, everyday stuff. That’s not to
minimize it. I think it actually elevates it. It
reminds us that risk, bravery and boldness aren’t
once-in-a-lifetime things done in uniquely
daring moments, but instead make up a way of
life that must be lived out each and every day.
Yes, there are those stories of someone pulling a
stranger from the burning car. Yes, we should
sit in awe of the civil rights workers who put
their life on the line for justice or the soldiers
who are willing to give their lives for others. But
in addition to such dramatic acts that alter
history, there are daily choices that prevent
history from altering us. Staying centered and

maintaining integrity don't happen without daily bravery. Ordinary risk is what stops us from disappearing, losing ourselves or becoming small. –Rev. Scott Taylor

Videos & Podcasts

Courage & Risking Everything To Do The Right Thing

<http://www.npr.org/programs/tes-radio-hour/368757408/courage>

What does it mean to be courageous? Is it an automatic response or a conscious choice? This hour, TED speakers examine the nature of courage and what it takes to risk everything to do the right thing.

Toxic, Risk, Danger...Creativity

<http://www.radiolab.org/story/107024-toxic-risk-danger/>

Can you imagine a job where the materials you work with daily could actually kill you? An exploration of why creative people sometimes put themselves at risk: dancers dive through glass, a sculptor constructs a tornado of fire and an injured trumpeter tries to get back his chops.

Walking Together

<https://themoth.org/stories/walking-together>

A high school student takes a risk to make a friend.

Raising our Girls to be Perfect and Our Boys to be Brave ~ Reshma Saujani

https://www.ted.com/talks/reshma_saujani_teach_girls_bravery_not_perfection

Addicted to Risk – TED Talk ~Naomi Klein

https://www.ted.com/talks/naomi_klein_addicted_to_risk#t-197903

We have become far too willing to gamble with things that are precious and irreplaceable.

Articles

Confessions of an Amateur Tightrope Walker

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/02/opinion/confessions-of-an-amateur-tightrope-walker.html?emc=edit_th_20161203&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=62154555

“These recklessly, riotously brave people do us all a service: There is so much optimism and hope in their daring. They show us that, with practice, even the most improbable things become possible.”

Holding Nothing Back

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SgMcGNznMk>

“...windows get dirt on them, trees get moss, metal rusts, we get covered over by our experience. Part of staying awake and part of holding nothing back and part of the exquisite risk is to wipe and clean away the window, to constantly be committed to removing as much as possible between us and life.... And what’s risky about being [*this*] present is that you will be changed. That life will not stay the same. Because if we truly bring who we are out and we drop our preconceptions and our opinions, we will be changed by what we encounter. And life will not be the same. And that’s beautiful and scary....If I truly am in each moment, it’s hard to stick to my plans because I will be touched and moved...”

The Warrior Tradition: Conquering Fear

<http://www.lionsroar.com/conquering-fear/>

“Doubt is the first obstacle to fearlessness that has to be overcome... We are referring here to overcoming a much more basic doubt, which is fundamentally doubting yourself and feeling that you have some kind of shortcoming as a human being. You don’t feel that your mind and body are synchronized,...you feel that you are constantly being short-changed somewhere in your life.”

Stay Safe or Risk Opening Your Heart? By Teresa Graham Brett

<http://tinybuddha.com/blog/stay-safe-or-risk-opening-your-heart/>

“When [my children] came into my life, the skills I learned in childhood no longer worked. My children... opened my heart and my soul... They demanded to be treated with the kind of

respect I wasn't used to showing myself. They showed me what it meant to clearly communicate what one needs... Their unwillingness to be treated with disregard, to be dismissed, controlled, and dominated forced me to call into question everything [about boundaries, safety and hiding] that had served me well (or so I thought) until that point in my life..."

Movies & Television

Documented

<https://thedissolve.com/reviews/762-documented/>

<https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/documented>

"Jose Antonio Vargas' parents brought him to the United States from the Philippines when he was 12. His immigration, he discovered some years later, was illegal. He eventually became a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist at The Washington Post and other outlets, all while hiding his status. Finally, in 2011, he took the risk of coming out as an undocumented immigrant..."

Fire at Sea

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/fire_at_sea_2016

A heart-rending documentary about a small island between Libya and Sicily where illegal immigrants from Africa stop on their way to Europe. The risks the refugees and the locals take.

Meru

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/meru_2015

An emotionally moving documentary about why three men attempt to climb one of the most challenging mountains in the world.

Man On Wire

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/man_on_wire
August 7, 1974. A young French man named Philippe Petit stepped out on a wire suspended between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. He danced on this wire for an hour with no safety net before he was arrested for what has become to be known as the "artistic crime of the century."

Safety Not Guaranteed

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/safety_not_guaranteed

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/23057/safety-not-guaranteed>

What happens if we fight too hard against the risk of future disappointment?

Songs

Tightrope – Janelle Monáe

While they jumpin' round ya; They trying to take all of your dreams; But you can't allow it; Cause baby whether you're high or low; Whether you're high or low; You gotta tip on the tightrope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwnefUaKcBc>

I Won't Back Down

A classic celebration of courage and the risk of standing our ground.

Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvITJrNJ5IA>

Johnny Cash:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUQCmDfKFac>

Take a Chance On Love – Ella Fitzgerald

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrnDYriNH5A>

Courage Of Your Convictions - The Hollies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEG0mzUVFmA>

Courage -The Whitest Boy Alive

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh0fuyDhKZg>

Take a Chance On Me – Abba
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-crgQGdpZR0>

Try Everything - Shakira
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nX5gd4GXcv0>

Books

The Exquisite Risk: Daring to Live an Authentic Life by Mark Nepo
https://www.amazon.com/Exquisite-Risk-Daring-Live-Authentic/dp/0307335844/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1481819525&sr=8-1&keywords=mark+Nepo+risk
“In these fast-paced times, the exquisite risk facing each of us every day is to slow down and “still our own house” so that we may experience life rather than simply manage it. In rich, lyrical prose, Nepo shares his own spiritual path, including a battle with illness that helped him understand how only by daring to embrace all that life has to offer can we come to a deeper appreciation of its meaning and beauty.

Book: Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead by Brené Brown

https://www.amazon.com/Daring-Greatly-Courage-Vulnerable-Transforms/dp/1592408419/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1482437261&sr=1-1&keywords=daring+greatly+brene+brown
Based on twelve years of pioneering research, Dr. Brené Brown dispels the cultural myth that vulnerability is weakness and argues that it is, in truth, our most accurate measure of courage. A celebration and affirmation of the risk of vulnerability

Celebrate March as Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day on March 8.

Do It Like a Woman ... and Change the World by Caroline Criado-Perez

This book is a fantastic collection of inspiring stories by women who have succeeded in monumental achievements — often having had to break through glass ceilings in their fields along the way. Its central message is a hopeful one for women: no matter how much you’ve been told that a career or path isn’t right for you due to your gender, it’s all a myth. ~*Ione Wells*

We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Adichie’s approach to the politics of gender is sharp and funny and really accessible. Without ever seeming idealistic or naive, she uses her superhuman compassion to imagine a future in which women and men have more possibilities for how to be at home in the world. ~*Mandy Len Catron*

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