

# Book Review

## Playing Big by Tara Mohr from **Radical HR**

Some books give you tools. Others feel like they hand you back parts of yourself you didn't realise you'd lost. *Playing Big* by Tara Mohr does both, and it does it with such clarity, warmth, and depth that it's quickly become one of those books I'll keep coming back to.

At its heart, this book is for anyone—especially women—who's felt the nudge to step up, speak out, or lead more boldly... but hesitated. Not because of a lack of skill or passion, but because of all the internal noise that says, *"Who do you think you are?"* or *"You're not quite ready yet."*

I love this explanation by Tara:

*"Pachad* is "projected or imagined fear," the "fear whose objects are imagined." That, in contemporary terms, is what we might think of as overreactive, irrational, lizard brain fear: the fear of horrible rejection that will destroy us or the fear that we will simply combust if we step out of our comfort zones.

There is a second Hebrew word for fear, *yirah*. Rabbi Lew describes yirah as "the fear that overcomes us when we suddenly find ourselves in possession of considerably more energy than we are used to, inhabiting a larger space than we are used to inhabiting. It is also the feeling we feel when we are on sacred ground."

Think about how you can savour **"Yirah"** and stand at the edge of something meaningful. Lean into the fear that comes with awe, presence, and possibility. The kind that shows up when you're actually moving in the right direction.

It's such a helpful reframe. So often, we interpret fear as a sign to stop. But sometimes, it's the exact opposite. It's our signal that we're growing. That something important is about to shift.

Mohr starts by a confronting chapter on the inner critic, *"you simply need to learn how to live with the inner voice of self-doubt but not be held back by it, to hear the voice and not take direction for it."* Instead of trying to push it down and out, reframing to notice and name it, to understand and manage it. This is especially aligned with the kind of leadership I believe in - rooted, values-led, and future-focused. One of the reasons I love this book is because it is also incredibly practical. Mohr offers tools and frameworks that are immediately usable, like visualising your "Inner Mentor," a future version of yourself who leads with calm, clarity, and wisdom. Or rethinking our relationship to praise and criticism, so we're not constantly chasing approval or shrinking to avoid disapproval. She gives you both

language and strategy for showing up more fully, without burning out or bending yourself out of shape to fit other people's expectations.

This book doesn't ask you to fake confidence or hustle harder. It asks you to trust yourself more. To listen inward before you look outward. To stop waiting until you feel "ready" and start moving before you feel 100% qualified, because most of the time, that moment never comes.

In the work I do with leaders, I see this tension show up all the time - the pull to lead more boldly, matched with the pressure to stay small or safe. *Playing Big* speaks directly to that space. It gives you permission, but also a pathway, to lead with integrity and purpose, without needing to become someone you're not.

If you've been holding back, even just a little, this book is a gentle nudge (or a strong, loving push) to step forward. Not because you have to play big in the traditional, flashy sense. But because playing true to yourself? That's where the real power is.

~ Lisa