

Be Brilliant

HOW TO LEAD
A LIFE OF INFLUENCE

Janine Garner

BESTSELLING AUTHOR of *IT'S WHO YOU KNOW*

WILEY

‘Janine is more than an accomplished speaker and author, she truly understands people — at the core, “the why”. I am thankful to have her in my tribe, on my path to brilliance. Thank you!’

— **Darren Needham-Walker**, Global Marketing Leader, Developer of high performing teams, across IBM, HP and TechnologyOne

‘Janine has this amazing trait of being able to be on the cutting edge of what leaders need to excel and how to support them across the challenges and opportunities leadership brings. Her concept of infectious brilliance is a must read for the contemporary leaders of 2020 and beyond. Entrepreneurs making big bold decisions, corporate leaders who are making broadscale decisions and those who want that extra-factor will gain so much leveraging this book.’

— **Olivia Walsh**, Senior Vice President, Global Head of Talent Management, CBRE

‘The world needed this book! *Be Brilliant* is both a guide and a permission slip. Whenever I have the privilege of spending time with Janine, I have renewed confidence and am reminded of my purpose. This book gave me the same feeling. This isn’t a technical “how-to” book, but through her storytelling and by sharing her own vulnerabilities Janine is guiding us on our own path to brilliance. She genuinely believes we all have brilliance within us and after reading this book, I’m starting to believe it too! This book is permission to be yourself and share with the world what is uniquely brilliant about us.’

— **Alison Flemming**, General Manager Retail Design & Delivery, Scentre Group

‘Janine’s book helped me finally understand how important it is to know yourself and how to be your brilliant self. Her book made it so clear and easy to understand. Reading Janine’s book gave me clarity on how to show up consistently and how to be my best at all times. The minute I started reading it, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for.’

— **Ronald L. Harvey Sr.**, Vice President, Global Core Strategies and Consulting

‘Something became painfully clear as soon as I picked up *Be Brilliant*. How on earth could she step on my toes from half-a-world away? How could she know about my battle against the voices that tell me I should be more than I am? Janine takes us on a masterful, deeply personal, and compelling journey that reminds us that much of what holds us back from our loftiest dreams lies somewhere beneath the noise that we’ve become accustomed to and in some ways accepted. In *Be Brilliant*, Janine not only challenges everything — every thought... every voice you’ve listened to for so long — she provides practical tips and tools to step through the noise and move you from where you are to where you really want to be. She teaches us how to truly connect with the world around us as we unleash, within ourselves and others, that which has remained hidden for so long. She reminds us that the world awaits our light — our brilliance!’

— **Michael E. Perry, Ph.D.**, President/Chief Operating Officer,
Human Performance and Behavior Expert

‘I have worked with Janine as a partner in our organisation and I have seen her literally “unleash brilliance” in three successive cohorts of our flagship leadership program. When I read this book, I was excited to see what she would be able to do with this topic on paper. I was amazed (although I shouldn’t have been) that she was able to convey her passion, commitment and influence in her book in the same way she does in person. Having read the book I found that I was talking to myself a little more, throwing out my comfortable shoes (or at least wearing them less often) and most importantly appreciating that someone told me over and over again that I was brilliant. In a senior role to have that comfort in a book is a wonderful gift and it is one I shall be returning to time and again when I feel my light fading.’

— **Natasha Copley**, Human Resources Director, A&NZ

‘Janine Garner is obsessed with helping people achieve their brilliance! Myself and my teams have recently had the privilege of working closely with Janine to “Unleash our Brilliance”! She is fixated with helping people elevate themselves. The way in which she shows us how to build connection and intent through our network, and unleash our unique brilliance, is incredibly inspiring. I have experienced the impact personally and seen the elevation throughout our organisation. I believe her strategies are fundamental to building the leaders of today and tomorrow, which will position people and their companies at the forefront of opportunity.’

— **Derek Macartney**, CEO Preacta Recruitment

‘Insightful, instructive and inspiring, this book is a siren call to the brilliance within you! It will embolden you to clear through the mental clutter, connect with your truth, and step fully into the unique brilliance of the person you were born to become. What greater gift is there?’

— **Margie Warrell**, Bestselling author of *You’ve Got This!*
The Life-Changing Power of Trusting Yourself

‘Janine Garner’s latest book is simply BRILLIANT. Packed with personal stories and relevant insights this is bound to be another bestseller. The reader is guided through an engaging process to help them understand who they are and what they want to become brilliant in. Packed full of tips, techniques and inspiration this book is for anyone who wants to have a better shot of achieving their potential and being a bit more brilliant.’

— **Gabrielle Dolan**, Bestselling author of 5 books on business storytelling and real communication and
Founder of Jargon Free Fridays

‘Full of real-life stories both her own and many others, this book is just full of LIFE. It’s engaging and is a mix of the theory behind being brilliant along with the stories and facts to back it up. I love how Janine both respects and challenges Simon Sinek’s “know your why first” and as Janine says in this book—in today’s world it is hard to be truly you when there are so many influencing people and things out there telling us we should be someone else rather than ourselves. Our true selves. I have read Janine’s previous books and I truly believe this is the best work she has produced. I enjoyed every word—her commentary, her learnings, and her humour completely shined through and I loved how she walked her own talk by sharing her stories too, not just others! Standing in her spotlight and empowering others to do the same! This is brilliant and I know it will empower others to see their own brilliance too!’

— **Michelle Sutherland**, Social Entrepreneur and
National Vice President, Arbonne

'In a world of relentless competition and crazy diaries, Janine's wisdom is the sanity check that smart people are desperate for. Her raw honesty and care for others' success make her a powerhouse both on stage and in writing. This book is smart, funny and as brilliant as the name suggests.'

— **Ray Pittman**, President & Chief Operating Officer,
McWHINNEY

'I started reading *Be Brilliant* and simply couldn't put it down! This book is beautifully written, and it's packed full of techniques and strategies to help you embrace your authenticity. Janine's four laws of brilliance are indeed clarifying and will absolutely inspire you to own the power you have to create and lead a more fulfilled life. The lessons in this book fuel introspection at a deep level. After reading it, you will understand that you are made more brilliant, not less, by embracing the whole of who you are—the flaws, the strengths, the failures and the successes. Leaders who want to unleash the brilliance within themselves and their teams need to grab this book today and discover how to advance to the next level, personally and professionally.'

— **Terina Allen**, CEO, ARVis Institute and Chair, Strategic Leadership
Network, Columnist, Forbes Media

'If you want to be a better leader of yourself and others via maximising the brilliance within you, then this book will help you find a way forward. A must-read for anyone wanting to fulfil their biggest ambitions.'

— **Kate Mason**, Group Director, People & Culture,
Coca Cola Amatil

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About Janine

Janine is obsessed with unleashing the brilliance in individuals, teams and companies. As a connection expert at the organisational level (collaboration), interpersonal level (networking) and intrapersonal level (energy and intent), her whole world revolves around helping others reclaim and reignite their influence.

A highly sought-after keynote speaker, educator and author, Janine works with high-profile global leaders, and helps many of Australia's top 50 ASX companies and multinationals — EY, CBRE, DXC Technology, Hewlett-Packard, Micro Focus, Optus and CBA, to name a few.

Janine is the best-selling author of *It's Who You Know: How a network of 12 key people can fast-track your success* and *From Me to We: Why commercial collaboration will future-proof business, leaders and personal success*.

She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Aston University, UK, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the same university in 2016. She is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School in 'The Art and Practice of Leadership', a partner at Thought Leaders Global and has won an International Stevie Award in recognition of her work.

On top of this, Janine is super proud to have completed two Tough Mudders and one Spartan race and relishes the hardest challenge of all: raising three teenage children.

In addition to television and radio gigs, Janine also has her thoughts and insights published regularly in the media at *HuffPost*, *CEO Magazine*, *Success* magazine, *BRW*, *Women's Agenda*, *AIM* and *The Australian*. She is also the host of her own podcast, *Unleashing Brilliance*, featuring the untold stories of individual successes from people around the world.

Janine believes we need people, teams and companies to be absolutely brilliant to lead today's complex environment into tomorrow's unknowns. This requires collaboration, transformation and leverage and it demands better conversations, training and connection.

That's the power you have when you are your brilliant self.

Janinegarner.com.au

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To the most precious people in my world—Jason, Flynn, Taya and Carter—thank you for always loving me for being me and inspiring me every day to become a better person. I love you all so much.

To my amazing inner circle of friends and colleagues who continue to challenge my thinking, encourage me to keep going and who are always there for a glass of bubbles to celebrate and a hug when needed—I am forever grateful knowing you are in my corner and cheering me on from the sidelines.

To the many brilliant leaders, clients and thinkers that have allowed me to share their stories and learnings in these pages and on my podcast—our conversations planted the initial seeds of thinking behind this book. Thank you for being brave enough to share your personal stories, wisdom and insight so that others can learn too.

To Kelly Irving—you really are a genius wordsmith. Your patience and encouragement always pushed me to go deeper and further in my thinking and your ideas have helped shape this book into what it has become. I am forever grateful for all you do and for all you are.

Be Brilliant

To the wider team that have worked on bringing my words to life — Lucy Raymond, Ingrid Bond, Sandra Balonyi, Bronwyn Evans and the entire team at Wiley, Ellie Schroeder for your awesome designs and Scott Eathorne for your media magic. A massive thank you for continuing to believe in me.

To each of you — thank you for taking the time to read this book; to being open to becoming more brilliant. My wish for you is that this book opens up a whole new world of opportunity for you to become even more brilliant in all you do.

Introduction

How do you feel about the future? Be honest ... because most of us would agree that the mere thought is simply exhausting.

- ◆ It's *exhausting* trying to keep pace with technological changes.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* keeping on top of other people's lives: our teams, our families, our children, our friends.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* trying to keep up with work demands and the changing business landscape.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* having to conform to industry, societal and — let's be honest — social-media expectations of how to look, be and behave.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* trying to prove that we're good enough.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* trying to perform and play a bigger game.
- ◆ It's *exhausting* being human in today's busy world.

When everything external to us is moving so quickly, the risk is we enter a space of feeling out of control; we worry about what we don't have and seek out solutions to band-aid our perceived imperfections and doubts. We regress into a space of *me*, of self-protection, of 'protect what I know, learn what I don't and until then I'll fake it till I make it'.

We look externally for options to invest in learning and programs to improve our skills and capabilities. We buy tools and expertise to improve performance. We spend hours researching the next big thing so we can be ahead of the curve. And we invest materially in external validations of success.

We want to be in demand, to be needed, to be relevant, to be seen as successful, so we spend a fortune on stuff, on shit, that we think will make us 'better' — that will 'fix us'.

And what does this really get us?

Despite this constant acquisition of skills, work, promotions, learning, material possessions and jam-packed calendars, there are so many of us living daily with imposter-like feelings, doubts of our own abilities and questions about the path we're on.

Despite a perception of increased connectedness thanks to the quantitative counting of friends and connections online, and time spent scrolling, we're living increasingly in an age of loneliness and depression — of disconnection from ourselves and who we want to be.

And despite the outward appearance of being in control, stress, mental health and disengagement levels are at an all-time high in the workplace and at home. Relationships are breaking down, both with our team members at work and our family and mates at home.

We feel uninspired by leaders, organisations, brands, governments and businesses. We question the type of leader, partner, parent, friend and person we want to be.

Worse yet, in this fast-moving new world, we're having to learn to live with incessant change. Talent is no longer enough, truths are hard to find and being fake is more visible; yet somehow, we're expected to live and lead a brilliant life.

How on earth can we be brilliant — and feel brilliant — when we're engulfed by disillusionment, comparison-itis, blame-itis, imposter syndrome-itis and lack of self-belief-itis?

Why this book — why now?

These are just some of the examples of *internal* pressures we put ourselves under. What about the *external* ones?

Here's what we're facing.

Problem 1: business was simple; now it's competitive

Business used to be relatively easy. We'd work on our one-, three- and five-year plans. We'd present them for sign-off and then off we'd go, like good little soldiers, implementing them. Life felt uncomplicated. Business felt uncomplicated — calm, simple, known — and the speed of change felt considered.

But now we're living in extraordinary times of change and challenge. Business is more complex than ever before, and we're no longer performing on a level playing field. We're not just competing locally in our own backyard, we're competing nationally and globally for everything: resources, people, sales and profit.

Problem 2: clients were easy; now they're demanding

Likewise, our clients and suppliers used to be relatively easy-going. In fact, we loved hanging out with them. Want to head out for a spot of lunch? Sure, why not? Can we meet to discuss our business terms and plans for the next year? Of course, let's have a chat.

But now our clients, suppliers, employees and leaders are becoming more demanding, wanting everything better, quicker and cheaper. And

if you can't deliver on this you'd better throw in some extra services and value — for free, of course!

And it's not just *them* — it's *us*! We get annoyed if our Uber doesn't turn up in 90 seconds, if we can't get the cheapest flight on offer, that table booked in the new super-cool restaurant, one-hour delivery of that must-have dress for the weekend — and get a replacement within 24 hours.

Problem 3: communication was straight-forward; now it's overwhelming

Marketing used to be a four-step process. Once we'd diagnosed the '4Ps' of our marketing plan — product, price, promotion and place — we'd allocate our marketing dollars across a limited range of options: television, radio, print and maybe a promotional event or two.

Now we're operating in an increasingly interconnected, fast and flat world that allows us to market anything, everywhere. As long as you have a phone and a laptop you can get your brand out there from anywhere, at any time and in any place. We're bombarded daily with information that we're attempting to process and compete with. Technology has changed how we connect, interact, work and relate — it's changing how we exist.

Problem 4: resources were limitless; now they're stretched

In the 1990s, when I started work, resources were limitless. It was the time of the banking boom in London: the champagne flowed, company credit cards were put behind the bar with free abandon. We could even access the stationery cupboard without asking for a key and print A3 in colour (shock horror!) without worrying about being caught by the office manager.

Now everything has been cut — resources, headcounts, budgets, travel — and we're watched as if under a microscope. Despite the cuts, we're all under the pump to do more with less.

Problem 5: employment was secure; now it's uncertain

Remember when a job was for life? You were embedded into the company, secure in the knowledge that you would be looked after until the day you retired.

But with changing industries, evolving organisational structures, technological advancements changing the jobs available, increased competition across generations and the necessity to upskill, reskill and evolve skills based on the future of work, jobs are no longer guaranteed. In fact, recent research states that millennials will have 17 different jobs in their lifetime! Eek!

Without each other, without collaboration and connection, without us all being our absolute best, we can't adapt and move at the speed needed to meet these demands.

Better be yourself

We all have to get better at being ourselves.

Think about it: without people being who they truly are, being their brilliant selves, we'll never create the true heart and soul, the belonging that's needed to turn the challenges of our present into the successes of our future. When we reconnect and reclaim who we are in the entirety of our lived experience, imperfections and strengths, and when we stop faking it till we make it, we'll be in a position to unleash our individual brilliance, and at the same time unleash the brilliance in others.

So, the solution here is to start by looking at *who*.

In 2009, Simon Sinek published his first book, *Start with Why*, which included the infamous Golden Circle framework for his approach to leadership — that 'people don't buy *what* you do; they buy *why* you do it'.

While Sinek was undoubtedly correct in identifying a starting point for why you're doing something, this thinking has created a tsunami of significant unrest and anxiety as people and organisations try to find their purpose in life.

What do we value? What's our mission? Why are we here? These are the questions we ask ourselves on a daily basis — and if we don't have the answers, we panic!

While I'm absolutely not discrediting his great work, what I am proposing is that there are other, more critical questions that need to be asked first: Who are you? Who are you being and who do you want to become?

Understanding *why* on its own will never work.

The *who* we are and who we want to become and the *why* we're doing what we're doing must align, otherwise there will always be a point of tension and conflict.

Phil Knight, founder of Nike, talks to this concept in his book *Shoe Dog*. He writes about what sparked his success at selling. After being unable to sell encyclopedias because he hated it, and feeling empty inside when selling mutual funds, he started selling shoes and realised he enjoyed it because 'it wasn't selling': he believed in running and believed these were the best shoes to run in and that the 'world would be a better place' if people ran every day. He added, 'People, sensing my belief, wanted some of that belief for themselves. Belief, I decided. Belief is irresistible'.

What Knight shared is that the *why* for other people only became important when he had *belief* in himself — in his *who* — first.

So, what if we could remove the shackles we're placing on ourselves and instead know that we have all we need *right now*? That we have all the skill and capability that's needed to contribute and influence; that our opinion matters; that the culmination of all the facets of ourselves — the strengths, the weaknesses, the successes, the failures, the loves and the imperfections — are our perfectly imperfect and brilliant selves.

We just need to tap into it! Embrace it!

You have all that you need to be brilliant.

To meet all of your challenges and demands head-on, right now.

It starts with *you*.

My wish for you, as a reader of this book, is to understand that we're all unique, that we all have individual facets that, when embraced, will help us become the best individuals, partners, parents, leaders, team and organisations we can be.

Much like learning how to meditate for hours or mastering a one-handed push-up, it takes continuous work to be brilliant, work that lasts a lifetime! But this continuous mastery, ongoing improvement and determination to become better is where the opportunity exists for you and for those you lead.

Only when we take ownership of who we are, who we want to be and who we want to become, only when we accept all of our imperfections and rise above our limitations, only when we unleash our own inner brilliance can we truly create the space for others to do the same.

Brilliance is infectious.

So, let's be brilliant together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Janine', written in a cursive style.

The quest to be brilliant

I was born to a working-class, farming family in a small village called Guiseley in Yorkshire in the north of England. My dad was a poultry farmer and my stay-at-home mum juggled kids, the farm and the market on weekends. While riding around on my dad's lap on the tractor, he would often say (in his strong northern accent) 'Where there's muck there's brass, love', which meant, 'if you put in the hard work, the money will come'.

Mum, on the other hand, would share her pride at being 'the first girl in the family' to attend Leeds secretarial college and then the disappointment at having to give it all up when she got married.

Something many people don't know about me is that I received a full student grant and financial support from the government to go to university. There's no way my farming family could have funded my further education without this. Suddenly, I was off (hooray!). I packed my backpack and headed to Birmingham, not realising at the time that I would never return home to live again.

I remember that first term—the conversations, the people, their backgrounds—my eyes were well and truly opened to the world of

possibility, and also to self-doubt, lack of confidence, imposter syndrome, imperfection and all of my flaws.

I worked and played hard and graduated four years later with a Bachelor of Science, a significant amount of debt, some lifelong friends and a suitcase full of memories. Over the next eight years, in London this time, I tackled the ongoing, exhausting battle between striving for more and proving I was good enough. I was determined to ‘make it in a man’s world’ and prove to my dad that I could do it.

Despite rising through the ranks, self-doubt always told me I wasn’t smart enough, savvy enough, brave enough or good enough to be there.

By the age of 27, I’d fallen in love with an Aussie, Jason, and decided to run away from those nagging doubts and try again — somewhere new. I left my job, sold my belongings, packed my backpack (again) and moved to Australia.

Over the next 10 years, I rebuilt my career in a country where I had no friends and no proof of who I was or what I could achieve. I lived on the verge of burnout and breakdown while juggling three young children, a full-time corporate job and horrendous bullying at a senior level. Deciding I’d had enough I chose to leave to set up and bootstrap my own business.

Then, my husband’s company went into receivership and he lost his job. With no regular money coming in we hit rock bottom financially. We had to sell up, downsize to a rental, live off credit cards — we even went as far as having conversations with mates about camping in their backyards (I’m serious!).

Through it all, Jason believed in me — that was all the fuel I needed to open my eyes and make a change. I took back control and I worked. I dug deep, I hustled and I invested in the right people around me to keep me focused and on track. I formed the LBDGroup, a network for commercially smart women who collaborate and support each other (which I sold in March 2019).

Since then, I've built a global speaking and training business, working with some of the most inspiring businesses and leaders who are committed to driving change in industry. In 2011 I founded the not-for-profit First Seeds Fund with an incredible board of women who, together, helped many parents and kids in disadvantaged areas in Australia. I became a partner at Thought Leaders Global, a business helping clever people become commercially smart. In 2017, I received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Aston in Birmingham and was privileged to be asked to speak to the graduating year of students. I've even written and published two books (one of which is a bestseller — let's hope this third one becomes one, too).

Why am I telling you this? It's not about stroking my own ego, telling you all the things I'm good at, or all that I've done. No, it's about owning the good stuff — the achievements *and* the nagging internal voices along the way — everything I've told myself I'm not doing 'right' or could do 'better' (like writing this book).

Just like you, my journey was never and will never be all unicorns and rainbows. That's not life.

Being brilliant is about accepting the conditioning we've grown up with, why we think the way we do, recognising what drives us, celebrating our wins, *and* equally, recognising when we're being hard on ourselves, when we judge ourselves and when we fu*k up!

I know, I know, easier said than done, right?

Like me, you've probably spent *years* investing in yourself, reading self-development books, going on training programs to make you a better leader, negotiator, writer, presenter, thinker (insert whatever works for you). And even after all this investment, you continue to question who you are and what you're doing. *It's crazy!* We continue to question our worth and our brilliance! Why?

Barriers to our brilliance

We're struggling with owning who we are and giving ourselves permission to become our best selves. We're wanting to belong but feeling lonely.

And while we talk about collaboration and building teams, we're so worried about ourselves that we're continuing to operate from a place of *me* versus a place of togetherness, of us, of *we*.

We're all at risk of becoming the robots of life versus the humans of extraordinary evolution, where potential is unleashed and brilliance shines.

The world is asking us to be our extraordinary, brilliant selves, but we're not listening. Instead, we're suffering with extreme and multidimensional fatigue at three levels:

1. *exhaustion fatigue* — we're exhausted with being exhausted
2. *stretch fatigue* — we're pulled in 101 directions, often at the same time, by multiple parties
3. *choice fatigue* — we struggle with what to do next, tomorrow, the day after; first, second, at the same time, or all *right now!*

Ring true?

Exhaustion fatigue

We feel exhausted every day with all that we have to do and by the thought of the future and what we think we 'should' be doing. You may even now be starting to spin as you think about what you should be doing right now instead of reading this book.

There's too much to do and not enough time. We're racing around putting out fires, answering emails, attending meetings, meeting demands, rushing around like headless chickens trying to look the part and act the part, but maybe not quite delivering in a way that's sustainable for us over the longer term — and we know it.

Downtime is becoming increasingly limited. On-time is becoming increasingly maximised. We spin out of control, running ourselves ragged, falling under the pressure of the demands of adaptability, agility and connectivity.