

Girl Mogul

DREAM IT. DO IT. CHANGE THE WORLD.

tiffany pham

{Imprint}
MAKE YOUR MARK

New York

For my loving family.
For our amazing team.
And for all the young girls around the world
who want to believe in themselves.
The underdogs.

THIS IS FOR YOU.



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Buy this book. (And do feel free to lend!)
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But moguls who steal
Will find it unreal
How quickly their businesses end.

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INTRODUCTION

No matter where in the world you sit as you read this book, I want you to know one thing:

There are no ceilings to your success.

There are no limits to what you can accomplish. You are smart, you are powerful, and you are capable of doing things that may not seem possible. With hard work, they *are* actually possible.

*there are
no limits*

And it does not matter how old you are. There's no reason to wait to pursue success and significance. You can start today. You can take each moment of your life and seize the opportunity within it. Every day holds an invitation to start dreaming, start doing, and start changing the world.

Malala Yousafzai was only fifteen years old when she stood up for her right to an education, putting her very

life at risk. At seventeen, she earned the Nobel Peace Prize for the work she does on behalf of girls, not only in her native country, Pakistan, but all over the world.

Or think about the courageous teenagers from Parkland, Florida, who spoke up after a devastating school shooting and began leading the United States in the call for change in gun control laws.

You are capable of so much. Whether your aim is to become a doctor, a politician, an artist, a singer, a teacher, or an entrepreneur, you were born to become something great. It is all within you: more power and creativity than you could ever imagine.

This book will show you how to access all the amazingness that is already inside you.

I know from my own life that the path to your future can start early. I always had big dreams. They were born the day that my beloved grandmother passed away, and I vowed that I would always make her proud. I was a teen,



ME AT AGE SIX, A LITTLE GIRL WITH BIG DREAMS AND A BOB HAIRCUT.

and on the heels of that loss, I decided I wanted to create a company to empower women, the way that my grandmother and my parents had always empowered me. Their own lives showed me that, despite the obstacles they faced, it was possible to rise above, not to let people's stereotypes and limits confine them. At the beginning, I didn't know how I would build my company. But I worked hard with that goal in mind, every single day.

When I was twenty-seven, I built a platform for women in my bedroom. I'd come home from my full-time job and teach myself how to code between the hours of 3 A.M. and 5 A.M. After a few months of working through the night, I felt like my site was ready to share with the world. I called it **Mogul**.

It went viral in its first week.

Today, Mogul is one of the most influential companies for girls and women worldwide, reaching across 196 countries. We're everywhere—from mobile app, to web, email, social media, books, TV, films, and events globally.

We enable girls and women across

continents to connect, share knowledge, and help one another change the world. We provide access to rock-star women like Katie Couric, Chelsea Clinton, Naomi Wolf, and Rebecca Minkoff; resources to find jobs and internships at top companies; and courses on subjects like how to craft a killer résumé, how to be a successful entrepreneur, and how to manage your finances.

A **mogul** is defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as “an important or powerful person.” But for far too long, the word was associated almost entirely with men. Just a few years ago, when you Googled the word *mogul*, the top search results were links to businessmen like Warren Buffett and Rupert Murdoch.

But today, when you Google the word *mogul*, the platform and company our team built is the number one search result. We are redefining the word *mogul* for **you**. We want you to know that you, too, are strong and important, and there is no limit to what you can do.

This book will give you the tools

to step into whatever role you want to. Your training starts now. In this book, I’m going to show you how to set yourself up to succeed. While every path looks different, there are a few key components of becoming a **Girl Mogul**:

Confidence: knowing that you have within yourself what it takes to create something powerful.

Community: looking for those who can help you achieve your dreams.

Commitment: working with every ounce of your being every single day to make it happen.

So we’ll begin this journey focusing on you: helping you develop the confidence to know how awesome you are, and ensuring that you take the time to truly take care of yourself. Take it from me; confidence isn’t necessarily something you are born with. While some girls seem to come out of the womb assured of their worth, most of us feel insecure throughout our lives. I was a very shy girl growing up, moving from Paris, France, and landing in Plano, Texas, at ten years old. I looked very different from those around me,

plus I didn't speak much English. It took several years, and a lot of awkward moments, before I finally began to feel comfortable in my own skin and confident in my abilities. But there are ways to get there faster. Confidence is like a muscle that you exercise, and when it becomes strong, it will take you further than you think. When you learn to build confidence and take care of yourself, you begin to live life on your own terms. You no longer wait around for others to grant you something you want; you know that it is up to *you* to forge the path forward.

The second part of the book reveals just how important community is to your overall success. You've got to staff your team. This means making sure that the friends you surround yourself with are the kind who build you up and push you forward, not those who drag you down and pull you back. We will talk about dating, friendships, filtering out negativity, dealing with family life, and the importance of putting positivity out in the world (because it always comes back tenfold!).

Finally, we'll look at how to commit to living a Girl Mogul life. This is where you'll set the blueprint for your future and make it happen. You'll examine your passions to determine what kind of career path will not only allow you to flourish but let you have fun as well. You'll learn how to crush it in every area of life, and how this attitude of over-delivering early on will set you up to become a mogul. You'll learn to speak up, to realize how much you have to say and how valuable your perspective really is.

Think of this book as your personal guide not just to surviving your teen years but to thriving through them. Read it from front to back; skip around to different chapters based on what you'd like help with now, and read how I overcame many of the same challenges you might be dealing with; or skip to the end of each chapter, where I offer tips on doing your best in school, laying the foundation for the future you want, and forming relationships that'll improve every part of your life. All the things you want to achieve are real possibilities with the right

approach, attitude, and skill set, which is what this book aims to pass on.

I am living proof of that. And my friends are living proof of that. You'll hear from these friends throughout the book—twelve of the most powerful moguls worldwide, including Arianna Huffington, Nastia Liukin, and more. They will serve as your mentors along the way. The only difference between you and us is a few years of hard work. And to work toward your goals, you must believe you can achieve them.

I didn't know it, but there was a mogul in me all along—and there's one in you, too.

From a young age, boys are trained to be leaders, to know their worth, to raise their hands and use their voices. Girls, on the other hand, are often scolded for speaking up or asserting ourselves, inadvertently teaching us to be quiet and accommodating. We are not always encouraged to step into the inherent power we have within. There are few primers for girls aiming high.

I hope this book can be that primer for you.

After all:

you are fierce.
you are bold.
you are unique.
you are brilliant.
you are motivated.
you are driven!
you are empowering.
you are inspiring.
you are a mogul.

PART ONE

confidence

Define your life on your own terms.

CHAPTER ONE

AWAKENING YOUR AWESOMENESS

To do great things, you have to believe you are capable of them.

You have to know your worth, be assured of your power, and realize you already possess an aptitude for awesomeness.

After all, confidence is the first step to awakening your inner Girl Mogul.

Without confidence, you don't know how powerful you are, how creative you are, and how much you can accomplish. I'm not talking about the kind of confidence where you walk into a room convinced that you are the most beautiful one there. I'm not talking about how you *look* at all—this has nothing to do with your weight, height, hair color, or style. It's not about who likes you or whether you're the most popular girl in school. I'm talking about the kind of confidence that comes from deep knowledge of your smarts, skills, and significance. The kind of confidence that allows you to believe that within you is the ability to learn new things,

think of innovative solutions, and bring change to the world.

This chapter is all about asking yourself the question *What am I capable of?* Have you tried something you haven't done before and learned a new skill? Have you taken a risk and succeeded? I know the answer is yes. The question is, Did you notice? You've likely never taken the time to recognize that your life has been a series of trying new things and gaining new skills. It started the moment you were born! The problem is, somewhere along the way, we stop aiming high, because we are surrounded by a culture that is afraid of failure.

To be confident in your abilities, you've got to try and try and try again. There will be times that you fail. But as long as you get back up and keep going, it's not really failure. It's a chance to learn. And once you have enough successes under your belt, you realize that there is nothing you can't tackle.

It's time to awaken the awesomeness that is already inside you. And don't worry—it doesn't matter when you start.



ALWAYS A PLACE IN MY HEART FOR PARIS.

FROM AWKWARD TO AWESOME

I was born in beautiful Paris, France, the middle child of Vietnamese and Chinese parents. We spoke French and Vietnamese at home. My siblings and I wore school uniforms straight out of the Madeline books and spent our weekends exploring the Tuileries Garden. My early childhood in Paris was a wonderland of history, shopping, and food along the River Seine, full of jaw-dropping cathedrals like Notre-Dame and majestic monuments like the Eiffel Tower.

But when I was ten years old, our family moved to Plano, Texas, for my father's work. It was jarringly different from Europe, and I became the definition of the odd girl out.

I spoke little English at the time, making my inherent quietness even more pronounced and a defining characteristic in my first few years in Texas. I sat in class coloring instead of contributing anything, doodling in a dictionary instead of starting my

homework. My teachers would call my parents, concerned that I wasn't making any progress. But my parents knew to give me time. They knew I would pick up the language eventually and then be able to start participating in class and making friends.

In those early months in Texas, I would come home every day after school, and await my father's arrival. He would come home from work each evening with a different movie rental from Blockbuster. Classic '90s romantic comedies like *While You Were Sleeping* and *You've Got Mail* became my de facto English lessons.

Slowly but surely, I began to emerge from the cocoon of my family and put myself out there. With my father's encouragement, I joined the school orchestra and started taking piano lessons. I trained in Taekwondo at the local dojo and, by the time I reached high school, tried out for the lacrosse team.

I was far from confident. But at least I was no longer hiding, or afraid of standing out and being ridiculed for

being different. Though I may not have been as awkward anymore, I was still trying to find my awesomeness.

So how did I go from shy barely-speaks-English Tiffany, at age ten, to the young woman who runs a global technology and media company today?

Actress, author, and producer Mindy Kaling says in her book *Why Not Me?* (which is a great title and a mantra for all of us): "Confidence is like respect; you have to earn it." I couldn't say it any better. I've learned firsthand that the only way to earn confidence is to dare to do something you once thought was impossible. When you tackle a problem that seems insurmountable, when you approach someone you thought would ignore you, when you try out for something you aren't sure you'll get chosen for, you realize how capable you are. And you'll get addicted to that feeling of accomplishment. You'll begin to feel like if you work at it, nothing is impossible.

My journey to becoming the confident woman that I am today started in math class. Math was

my favorite subject when I moved to America, mainly because there was no language barrier. Numbers were numbers, and equations came out the same whether in English, French, or Vietnamese. And I was good at math. With little studying, I could still earn an A- on every test or quiz.

I discovered this fact thanks to a grade-school teacher who would hold multiplication races each week. There would be dozens of equations, and whoever solved them first would quickly jog-walk up to her desk to turn in their answers. The teacher would check their work, and call out their name if they got all the answers correct. The winner would now proudly walk back up to the front of the classroom, where the teacher would present them with a small tin of Sour Patch Kids. The winner would then select their prize—one Sour Patch Kid—and head back proudly to their desk. And while I know that a single piece of candy seems like a small token, everyone in the class wanted to be the winner.

A different student would receive

the Sour Patch Kid each week, and while I was always done quickly, I was never the first to submit my answers.

But one day, I just decided—I was going to do it. I felt this determination surge inside me. I knew that I was good at multiplication and that I was fast. I could do it. I could be better than I thought.

That week, I stayed laser-focused on each problem, and quickly raced through and finished. Then I jog-walked up to that desk—where I was declared the winner.

No candy
ever
tasted
sweeter.

The next week came, and I gave myself a pep talk again. *You can do this, Tiffany. That Sour Patch Kid can be yours.* And sure enough, I jog-walked up to her desk—again first—and won that coveted prize.

I did so every week for the rest of the year. But this was about more than candy. This was about knowing how hard I'd worked, and the powerful belief that I could accomplish something I set my mind on.

I once heard about a research study on the power of positive messaging. Two groups of students of similar mathematical ability were put in two separate rooms. One group heard that they were receiving some math problems that were very difficult to solve. The other group received the same math problems but were told that they were easy. The first group was unable to solve any of the equations. The second group solved every single one.

What you tell yourself and believe you can do truly does matter.

I received another important lesson in the power of believing in yourself

during my freshman year of high school, when I had a geometry teacher who asked us students to grade our peers' papers. Toward the end of class, we would switch papers with the person in front of us and grade their work while they graded ours. I was never too focused on these grades and, therefore, usually got a 92 or 93. But I often had to grade the homework of the girl who sat in front of me, Diane. I had my hand poised ready to put a red slash through any answer she got wrong. But I never had to use my pen. There was always one grade at the top of her papers: 100%.

After a few weeks of this routine, I started to wonder why I had felt so content with my 92s. Why did it suddenly feel like I was settling? As Diane kept getting perfect score after perfect score, something awakened in me. *Could I get a 100%? If I took the time to really study each night and double-check my work?*

I remembered my experience with the Sour Patch Kids. If I put in the work and believed I could do it, I bet I could get a 100%, too. Instead of breezing through my math homework, I made

sure to study the lesson carefully each night and concentrate on ensuring that the answer to each question was correct.

And after a few weeks, my grades started to rise. First it was a 95. Then a 97. And then, I got my first 100.

When Diane turned around to hand me that paper, she gave me a little smile. I smiled back. I had done it. I had gotten a perfect score.

Pretty soon, I was getting 100s on every homework assignment, and every quiz, too. Diane and I became best friends, studying together after school and occasionally meeting up at the local mall on the weekends, where we had a tradition of buying “Best Friend” key chains. Diane ended up being valedictorian of our class. And though she and I attended different colleges, we stayed best friends and both ended up attending Harvard together for graduate school. Shortly after, I was a bridesmaid in her wedding, which took place inside the cylindrical MIT Chapel, decorated with geometric shapes that seem inspired by mathematical formulas. The

night before the wedding, in the midst of all the hectic preparations, Diane showed me her “Best Friend” dice key chain, which she had kept all these years.

I’m indebted to Diane, because she set before me an example of awesomeness, and of what happens when you believe in yourself and actually apply yourself to a goal. Accomplishing that goal strengthened my confidence, so that the next seemingly insurmountable task somehow didn’t seem so insurmountable anymore.

Because now that I knew what it felt like to be my best, I wanted to strive for excellence in everything.

BABY STEPS CAN TAKE YOU FAR

The confidence that I cultivated in the classroom helped me aim high when I began applying to colleges. While I applied to the state university system, I also applied to a number of schools that I had only ever read about, schools that I felt were out of my league.

YOUR AWESOMENESS CHECKLIST

What is one area in your life where you know you could up your game from good to excellent?

What could you begin to do today to awaken your awesomeness in that activity?

Tell one friend of your commitment to see this goal through, to build up your confidence muscle. Ask them to check in with you occasionally, as a reminder.

List three other areas that you could work on next:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

I had purposely not told my parents about the applications, not wanting to disappoint them.

Then came the large envelopes.

My parents were moved to tears as I showed them each letter, one by one. I had been admitted to Yale. Stanford. Duke. Everywhere I had hoped.

Yale had especially intrigued me, because I was a huge *Gilmore Girls* fan. Rory Gilmore was a lot like me growing up. She was shy, the quiet one in any classroom, her nose always in a book. She stayed focused on her big goals, often sacrificing fun in the moment for a focus on the future. When she went on to attend Yale and run the school newspaper, meeting smart and interesting friends along the way, I dreamed of doing the same. I wanted to stretch myself, as she had, to grow in unexpected ways.

I felt fortunate that the school had granted me a full scholarship for the first three years. While my parents were overjoyed that I was being given the chance to attend such an esteemed school, I was equally happy that I had

the opportunity to go without burdening my parents financially.

I sent in my acceptance check, even though I still hadn't even visited the campus. I couldn't believe I was going to build a new life in New Haven, Connecticut, and I was incredibly nervous and excited to start. Yet when I walked onto campus, I felt like a total outsider. Sometimes things aren't as bad as you'd imagined, and sometimes they are exactly the way you'd imagined them to be. I felt incredibly insecure, unsure of how I would ever keep up with all these geniuses. I was so shy in class that I rarely spoke up. I kept my awesomeness hidden under lock and key inside of me. I didn't want to risk letting it out, in fear that compared to others, I wasn't awesome at all.

I won't pretend that first year wasn't rough. Anytime you move someplace new or start a new job, it is going to take some adjustment to find your footing. Don't beat yourself up about it! We have all been there. But at some point, you're going to have to open that lock and unleash your awesomeness for

the world to see. It *does* get better.

By sophomore year, I knew I had to push myself more. I had been accepted to Yale. I deserved to be there just as much as anyone else. And I slowly began to emerge from behind the guard I had put up: I spoke up in class and started to get involved in campus organizations.

Why are extracurricular activities so important? In high school, they're encouraged because they help us to become well-rounded, and more desirable to the colleges of our choice. But why do colleges even care about these activities? While you may be able to take tests and write papers with the best of them, academic learning is only one aspect of who you are. You can be incredibly confident in the classroom and completely insecure when you step out into the real world. Having confidence in both is key!

By the time I graduated, I had shed my shy-girl ways. But it didn't happen overnight. Instead, through a number of gradual steps, I began to put myself out there.

You have to
start SMALL
to go
BIG.

My first small step was volunteering to be the website manager for the Asian American Students Association. Even though it was a minor role, participating in that group led to an opportunity to join the staff of the school newspaper and then, by junior year, to be promoted to publisher. By senior year, I was selected to be a part of the Yale Senior Class Council, composed of the top student leaders from across campus (athletes, musicians, newspaper staff, student government officers), who would be in charge of overseeing class events throughout the year.

As someone willing to put in the work, I ended up being the one to take

charge of most of these events. And by year's end, both students and the administration ended up asking me, as a thank-you, to be the class's graduation chair. This involved planning Senior Week activities and the graduation ceremony; meeting with our graduation speaker, Tony Blair (who at the time was the prime minister of the United Kingdom); and giving an address at graduation itself.

And that is how I found myself onstage, in front of ten thousand people, giving a speech to my classmates about how we should stay focused on the good and optimistic about our futures, no matter what hardships we may face.

I was hesitant to give that speech; the shy girl who would never speak up in class still lived within me. But despite my hesitation, I knew I could face my fear and do it anyway. Every time I had faced something that I wasn't sure I could do, with enough practice and perseverance, I had stepped up to the moment, not wanting to live with regret.

As I took the stage, I took a breath

and unleashed my awesomeness. I had spent hours preparing and had practiced enough to know, without a doubt, that I could do it.

As a fun surprise for my classmates, one of Yale's choirs joined me onstage in the middle of my speech. Together, we sang a college favorite, Bon Jovi's classic "Livin' on a Prayer."

The audience of ten thousand cheered.

Looking out from that stage, I stood there confident and capable, knowing how far I had come from the moment that I had first stepped on campus, afraid, insecure, and hiding. Here I was in front of everyone, not letting any fears hold me back.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

The kind of confidence I felt on that graduation stage—the kind that fills your chest with excitement and makes you feel on top of the world—is the key. I never would have built my own company without it. When I felt the seeds

YOUR BADASS GIRL MOGUL READING LIST

Marian Wright Edelman, who founded the Children's Defense Fund and was the first African American woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar Association, famously said, "You can't be what you can't see." Below is a list of books about empowered, inspiring women and girls who break stereotypes and do the unexpected. They will allow you to see how much you are capable of.

***Ramona and Her Father* by Beverly Cleary.** I loved the Ramona books growing up, and especially this one about her relationship with her father when he loses his job. Even though she was just seven years old, Ramona dedicates herself to helping out her family. She knows she can contribute, and doesn't let her age slow her down.

***Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery* by Russell Freedman.** I read this biography of Eleanor Roosevelt when I was in high school and was incredibly inspired by this bold, daring woman who aimed to accomplish more than people expected from a first lady. She redefined what that role was for the women who came after her.

***Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly.** This remarkable book tells the story of four African American women who were called to serve their country during the labor shortages of World War II, and

who consequently were given the opportunity to work at NASA and highlight their mathematical skills. These women faced discrimination not just because of their race but also because of their gender. They were able to challenge the status quo, demand rights, and show that their brains were just as bright and their abilities just as extraordinary as those of the white men around them. Whether you read the book or watch the Oscar-nominated movie, this inspiring true story will encourage you to push boundaries and not let people limit you.

***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.** Elizabeth Bennet, the main character of this book, is an incredible example to me of a young woman who wasn't afraid to speak her mind, even in a society that didn't encourage it.

***Bossypants* by Tina Fey.** There is so much kindness and humor on every page of this book as comedian, author, and actress Tina Fey talks about what it was like to enter a field dominated by men and make a space for herself.

***Why Not Me?* by Mindy Kaling.** Mindy Kaling could easily be one of my best friends. So much of what she says in this book rings true to me, and I highly recommend it to anyone. It is not just a great read but also an empowering manifesto.

of Mogul growing, I would not have been able to see the opportunity and build it myself without confidence in my abilities. That doesn't mean it wasn't scary. It *was*! But I had learned by then to trust that I had what it takes. This trust came not only from responsibilities that I took on during college but also from pursuing jobs after graduation that I knew would develop the skill sets I needed to one day build my own company.

I first worked for two years at the investment bank Credit Suisse in its financial analyst program. I then attended Harvard Business School. After graduation, I accepted a job at CBS as a director of business development. I'll share throughout this book the decision-making process that led me to take on each of those jobs as well as many others that I did on the side. Each step was an essential confidence booster that allowed me to feel assured when the time came to build my own company that I had the skill set and ability to do what I dreamed of.

My conviction that it was time to

create something on my own was born when I woke up one morning to learn that I had been named to *Forbes*' "30 Under 30." It was a surreal moment. At twenty-seven years old, I was one of the youngest directors at CBS. In the brief article that was under my picture, *Forbes* described my additional portfolio of work, from producing films, leading the Beijing International Screenwriting Competition, to co-authoring a business and technology book with my father and younger brother, David. (Yes, it was a busy time in my life, and I wasn't getting a ton of sleep, but I wouldn't change it for the world!)

As I opened my email, I had tons of messages from friends and family who had heard the news and were congratulating me. But I also had emails from people that I didn't know. Hundreds of them. From women and girls all over the world, who had seen the list, read about what I was doing, and wanted to hear how I had gotten these jobs in my twenties. They wondered how they could get these jobs, too.

I tried to carefully respond to each and every message I received. They varied in content and circumstance, but each girl was facing frustration, roadblocks, and what felt like limitations to how far she could rise in her respective society.

I didn't know exactly what to share, but I emailed each person back, writing of the strategies I used to reach out to people I admired, the places where I sought out opportunities, and the overall mentality that had driven me from the very beginning. Each time I pressed SEND, I was thankful for the opportunity to be a mentor.

And I couldn't help but remember the promise I had made to my grandmother and to myself when I was a teenager. I had focused on one day creating a company to empower women. My grandmother had been a pioneer, creating businesses and providing opportunities to others in need. I wanted to do the same.

And though I hadn't created a company yet, what I was doing each night was most definitely empowering



women. As weeks went by and I continued to get emails from new people each day, I also began to receive responses from those who had already reached out. Each was saying that my letter had changed her life. That she had gotten that interview, that job offer, that promotion she never thought would be possible.

It felt amazing to be connected to women around the world and to have the opportunity to encourage them and help them reach their goals. But I knew that answering emails every night until three in the morning was not

sustainable. I knew that these women could likely offer one another support in ways that I was not even capable of. What if I could create a place where women could come together to share conversations—their questions, experiences, advice, and feedback? It could be a platform geared toward women and their goals—a living, breathing place where these women could support one another and where, at any given moment, you could see what was top-of-mind to women across the globe.

I had endless ideas about how this could take shape. There was only one problem.

I had no idea how to create it, and I didn't have the funds to hire a team of engineers.

My brother, David, had always been the tech prodigy in our family. But I hoped that if I could teach myself how to code, I could initially build this platform myself. I wanted to develop technical know-how and be able to understand every aspect myself. So I reached out to David and asked him how I could teach myself to code.

My ever-helpful brother, whom I proudly consider a mentor (even though I'm older!), pointed me to a couple of different resources and offered to step in whenever I might need him. For several months, after I got home from my job at CBS and finished work on my side projects, I would make myself a cup of tea, open my personal laptop, and teach myself Ruby on Rails, a coding language.

It wasn't easy. In fact, it took me an entire month to get through the first chapter of Michael Hartl's "Ruby on Rails Tutorial," which was literally just about what kind of software you needed to download on your computer.

But once I got through that chapter and finally started the nuts and bolts of creating a website, I loved getting to build something myself. I enjoyed what I was doing so much that, at twenty-seven, with no true plans in place, I resigned from CBS, taking the leap so I could focus on coding.

And before I knew it, I had a site up and running. It was far from perfect, and it would take months to continue

tweaking it and improving it. But I was ready to put it out there and give the women who had written me access to one another. I could continue to improve the site in real time, if necessary. I sent the link to my parents and my brother to get some feedback and see how it would work for people outside. Then I knew it was time to release it to the world.

I had been collecting the emails of the women reaching out to me, a list that now numbered in the thousands. I sent the link to all of them, encouraging them to join the conversation online and have access not just to my thoughts and feedback but to those of other women across the globe. I knew that together we had the power to create a network of women supporting one another.

I clicked **SEND** and went to bed.

By the time I woke up the next morning, I realized that something viral was happening. David reached out to tell me that Mogul was getting a lot of traction. We watched in awe over the next few days as we reached 250,000 people. Then 500,000.

And by the beginning of that next week, nearly *one million* people.

I had no idea that the platform I had created would strike such a chord. Sure, I'd had big dreams for it. I knew it had vast potential. I knew, from the emails that I had received, that girls were looking for something like this.

But I hadn't expected that kind of growth, that Mogul could become one of the fastest-growing platforms for women worldwide.

I decided I needed to fully commit myself to this endeavor. I needed to work on Mogul all day, every day. Though I was young to run my own company, I knew how much I had learned during my time at Yale, Harvard Business School, Credit Suisse, CBS, and the many side jobs I'd had over the years. With every new task I had taken on, with every successful collaboration, it was another way for me to know how much I was capable of, to know what I had to offer the world. It was time to acknowledge the awesomeness within, and that I was ready to run this company.

TRUST THAT YOU CAN

What confidence allows you to do is to step up to the plate and know that you have what it takes. Women notoriously don't apply for internships and jobs unless they are 100 percent qualified, whereas men apply for internships and jobs even if they are only 60 percent qualified. But it shouldn't be this way.

No matter who you are, don't allow the fact that you don't know something to hold you back. If you don't know how to do something, you can always learn. I taught myself to code so that I could build a technology company myself when I didn't have the funds to hire engineers.

Take a page from Mindy and ask: *Why not me?* When an opportunity presents itself, to try out for the play, run for student government, or join a new club, say yes and trust that you can do it.

CONFIDENCE BOOSTERS

Having confidence and the knowledge that you are capable is the first step to realizing your dreams. You have to know that you have within yourself what it takes to succeed. And you do! It may not have been there from the day you were born, but take a moment and

think about all the things you've done in your life. Whether it was crushing the SAT even though you hate taking tests, having your artwork chosen for a school exhibit, starting a new fundraiser for your school and watching the donations roll in, or running for student council and getting elected, each of your accomplishments is something to celebrate.

Think about how brave, strong, and smart you are. And now take all these amazing feelings and apply them to what you want to do next.

Every time you succeed at something, take a moment to acknowledge it. We are big on celebration at Mogul, so we have a “Weekly Wins” session every Friday, where everyone in the entire company takes turns sharing their greatest accomplishment for that week. It doesn’t have to be something major, like signing a new client. It can be getting through your to-do list, or staying focused on a problem and finding a solution, or identifying a new way to collaborate with a different department. We do Weekly Wins because the shared wins produce passion and momentum for the week ahead. But we also do it because when you acknowledge and celebrate your own accomplishments, you set your sights that much higher the next time you go after something. You give yourself permission to aim high because you know how capable you are.

CREATE A “WEEKLY WINS” JOURNAL

Take a play from Mogul, and each Friday, review your week and write down five things that went well. If you have more than five, great—keep listing them! Recording your successes helps you exercise that confidence muscle. Don’t just think about schoolwork; think about friendships and activities, and family life. Maybe you forgave a friend you’d been fighting with. Maybe you had a good conversation with your mom. Maybe you aced a tryout or made a new friend. Celebrate these moments! And then get ready for another incredible week to follow.

TIFFANY'S TOP TIPS FOR CONFIDENCE BUILDING

- ✓ **Learn a skill.** Identify a skill you've always wanted to acquire, and learn it. Take a lesson, enroll in a class, or reach out to a friend who already knows how. The more new skills you acquire, the more confidence you'll have.
- ✓ **Make something happen.** Whether it's asking someone you've had your eye on out on a date, trying out for the school play, or running for student government, take something that feels impossible and see if you can make it happen. Just try. Try your absolute best; give it your all. Obviously, you may get a no. That's *okay*. The experience gained will be helpful, regardless. Keep going, and don't give up. Try again, or try something comparable.
- ✓ **Echo a role model.** Do you have a role model that you look up to, who embodies something you want to be? Someone who inspires you, who keeps you focused on what is possible? Pick one thing you admire about her and then embody that positive quality as you follow in her footsteps. That commitment will keep you going even during the hard days ahead.

mogul mentor

KRISTEN VISBAL

ARTIST AND CREATOR OF THE
FEARLESS GIRL STATUE

HOW TO BE FEARLESS

On November 30, 2016, I received a phone call from McCann New York, a worldwide advertising company. One of its clients, State Street Global Advisors of Boston, Massachusetts, wanted to create a statue of a little girl, in celebration of International Women's Day, and install this bronze figure three months later, on March 7, 2017. The plan was to place her, under the cloak of night and in the same manner, across from Wall Street's famous *Charging Bull* statue, located at Bowling Green in Lower Manhattan. Could I help?

With that, *Fearless Girl*, a more than fifty-inch (less than one-and-a-half meter) bronze statue of a little girl standing defiantly, with hands on hips,



© Federica Valabrega

KRISTEN VISBAL FACES THE *FEARLESS GIRL*.

was born. Little did we know what an overwhelming success the sculpture would become.

The intent of the statue is to highlight the role of women in the

male-dominated financial community. She is a statement of the importance of women in business and a call to increase the number of women in decision-making roles. The child directly references the impact women will have on business tomorrow. Though *Charging Bull* remains a symbol of the strength of the American people and the bullish market, the placement of *Fearless Girl* sends the resounding message that the inclusion of women in business is imperative to the well-being of the global community.

State Street Global Advisors initiated a global conversation (in conjunction with the placement of *Fearless Girl*) on the importance of gender diversity in decision-making, specifically at the board level. The overwhelming research these gender diversity studies represent validates the importance of women in the workplace. Simultaneously, *Fearless Girl* has become synonymous with empowerment and courage, setting an example for women of all ages. She calls for valiant

behavior in retaliation to gender stereotypes, which diminish and mask the invaluable resource women represent.

Fearless Girl is art at its very best, generating speculation and debate. Her placement started an important conversation about gender stereotypes and how these hinder productivity and enlightened decisions. *Fearless Girl* embodies the idea of true equality, an equality that will free the global community, creating a more productive and superior environment. Specifically, the sculpture represents support for women in leadership positions; the empowerment of young women; women's education; gender equality; the reduction of prejudice in the workplace through education; equal pay; and the general well-being of women. She is a figure to emulate.

Assuming the *Fearless Girl* position of power with chin lifted, feet firmly planted apart, and hands on hips, instills a quiet inner resolve and the determination to overcome. 🏹



CHAPTER TWO

FEELING YOUR BEST VERSUS LOOKING YOUR BEST

For most of my life, the women I saw on TV, in movies, and in magazines looked nothing like me. Let's face it—the popular conception of beauty in America (and especially in Texas, where I was growing up!) was blond hair and blue eyes. Even though our country has gotten more diverse, America's diversity hasn't always been represented in the media. For a good chunk of my life, I felt like an outsider and an ugly duckling.

It wasn't until I was an adult that I understood how messed-up these ideals are, and that by defining beauty and “normalcy” in such small terms, you leave 99 percent of the world out of the equation.

Being considered beautiful on the outside is never a goal I've striven to achieve, because I know that it's not what's on the outside that truly matters. I know, from examples in my own life and the world around me, that true beauty stems from the essence that

exudes from inside. It's the emanation of your spirit and emotions.

Think about the following: You can be drop-dead gorgeous by societal and cultural standards, but if you are mean, judgmental, and unkind, those qualities make you ugly. Think of someone who may not be traditionally beautiful, but who exudes kindness, generosity, openness of spirit, and joy. They are beautiful in their own way. You feel beauty in their presence.

And just like beauty, confidence stems from inside. Confidence is about how you *feel*, not the package you present to the world. If you feel insecure, belittled, or unappreciated on the inside, no matter how you look on the outside, you won't be walking into a room with confidence. On the other hand, when you feel smart, happy, valued, and loved, you can walk into any room and command attention.

The journey to true self-confidence is not about trying to fit into the small

box that society has deemed beautiful. It's about discovering what makes *you* feel your best, and comfortable in your own skin. Along the way, I've discovered small efforts that make a big impact on my ability to walk into a room with confidence. When *you* determine these "awaken your inner-badass" hacks, you'll discover your own shortcuts to feel like your very best self every single day. And when you feel your best, you do your best.

FIND A TRUE BEAUTY ICON

My parents loved classic American cinema and introduced my siblings and me to it very early on, when we were learning English. Sometimes I think my poised way of speaking today comes from watching those movies, with strong feminine characters portrayed by Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn. Audrey especially stood out to me, not just because of her poise on screen but because she was a natural beauty, never overly made-up, and she

always looked comfortable in her own skin. It was clear she knew what looked best on her body, and she rarely veered from what worked for her, no matter what the current fashion trends.

She was true to herself and always focused on giving back.

Audrey grew up in the Netherlands during World War II, and, after the war, when much of the country was starving, she was one of many grateful recipients of essential nutrition and medical relief from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). When her Hollywood career ended and her children were raised, she dedicated the last five years of her life to UNICEF, traveling the world to provide aid to children who needed it. She visited war-ravaged countries so that she could share personally about the needs that remained and all that we in the US could do to help.

Audrey was kind and generous and devoted to others. Beautiful, both inside and out. She exemplified true beauty, and her beauty deepened as she aged. When you think of timeless beauty, it is beauty that stems from within.

Someone who ages gracefully has a shine in their eyes that is powerful and speaks of all the wisdom they have gathered within. It's about what's inside.

My other beauty idol was my mother. She had a similar poise about her. She had beautiful skin that she took great care of, and she always applied classic red lipstick before she left the house. I remember that as she raised my sister and me, she wanted to ensure that we took care of our skin and presented our natural beauty to the world. She never wanted me to wear much makeup on my face, to put on a mask, convinced that I didn't need it and that it would ruin my natural complexion. And after a few attempts at full-on foundation, I realized she was right! I would end up breaking out anytime I tried. To this day, I rarely wear foundation, preferring instead to have a clean face, just like my mother.

My mother is one of the most beautiful women I know because she carries herself with such grace and composure that she attracts attention. She is someone who does not speak loudly, but

Josh Castillon



FEELING LIKE A MOGUL.

speaks purposefully, and you feel like what she says will really matter. She doesn't fill up the room with chatter. She is careful with her words, but they

are gems, precious, and worth their weight in gold.

She was always comfortable being who she was, in Paris and in Plano. She didn't try to conform to the culture she moved to, but had her own sense of style and her own kind of confidence. She was beautiful not only for her outer appearance but also for who she was not afraid to be.

We have examples of this all around us. Today, there are women challenging traditional American beauty standards, including models embracing their curves and natural body shape, who are stunningly beautiful not just for their features but because of the confidence that stems from every move they make. They show us how powerful it can be when you feel comfortable in your own skin. When you know what you bring to the table. When you aren't afraid to challenge the status quo and be something different.

My beauty idols are women who know who they are and how special they are. We are all born with inherent gifts that, when shared with the

world, illuminate our inherent beauty. When we stop thinking about beauty as something that relates to our outer self, instead realizing that it stems from inside, we can recognize that we all have something to share, that beauty is not only the realm of supermodels but the realm of real, honest people. Your beauty could be your creativity, your ability to speak honestly and forthrightly with kindness, the way you can lighten the mood in a room with humor, how you bring out the best in your friends. *This* is what the world needs, not pretty packaging. So get in touch with your gifts, and then share them with the world.

OWNING YOUR UNIQUENESS

Before I could be truly comfortable in my own skin, I had to embrace the fact that I was often going to stand out in a room. Throughout my life, there has always been some characteristic that made me different from everyone else. In Paris, I was Asian. In Texas, I was

YOUR BE-YOU THOUGHT STARTERS

What are some of your best inner qualities?

How do you show them to the world?

What could you do to share them with your friends, family, school, or community?

Who is someone who you feel exudes beauty in their own way?

Asian with a French accent. In college in New England, I was Asian but now with a Texan twang. (“Y’all” really is more efficient to say than “you all.”) Then in business school, I was among the youngest in my classes. Even when I entered the corporate world, I was often the youngest, the only Asian, or the only woman in the room.

I had to learn how to own my uniqueness and see it as a differentiator and a positive. Otherwise, I was always going to deal with impostor syndrome.

When I entered Harvard Business School, I knew I was going to be one of

the youngest students in my class. It wasn’t a surprise; it was something I was prepared for. I had wanted to go to business school since my senior year in college, with the hopes that it would help me further develop the right skill set for creating my own company. HBS was my dream, and I was shocked and thrilled when I received my acceptance during spring break that year. I ended up deferring my enrollment for two years so that I could work at Credit Suisse. But even with those two years of experience, I was just twenty-three when I entered business school, four

years younger than the average first-year student.

Our class of nine hundred was split into ten different “sections,” and these smaller groups of ninety students each would be the people we had classes with and thus became closest to. I was placed in what came to be called the “married section,” since most of the students were already well-established in their careers and married with young kids, and this degree was their final step before they would be ready to start running companies.

The majority of the students in my section were white men—and then there was me: a twenty-three-year-old single woman, and a minority. And though I had gone to Yale, been publisher of the *Herald*, led our Senior Class Council, helped produce off-off-Broadway musicals, begun producing Hollywood movies, *and* worked at Credit Suisse, I felt small. Insignificant. Like I stood out, and not in a good way, but in a “who-let-her-in?” way.

There were many nights when I would have to give myself a pep talk just

to head to class the next day. Class participation was a huge part of my grade, and I shied away from talking in class. I watched as my classmates confidently spoke up, sharing their opinions and adding to the discussion, regardless of whether they had anything new to truly add. I realized I could try to fade into the background because I didn’t feel like I fit in, or I could speak up for the very reason that I would be able to share a different view. My perspective was necessary *because* it was different. It added something new and valuable to the conversation.

That shift allowed me to finally embrace that my uniqueness was actually a gift.

The fact is, as women, if we are going to be breaking down boundaries, we are often going to find ourselves the only woman in the room. We will look different, think different, and speak different from those who may surround us. That is *exactly* why we are needed.

Ultimately, I was the first HBS graduate to be honored on *Forbes*’ “30 Under 30,” and many classmates have

since kindly described me as one of the most successful from our graduating class. I share all of this only to encourage you further if you sometimes feel like an underdog, as I did—to remind you that you cannot let your age or the fact that you are different hold you back. Many people think you have to have a lot of work experience under your belt before you can really get something out of business school. Or that there are certain boxes you need to check before you apply. I didn't

follow a conventional path, but it was one that felt right to me. And it has led to Mogul's success today.

Currently, we are seeing more and more diversity on-screen, in the boardroom, and in government. But we still have a long way to go. Don't feel like you have to wait for someone who looks like you to lead the way. Former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice once said: "You can't wait for role models to look like you. If Sally Ride . . . had been waiting for a female



Audrey Froggatt

MOGULS COME FROM UNIQUE BACKGROUNDS AND DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES.

OWN YOUR UNIQUENESS: ROLE MODELS TO KEEP YOU FOCUSED

Take note of these amazing individuals who have taken the very thing that makes them unique and created something beautiful.

- ✓ **Madeline Stuart** (our Mogul Mentor for this chapter): Madeline is the world's first super-model with Down syndrome. After seeing a fashion show when she was just seventeen, she told her mom she wanted to model. And she has done just that, breaking down stereotypes about who should be represented on the runways, and proving that beauty comes from knowing your worth and not being afraid to go after what you want.
- ✓ **Lizzie Velasquez**: Born with an undiagnosed syndrome that prevents her from gaining weight, Lizzie has been the victim of extreme bullying, especially online, where she was once

called “The Ugliest Woman in the World.” But instead of hiding in shame, she has become an award-winning motivational speaker and author, helping others realize that they can stand up to abuse and that they can be beautiful in their own way.

- ✓ **Ashley Graham:** As one of America’s most famous plus-size models, Ashley has graced the covers of *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Elle*, and more, and is the first plus-size model to be featured on the cover of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, as well as to get a major cosmetics contract. Her daily mantra?

I am bold.
I am brilliant.
I am beautiful.

astronaut role model, she would have never done it!”

Own your uniqueness and allow it to *give* you confidence, not deplete it.

REDEFINING THE STANDARD

When I started Mogul, I wanted to create a company that could battle the barriers that women face when they try to enter spheres where they haven’t been welcomed. One of the goals of Mogul is to help transform our society from one that tries to put us in boxes where we are to be admired for our beauty instead of our brains. In particular, we have learned to focus on advertising. According to the World Economic Forum, women are depicted as intelligent in only 2 percent of advertising, even though in the United States, we are now more likely to have bachelor’s degrees than our male counterparts.

Think about a few of the ad campaigns you might have skipped past on your way to viewing another episode

of *The Walking Dead*. If there was a woman in the commercial, she was likely (1) doing some kind of domestic work, (2) getting her hair done, (3) looking at herself in the mirror, or (4) the object of a guy’s attention. And then, of course, there are the print ads in fashion magazines that make it seem like we should all be size 0, putting on a full face of makeup, half-clothed, to go out on the town.

Mogul was created so that we could address this stereotyping and change the conversation.

One of our divisions at Mogul, Mogul Studios, works with Fortune 1000 companies on such advertising campaigns. From the very start, we held these companies to certain standards when it came to how they portrayed women in their ads. If we saw a woman portrayed in a stereotypical light, we tried to open their eyes to other options. Why is she in the kitchen? Could she instead be in the boardroom? Why is she wearing a miniskirt? These companies had hired us to help them connect with the Mogul audience. This guidance was

one way we could do just that.

But in 2017, we decided to take it a step further. At a United Nations gathering of Fortune 1000 chief marketing officers, UN representatives, and reporters, I asked everyone to stand up and commit to what we call “The Mogul Standard.” They repeated the following pledge out loud:

“I pledge to ensure that all marketing and advertising produced by my company will present women in a positive and diverse light in terms of race, physicality, and context, and avoid stereotyping. We stand by efforts to drive positive social change and to reshape the standards that are presented to young girls and women with respect to perceptions of beauty and gender roles.”

As soon as they finished reciting, the UN chamber erupted in a standing ovation.

I cannot wait to see the effect this pledge might have on the kinds of images this and future generations of girls are presented with as they are growing up. It will take time, and we

will still be presented with unrealistic portrayals of beauty. When you are faced with an image that implies you should focus only on your outer appearance—that therein lies your value—turn off the TV, flip the page, or change the channel. Know that it is not true. Who you are is so much more than what people see on the outside.

DRESS FOR YOU

I’m not going to lie and say that how you present yourself doesn’t matter. It’s not like you see me wearing sweatpants and a ponytail in every picture (though if you’d had a camera during those early days building Mogul, that’s exactly what you would have found!). Especially when you are the public face of your company or brand, your image does matter, and I’ve learned that when I feel like I look my best, I’ll act my best. But again, how I *feel* is what is important, not what others think. I have two beauty products that I consistently use to allow myself to quickly feel pulled-together: red

MY THREE FAVORITE FEMALE EMPOWERMENT AD CAMPAIGNS

#FearlessGirl: The little girl that stands opposite *Charging Bull* in Manhattan was conceptualized by an advertising company in celebration of International Women's Day. You can read about her creation in our Mogul Mentor section in Chapter One. *Fearless Girl* is an example for all of us: She is determined, she knows her worth, and she isn't going to back down.

#LikeAGirl: For a 2015 Super Bowl ad, Always created an ad campaign that took the phrase *like a girl*, which is often used in a derogatory way (i.e., he throws "like a girl") and turned it on its head, letting little girls redefine what "like a girl" really was. The ad pointed out that it isn't until puberty that girls start to feel insecure about their abilities. When the ad producers asked younger girls what "like a girl"

meant, the phrase meant doing the best that they could. It was an amazing, empowering, and revolutionary ad, and it has continued to be relevant in our culture today.

#IAmAMogul: We created the #IAmAMogul campaign to encourage women everywhere to identify themselves as moguls. We started with our Mogul Influencers, but the campaign extended broadly, with women across the world claiming that they have power, influence, and a chance to change the world. Now it's your turn:

#IAmAMogul because: _____



MOGULS COME IN ALL BEAUTIFUL SHAPES AND SIZES.

lipstick, because it helps me stand out even when I'm not the loudest in the room, and black eyeliner (typically a cat eye), because it makes my eyes stand out with sharpness. When I have those two components in place, I feel confident and beautiful, no matter what. I feel ready for whatever may come.

Your routines will change as you go through different phases of life and discover new things about yourself.

Your style may change or your job may require a different dress code. But if you remember to stay focused on what feels best to you, staying authentic to your personal style and your comfort, you'll always broadcast the kind of confidence that makes people take notice. You'll increase your ability to command a room, feel confident in every moment, and know that you're powerful enough to handle what is to come.

DETERMINE YOUR CONFIDENCE HACKS

When do you feel like your best self?

- What are you doing?
- What are you wearing?
- How does it make you feel?

How could you incorporate these elements into your everyday life so that you always feel great? It could be something as simple as identifying what kind of fabric makes you feel comfortable but confident. It could be listening to a certain song before you go into soccer practice or a test. It could be developing a mantra that you say each morning before you start your day—like *I'm doing great. I have so much to be thankful for. So now how can I help others?* These small things can have big impact on your overall feelings.

How you look should be an extension of who you are on the inside. You can be someone who loves fashion and expressing your individuality through what you wear. You can be someone, like me, who pretty much wears the

same thing every day. It doesn't matter what you wear as long as it works for you, allows you to get in touch with the gifts inside yourself, and gives you the confidence to share these gifts with the world.

mogul mentor

MADELINE STUART

THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPERMODEL WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Just like every girl, I have dreams. My dream was born the day I saw a fashion show with my mom when I was seventeen years old. From that moment on, I knew I wanted to be a model. But I knew I had some work to do. I needed to change society's perception of the word *beauty*.

I was born with Down syndrome and thus don't fit the mold for a typical model. But though I knew there would be plenty of people who took one look at me and said, "No, you can't," I said, "Yes, I can," and didn't let being different stop me. I knew there were countless girls who felt completely left out of the fashion industry because of the ridiculous standard that had been set. If I could break down those boundaries, I could help other girls feel like they, too, didn't need to worry about being different. That they, too, could



© Wildflower Portraits

MADELINE STUART

celebrate their differentness.

Turning my dream into a reality wasn't easy. But I worked hard to get myself into the best shape possible, and then took some stunning photographs.

When I posted them on social media, they went viral and caught the attention of the very people I'd hoped to reach—the fashion industry.

Today, my
dream
has become a
reality.

I've walked the runways of New York Fashion Week for the past five seasons, along with Paris Fashion Week, London Fashion Week, LA Fashion Week, Mercedes-Benz China Fashion Week, to name a few; I've been named "Model of the Year" by *Melange*; I was the first person with Down syndrome

to be the face of a cosmetics company, GlossiGirl; and I am the only person in history with an intellectual disability to get a working visa in the US.

I am proud to say that I am the first professional model with Down syndrome who defied all societal odds of what *beauty* used to mean, and made progress to reshape what the definition of that word really is in the modern world.

I want my story to be one that shows girls across the world—no matter where they are from, what they look like, or what cards they have been dealt in life—that they can overcome obstacles to fulfill their dreams, too. If someone tells you no, make the choice to keep going, and you will find a yes elsewhere.

It is through our own naïveté that we discriminate against people who are different. But the more of us who step up and out of the shadows, the more opportunities we give others to realize how wide the spectrum of beauty can be.

True beauty is the spirit that lives inside each one of us. 🏰