

Renegades

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Renegades

The word "Renegades" is written in a bold, black, brush-stroke style. A thick, vibrant pink brushstroke underlines the word, starting from the bottom left and extending towards the right, following the curve of the text.

BENJ MILLER

with Chris White and McKenzie Decker

ENDORSEMENTS

“Benj Miller has written the book for every founder out there who has ever thought to themselves ‘*Why is this not fun anymore?*’ It’s a great question, and *Renegades* has the answers. Highly recommended.”

— **Les McKeown**, Founder and CEO, Predictable Success

“Benj, McKenzie and Chris have nailed a tension so many leaders feel. Their insights are practical, hopeful, and downright fun to read. You’ll find it as helpful as I did.”

— **Beau Johnson**, Partnerships, The Table Group,
A Patrick Lencioni Company

“Benj Miller is one of the sharpest thinkers I know. I’ve been wanting him to write a book for sometime now and I’m glad it’s here. Benj is a renegade in the best of ways. He believes you can lead a life of high performance and purpose by breaking the rules that hold you back, while finding true freedom at work and in life.”

— **Jeff Henderson**, Founder, The FOR Company,
Author, *What To Do Next*

“I read —no ROMPED THROUGH —Benj’s visual delight of colors, photographs, unusually numbered chapters and short sentences placed strategically in brief blobs on pages that invited you to go to the next. I read it in one sitting— which I RARELY do. Whether you are a renegade like me or you might want to grow into one, this book is a perfect example of how form ENHANCES content; Renegades is a must read. Thank you, Benj, for reminding me I do not have to play the hand I am dealt and for regenerating to the surface the renegade in my soul.”

— **Michael Allosso**, Master Communications Expert, Award-Winning Speaker, Self-Awareness Specialist

“I love how Benj Miller weaves his stories together to celebrate the value of the Renegade. What’s more, his approach allows Renegades everywhere the freedom to express themselves because the system makes sense. This is a new and important model for scaling without the old rule book. I enjoyed every page of it.”

— **Mary Pat Knight**, Author, *The Humanized Leader* and Founder, Leaders Inspired

“I believe we are all here to make an impact that only we can make. Renegades is a battle cry for entrepreneurs to rise to their calling and make their own most impactful contribution to leave the world better than they found it.”

— **Emily Morgan**, Founder and CEO, Delegate Solutions

“Like a Zen koan for capitalists. Don’t start a business without reading this first.”

— **Michael Pacheco**, Founder of Boxer Media

“No one knows being a Renegade like Benj. To go from Renegade-Founder to Renegade-Leader is no easy feat, but it can be done. Benj shares tremendous insight and wisdom through valuable lessons learned that will help anyone who has or knows someone with a Renegade spirit!”

— **Tyler Dickerhoof**, Founder and Podcast Host,
The Impact-Driven Leader

“Benj nails both the founder’s journey into wilderness and the pathway out. He gets right to the point, is full of wisdom and heart, and doesn’t waste any words. I have had the unique privilege of coaching Benj and being coached by Benj and can say two things without hesitation: as my coach, his wisdom—much of which is in this book—has made me and my team exponentially better; as his coach, he absolutely lives every word on every page.”

— **John Ott**, Executive Coaching & Leader
Development, Exceptional Leaders

“This book could not have come at a better time in my founder’s journey. I feel seen. But even better, I feel empowered with practical tools and soul-supporting encouragement to keep going and keep growing. This book is the Renegade revival founders need.”

— **Jennifer Zick**, Founder & CEO, Authentic

“Any founder who’s been in the game for more than two minutes knows it’s constantly changing. One moment you’re winning because you pivoted the next you’re winning because you stayed the course. And it’s all fine and good while you’re winning. But what happens when you’re not winning, when your people let you down, when there’s confusion or chaos, or where you’re just downright exhausted? You need to know exactly what to change to grow without losing your soul or the soul of the company you’ve worked so hard to build.

Renegades isn’t just another stale book of more things you ‘should’ be doing. It’s the freedom to be yourself AND the structure to make the very few changes you need to make to build a more scalable, sustainable, and enjoyable company. Benj, Chris, and McKenzie get the renegade soul because they have it. They live it out everyday. And this book is the proof you can be you AND lead an unbelievably successful business.”
—**Scott Ritzheimer**, Founder & CEO of Scale Architects

“One thing all Renegades need (whether they know it or not) is a guide who has blazed a similar trail and has the wisdom and generosity to help them succeed. In this book, Benj lays out a roadmap every Renegade can benefit from whether they are just starting out or need a breakthrough mid-journey. As a leader that has learned from Benj for years, I could not recommend a better guide for the Renegades our world needs now more than ever.”
—**Justin Elam**, Director of the Irresistible Church Network

“The dream of business ownership can quickly become a dungeon. Renegades is the key to not only breaking out of the ‘my business owns me’ cell—it is a schematic to break through to ownership freedom at scale.”
—**Trey Sheneman**, Founder, Herald

“I wish I had this book eight years ago... Thank you for writing this. I feel seen and understood in a way that maybe only one or two other people in my 35 years on this earth has made me feel. You delivered on your value of giving dignity because this book left out all of the shame and separation I've felt for so long by being a ‘Renegade’.”
— **Kenny Lange**, System & Soul Coach

“I felt like Benj was reading my mail. The thoughtfully-designed pages of Renegades contain stories, ideas, and practical action items that I found to be highly relevant to my role as a founder with strong visionary tendencies.

At times it felt like a cold drink on a hot day. Other parts of the book felt like a cold glass of water in the face. Both were needed and both were refreshing. Thank you, Benj, for shooting straight!”
— **Darrell Amy**, Author, *Revenue Growth Engine*

“Benj flips the perspective on traditional thinking by relating to his learning experiences and compels the reader to grapple with their own shortcomings. It takes humility to expose oneself and see the naked truth; then it takes courage to share it. Thank you Benj for crafting a fresh perspective for Founders.”
— **Clint Emerson**, President, Nehemiah Holdings

“The Renegade team has perfectly captured the heart and challenges of the founder and the necessary transitions to breakthrough to the next stage. I wish I had this book a decade ago when facing the same challenges!”
— **Jonathan H. Chen**, Serial Entrepreneur, Executive Coach

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our Father in Heaven who created us,
loves us, and seeks union with us.
Jesus who paid the price for union with the Father.
The Holy Spirit who guides and counsels us.

Our spouses who champion us and refine us.
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Darlene White
Jake Decker

Our mentors, advisors, coaches, and peers for their
necessary community and encouragement.

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John Ott
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Our System & Soul staff, coaches, and Renegade-
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

0: THE DILEMMA	25
1: THE RENEGADE	37
2: THE SHIT SHOW	49
2.5: THE PROBLEM WITH THE PROBLEM	63
3: THE GROUNDWORK	79
Your Personal Shit	81
Your Crew	91
4: THE MYTH	103
5: THE BIG SIX	109
Shift #1: The Design Shift	113
Shift #2: The Cadence Shift	129
Shift #3: The Score Shift	149
Shift #4: The Destination Shift	163
Shift #5: The Ethos Shift	179
Shift #6: The People Shift	201
6. THE PARADOX	229



The

Dilemma



Chapter 0

THE DILEMMA

I never set out to write a business book.
Seriously. Who needs *another* business book?
And yet... here we are.
Not because I became an overnight expert.
Not because I was suddenly struck with inspiration.
Not because my ego got the best of me.

Here's what changed my mind:

The book I needed, I couldn't find anywhere...

The book that helped me do a tough, lonely job...

The book about how to **keep your freedom as an entrepreneur and not get stuck in the grind of a growing business.**

When I started coaching founders, and I saw I wasn't the only one who needed a better way, that's what changed my mind.

As a founder, you are the only one who cares about the future of the business, the product, the ideas, all the revenue streams, relationships, and clients for a long time, years maybe. Most of us don't start out with a capable team, so we have to do all the "stuff." And for a while, that works... until it doesn't.

Overtime, if we run the business well enough, we end up needing to build a team to help pave the way forward. But when that happens, suddenly we have more cats to herd and problems to solve than ever before. Worst of all, the energy and focus we need to really do our jobs—the job of the leader charting the course, bettering the product, or unlocking the market—gets swallowed whole by day-to-day chaos.

As I've faced this challenge over the years, I've learned a few ways to get beyond the chaos. Looking back, I think entrepreneurs like us need a resource that gives us freedom to build and dream about our business in a way that leverages our strengths, not drains them.

I always felt like the freedom I had when I started a business was just out of reach as the business grew, and I struggled to get it back. I felt like my options were to give up trying to get that freedom back, or give up the business so I could have my freedom.

In the decades I've spent building and coaching businesses, I've continually run into the mess so many of us face when we go from lone ranger to suddenly herding a stampede.

If you're like me, you've read all of the classic business books to find the solution.

We gain a little freedom when our businesses have better systems, so we've read about systems. We enforce structure, hierarchy, and the rules we play by.

There was so much wisdom to gain from the business gurus who told us how great businesses are run—

The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni

The E-Myth by Michael Gerber

Good to Great by Jim Collins

Principles by Ray Dalio

Rockefeller Habits by Verne Harnish

Traction by Gino Wickman

The 4-Hour Work Week by Tim Ferriss

Measure What Matters by John E. Doerr

and so many more.



The systematic thinking of these leaders changed the way so many of us run the day-to-day of our organizations.

But the business felt dead inside when it was all about following rules and meeting protocols. We recognized that we didn't just need systems, we needed "soul" to make the business come alive—culture, purpose, and leadership to make what we're doing matter.

So, we've all read books about that, too.

There was also another tension to contend with inside the business itself:

If we systematized everything, we'd build a rigid box around everything inventive we'd created. That didn't feel right. My business would become just another soulless machine making average widgets.

And if I wanted to instill a real soul in our business, I knew it would be messy, hard to carry out, and maybe even useless. Soul seemed elusive, soft, and hard to quantify. Worst of all... what if I failed? What if nobody "got it" or it didn't make a difference?

Then I realized I had a much bigger challenge in front of me than the one I was trying to solve. It had nothing to do with anything I'd read.

My dilemma was this:

- 1.** I don't like systems. I don't like rules. I don't want to be confined or restricted. I am a Renegade! Systems would kill the very nature of me.
- 2.** I was stuck trying to make the best choices for the business. I felt like I had to choose one and lose the other: the systems or the soul. The business needed systems. It needed boundaries. It needed more clarity about the direction we were going than to follow my current whim. It needed to have some control.
- 3.** I desperately needed to regain the freedom to be the Renegade, visionary, founder, inventor, and dreamer while my business scaled.

This was the problem I needed to solve.

If that tension and deeply-held desire feels relatable, welcome to the club.

You are a Renegade.

I'm glad you're here.

If you're working with (or surviving) a Renegade, I'm glad you're here as well. This book will help you understand this seemingly untameable human being, and partner with them. And maybe, just maybe, it will awaken a little Renegade within yourself.

I wrote this book for us to find a way to have our freedom without sacrificing any of what we've built. To lead as Renegades—free to imagine, focus on the future, and chase possibilities, while building a healthy, stable, and mature business to scale.

This book is for those of us who are ready to cross the gap from being a Renegade-Founder to becoming a Renegade-Leader of an audacious team, one that will move beyond anything you could build on your own.

I've found that freedom comes to us when we let go and invite in a team of capable leaders that can take our dream to scale. But let's be clear—we're not going to play by the rules as they're set. Again—not how I roll—and not how you do either. Let's reimagine what it looks like to get ahead, build the business you dream of faster, more efficiently, and holistically *without* trading your soul.

Welcome to the *third option, Renegades.*

Before we dive in, I have to warn you, this new way of thinking about your business isn't for everyone.

Don't read this book if...

- You want to remain oblivious to the problems you're causing.
- You're unwilling to face your fears.
- You refuse to lean into your own vulnerability.

Because the third option is as much about looking inward at yourself as it is about evaluating your business.

Your ability to own up, grow up, let go, be vulnerable, and move forward with courage is everything.

Let's *ride!*

LET'S
RUN

