

# REBEL TALENT

## Dr. Francesca Gino

Social & Behavioral Scientist; Professor, Harvard Business School; Author



Dr. Francesca Gino is a professor at Harvard Business School recognized for her award-winning research and teaching on how to have more productive, creative and fulfilling lives. Born in Italy, Dr. Gino has a diverse expertise on the psychology of organizations. She has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review* and *The New York Times*. She has also been honored as one of the world's Top 40 Business Professors Under 40 and one of the 50 Most Influential Management Thinkers by *Thinkers50*.

Dr. Gino tells the story of Giuseppe Palmieri, maître d' at one of the world's best restaurants. An example of "rebel talent," although Palmieri had a specific script and set of rules to follow to do his job, when the children of a restaurant guest wanted pizza (which was not on the menu), he had a pizza delivered to the restaurant. As Dr. Gino explains, even though there were rules in place to ensure that the customer had a great experience, Palmieri chose to constructively break some of these rules in order to fulfil the restaurant's bigger mission.

## Consider Your Bigger Mission

Thinking about your organization, have you encountered times when adhering to a well-known script or set of rules runs counter to the bigger mission? As a team, describe together when you have seen this happen.

## Redefine a Rebel

Dr. Gino says that we often think of rebels as "contrarians, show-offs" and "jerks," but in truth rebels actually break rules constructively in order to carry out the bigger mission of the organization.

Based on Dr. Gino's description, as a team, list below those in your organization you believe to have "rebel talent":

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As a team, list below ways they demonstrate their “rebel talent” within your organization:

## Becoming a Rebel

As a team, recall together when Dr. Gino shared some of the recipe for “constructive rebels”:

1. They embrace \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They have a \_\_\_\_\_ perspective.
3. They have a talent for \_\_\_\_\_.

Now, personally reflect on these characteristics:

- Which one(s) come more naturally to you?
- Which stands out as being more personally challenging than the others?

According to Dr. Gino, our human nature works against these three traits. In what ways do you see that playing out in your leadership?

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Take some time to share how you can encourage each other as a team to exhibit these traits more often:

### Lead Like a Pirate

According to Dr. Gino, a pirate captain did not look to their title as the source of their power. Instead, their respect and influence came as a result of their actions. Furthermore, if the captain's actions did not serve the bigger mission of the ship—if they didn't treat the crew well, if they did not share treasure equally, if they didn't allow the crew to “thrive” in order to succeed—the crew could remove the captain and elect a new one.

Take some time to personally reflect on Dr. Gino challenge: “Am I the captain my crew would choose as its leader today?” Note your thoughts below:

### ACT

Choosing just one of the rebel talents, in what ways can you grow this talent more over the next week?