



Courage to Realize Your Dreams

By: John C. Spier, CEO Covenant Bank

2017

One of my daughters recently encouraged me to read “Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead” by Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook (co-authored by Nell Scovell). I thoroughly enjoyed it. As the father of three daughters (no sons), I was curious about this book. Nobody can argue the success of the book or the extraordinary woman who wrote it. Over two million copies were sold globally in a mere 2 years and Ms. Sandberg has been recognized as a top influencer by Business Week, in the top ten of the world’s most powerful women by Forbes and the list goes on. I have a great appreciation for Ms. Sandberg’s journey and the role model she is for all of us, women AND men alike.

Remembering that Sandberg wrote the book when her husband was still alive, I couldn’t help thinking about whether her written prose helped her personally “lean in” to face his untimely death. It is times like this that try our soul, test our spirit, and demand courage. I have found that to be true in my own journey – the times that seemed most difficult are also the periods that pushed me to courageous endeavors – decisions made without having all the answers.

Earlier in my career, I left the security of a corporate job to venture into the consulting world. Full of energy and confidence, I hit the ground running and quickly had a huge victory and financial windfall. I was pleased with my gutsy move and on my way to “significance” ... or so I thought. My next sale arrived 6 months later. It was a long wait while I looked at my little daughters and my anxious wife. Filled with doubt and second thoughts, I embarked on some serious self-assessment. To quote Sheryl Sandberg, “We cannot change what we are not aware of; and once we are aware, we cannot help but change.” This period in my life tried my soul and tested my spirit.

Frankly, it was scary to look at myself with brutal honesty, but the benefits of knowing my good, bad, and ugly far outweighed the fear. While really hard in the moment, it shaped me and prepared me for bigger dreams and a brighter future. It pushed me to find my passion and purpose. I learned a lot about myself and realized how much courage is required to realize one’s dreams.

Fast forward through a few decades and I would start a bank, and rebuild another to help people throughout the community realize their dreams, too. It not only required quantum-leap courage of me, but also the courage of others from investors and employees to the business owners and entrepreneurs that we serve. Along the way many good folks and a few hard knocks helped me come to know that humility, fortitude, perseverance, and yes, facing fear head on – all are necessary to shape courage. And courage is absolutely necessary if you dare to dream big and achieve success.

To read more of our Blogs, click [here](#)