Pauline Nguyen

INTERNATIONAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER ON UNSHAKABLE LEADERSHIP

Global Transformational Leader of the Year 2026 | Award-Winning Entrepreneur | Award-Winning Author

www.pauline-nguyen.com





WHAT THE RED LANTERN KNEW

What 25 years on a restaurant floor teaches leaders about pressure, people and performance

"The room always reflects the nervous system of the leader."

Every leader is in the business of emotions. Every negotiation, every team culture built or broken, every customer who stays loyal or quietly leaves comes down to how the people involved feel.

Pauline Nguyen learnt this on a restaurant floor. Her restaurant, Red Lantern, ran an 11% staff turnover rate against an industry average of 60 to 80% each year. Her keynote What the Red Lantern Knew, drawn from her new book of the same name, is about the one thing every team reads before anyone speaks: the nervous system of the person leading it.

She shows leaders the path between the hard kitchen that burns people out and the cotton-wool culture that protects everyone from discomfort: teams who stay and give their best because they choose to.

"The best session I have attended at Adobe in 5 years. Hands down." **Adobe Global**

THE SPEAKER YOU BRING IN

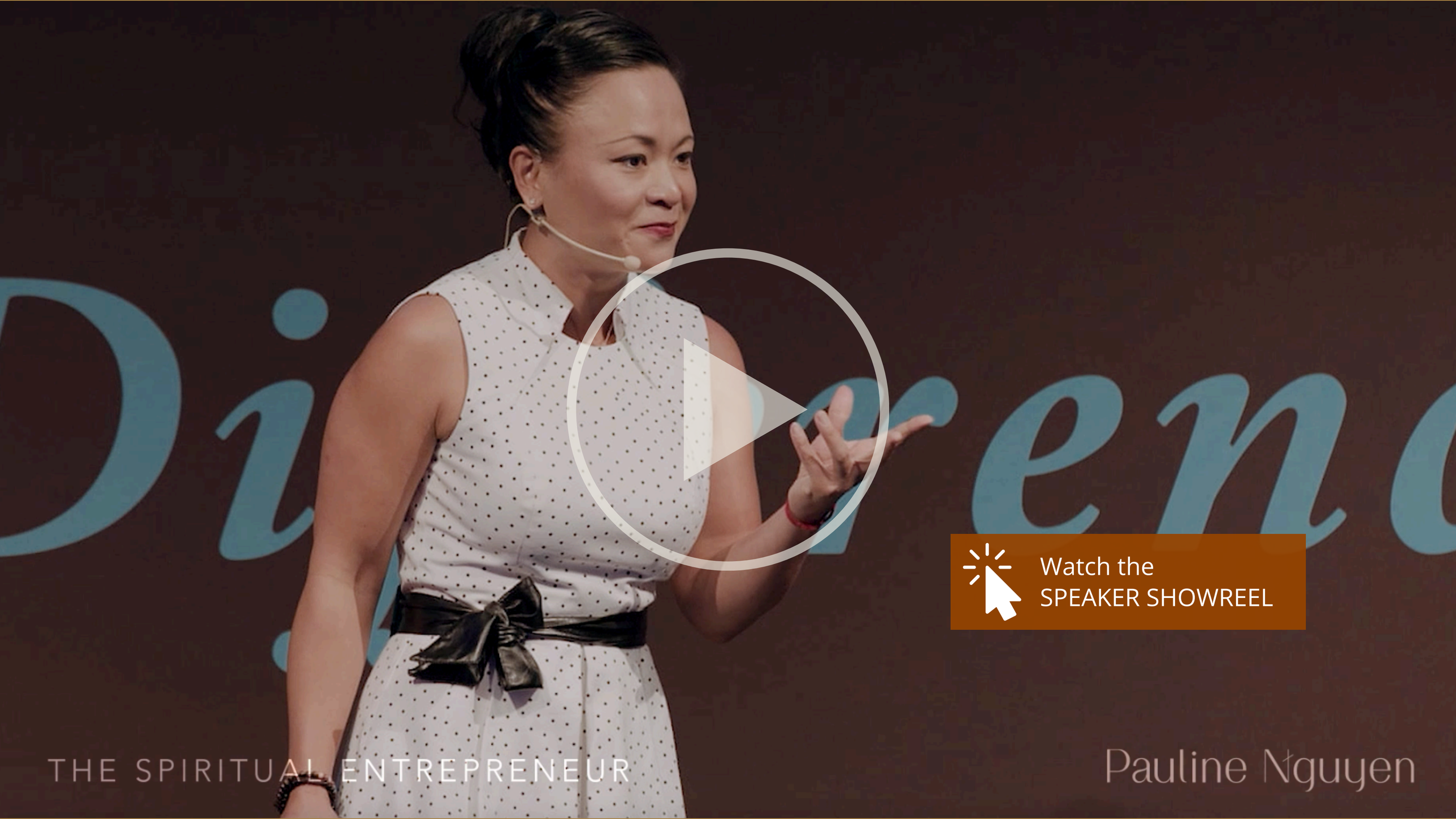
When your leaders have heard every conventional motivational speech and are still quietly burning out, Pauline Nguyen is the speaker you bring in. She has the commercial grit of 25 years running a restaurant, and tools leaders can use the next morning.

Audiences leave knowing how to steady their emotional state and make clear decisions when things get chaotic.

She has spoken to audiences from intimate rooms of top executives to conferences of 4,000. At the 2022 Engage Convention of the International Association of Speakers Bureaus in Chicago, she received a standing ovation from the entire room.

"From her first moment of eye contact, to her opening words with such a unique cadence and delivery she held the room of seasoned speaking industry leaders while she shared actionable strategies for helping each of us become more Unshakable."

Mirjana Novkovic, Co-Chair, 2022 Engage Convention, International Association of Speakers Bureaus


Watch the
SPEAKER SHOWREEL
THE SPIRITUAL ENTREPRENEUR
Pauline Nguyen

WHY PAULINE NGUYEN?

A COMMERCIAL TRACK RECORD THAT COMMANDS RESPECT

Pauline learnt leadership in the trenches, in one of the toughest industries there is.

She came to Australia as a Vietnamese refugee, after a year in a refugee camp in Thailand. She went on to co-found Red Lantern with her brother Luke Nguyen and chef Mark Jensen, and ran it for 25 years. It became the most awarded Vietnamese restaurant in the world and won the NSW Medium Business award at the 2012 Telstra Business Awards.

Against hospitality staff turnover of 60 to 80% a year, Red Lantern's was 11%. When the closure was announced, it sold out every night for 3 months, and every team member stayed until the final night.

She coaches elite leaders who've mastered their outer game to master the inner game.

Today she also co-owns Tiger Purrr, a premium chai brand, with Emma Scott.

THE ANTIDOTE TO FEAR-BASED LEADERSHIP

Many highly skilled leaders are exhausted, running on chronic adrenaline and quietly leading from fear. Traditional leadership strategies add to the overwhelm.

Pauline pairs 25 years of running a business with practical tools for emotional mastery. She helps leaders and their executive teams lead through change with calm courage and clear thinking.

When Pauline speaks, audiences rethink how they lead.

"Pauline was beyond incredible. Not one person dropped offline during her keynote - the entire audience was riveted by her keynote and her story - definitely hit the jackpot with Pauline!"

Dee Knopp, Executive Director, Diversity Alliance for Science



WHAT YOUR AUDIENCES WALK AWAY WITH

Actionable Emotional Mastery Tools

Practical tools that link a leader's emotional state to loyalty and commercial results.

Unshakable Capacity Strategies

Practical strategies for nervous system regulation and state management, so leaders execute with calm courage under pressure.

Cultural Transformation Path

A clear path from fear-based burnout to psychological safety and teams who take ownership.

"People that have been to many conferences commented 'Best speaker I have ever heard' or 'Best part of the conference.' There was a lot more to this than I could ever have expected. Great Speaker, Great Person, Great Experience."

John Chapman, CEO, Airport Retail Enterprises



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

- Global Transformational Leader of the Year 2026
- 200 Women Who Will Change the Way You See the World
- Australia's Top 50 Influential Female Entrepreneurs (Rare Birds)

AWARD-WINNING ENTREPRENEUR

- Telstra Business Awards, NSW Medium Business Winner 2012, for Red Lantern
- National and State Winner of Best Vietnamese Restaurant, many years running

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

- Newcomer Writer of the Year Winner 2008 - Secrets of the Red Lantern
- Best Entrepreneurship and Small Business Book Winner and Book of the Year finalist 2019 - The Way of the Spiritual Entrepreneur



SIGNATURE KEYNOTE

WHAT THE RED LANTERN KNEW: What 25 years on a restaurant floor teaches leaders about pressure, people and performance

"The room always reflects the nervous system of the leader."

Every leader has walked into a room and felt the boss's mood before anyone said a word. Pauline co-founded and ran Red Lantern for 25 years, through a global financial crisis and a pandemic, and when it closed, every team member stayed until the final night.

Drawn from her new book, this keynote shows leaders how their state sets the culture and performance of every room they lead, and gives them a practical way to change it.

AUDIENCES LEARN HOW TO:

- See the state they bring into a room, and what their team reads from it.
- Name the emotion underneath "stress", so they can choose their response.
- Reset their state in 5 minutes before a hard conversation or a board meeting.
- Use one question before every hard conversation: "Am I going in with chaos or with choice?"
- Build a culture where people stay, because the leader goes first.

"...the feedback that I received from my top leaders was amazing to the point that we had one of our most successful months in October..."

David Raphael, CEO, Life Force Asia Pacific



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SPEAKER TOPICS

THE WAR CHEST OF A MODERN LEADER: Calm Courage, Real Resilience and Unshakable Grit

LEADERS LEARN:

- The essential elements of a modern leader's war chest.
- How to stay calm and courageous in high-stakes situations.
- How to build resilience and grit without sacrificing health or relationships.
- Practical tools to regulate stress and think clearly under pressure.
- How to lead teams through disruption with confidence and clarity.

EVOLVING LEADERSHIP: From Fear-Based Burnout to Psychological Safety

LEADERS LEARN HOW TO:

- Upgrade their personal leadership for the new world of work.
- Practise self-leadership and self-mastery, so they lead others with integrity.
- Use compassionate assertiveness to drive performance without fear or burnout.
- Build cultures of psychological safety that invite innovation and honest feedback.
- Treat diversity and inclusion as real strategic levers for insight and growth.

THE WAY OF THE SPIRITUAL ENTREPRENEUR: The 7 Secrets to Becoming Fearless, Stress Free and Unshakable in Business and in Life

AUDIENCES LEARN HOW TO:

- Stay steady in the face of uncertainty and adversity.
- Build lasting success without sacrificing health, relationships or joy.
- Redefine what success means at work and at home.

PAULINE NGUYEN HAS WORKED WITH

"Pauline Nguyen is an energising breath of fresh air. I love her story. I love the way she thinks. I loved everything she said."

Kerryn Atkinson
Women in Digital Programs Lead, Dell

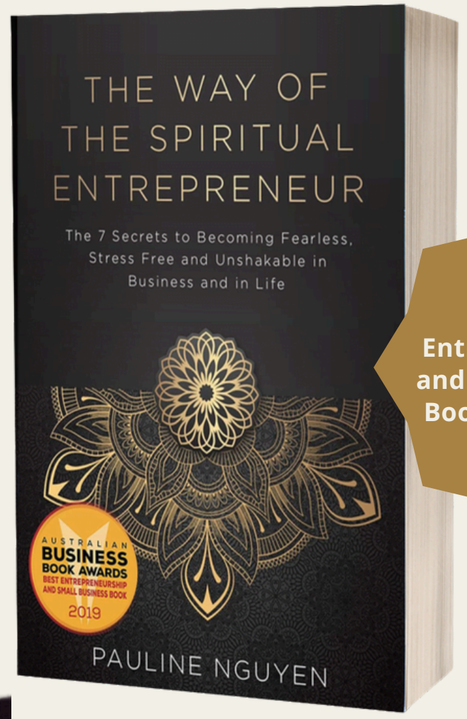
"She captured the attention and hearts of everybody in the room as she told her story of her life."

Harcourts International

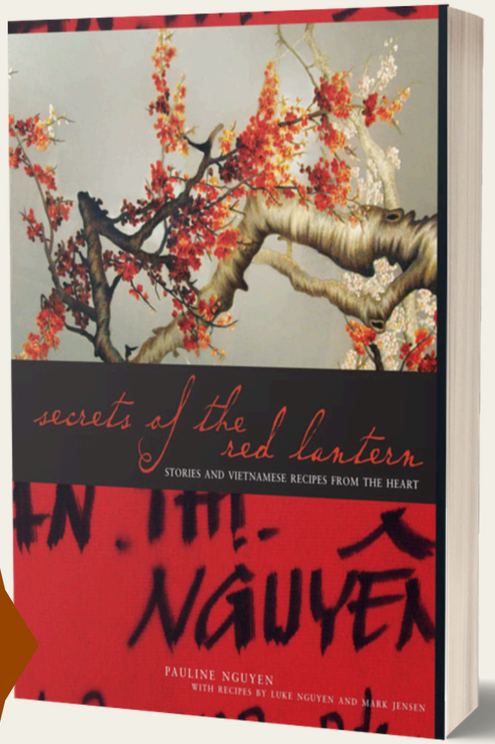


AWARD-WINNING BOOKS





Best Entrepreneurship and Small Business Book Winner 2019



Newcomer Writer of the Year Winner 2008

What the Red Lantern Knew, her third book, is out in 2027.

Her essay The Courage of Soldiers, in Growing Up Asian in Australia (Black Inc.), has been set for study in Australian secondary schools. She writes The Conscious Leader, a weekly leadership newsletter on LinkedIn.

FEATURED IN

Forbes

From burnout to breakthrough: The woman coaching Australia's corporate refugees to reclaim meaning

The Sydney Morning Herald

Pauline Nguyen: 'I was seven when I began working...that was our training, and it made us who we are'

FINANCIAL REVIEW

'This is a test': restaurateur Pauline Nguyen on living on the streets

CEO MAGAZINE

The Spiritual Entrepreneur: Pauline Nguyen shares her secrets to success

WellBeing

We sit down with Pauline Nguyen, who offers us all a beacon of hope

SBS

Filthy Rich & Homeless, Season 3 (2020)



In 2020, Pauline was one of 5 high-profile Australians who left their homes to live on the streets for SBS's Filthy Rich & Homeless.



BOOK PAULINE NGUYEN FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT

Today her keynotes draw on decades of running a business and on neuroscience and somatic practice. She tailors each one to the room, from CEOs to high-growth entrepreneurs.

Pauline also privately coaches top CEOs, board directors and their executive teams, as well as seasoned entrepreneurs, using her S.S.S. Method: Semantic, Somatic and Soulmatic.

GET IN TOUCH NOW

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