

How Entrepreneurs Can Build Self Confidence

It's not my imagination. And it's not just anecdotal evidence from my own coaching business. I've recently read several research articles that find women exhibit a lack of self-confidence in their own abilities as entrepreneurs compared to men; many women do not feel comfortable calling themselves entrepreneurs; and, fear of failure is higher for women compared to their male counterparts. Now the good news is that for some women in the research studies, entrepreneurial self-confidence grew over time in business.

It breaks my heart when I work with women who hold back and don't fully share their gifts with the world—even when I can see that they are shining stars. And I can relate! I've been there. I had very little self confidence in my younger days (middle age has its blessings). Here are five tips to build your entrepreneurial confidence.

1. Act now. Procrastination feeds fear. With each success you have, you lay another brick in your confidence foundation. Choose an action that you feel you can accomplish -even if it's a little scary—and get it done.

2. Keep an accomplishment log. Women often discount what they've accomplished, attributing their success to luck or other people. Keep a log of your accomplishments—read them when you start to feel self doubt. This is also a great tool to keep your resume or portfolio updated.

3. Save testimonials. I have a “testimonial” folder in my outlook email box. When someone sends me a thank you or a compliment of any kind, I save it in that folder. This serves two purposes: one, testimonials are a powerful marketing tool—people love to buy from someone who shows them testimonials that talk about specific outcomes, and two, reading them reminds me of why I get out of bed every day and do what I do.

4. Faith it till you make it. I know...you've heard “fake it till you make it”...since this is **Authentic Life Institute** ... we say “faith.” I have said “yes” to requests that are in alignment with my business and values even though, at the time, I wasn't confident I could meet the request. I knew I'd figure out the “how” if I made a commitment. An example was the first time I was asked to give a radio interview...my first internal reaction was a big gulp and a “I've never done that and don't have a clue what to expect” fear.

My external reaction was a confident “yes, thank you for the opportunity and what date are you looking at.” In this case, the interviewer was experienced and sent me questions ahead of time...yes, I was nervous and no, I don't think listeners knew it. With experience, I've learned to have a few “talking points” I want to be sure to work into the interview, regardless of what questions the interviewer asks...I didn't do this the very first time and it was just fine.

5. Don't Dwell on Mistakes. Do you ruminate over your mistakes...playing the scenario out in your mind over and over again? That's a habit to drop. Instead, learn to become a gentle, reflective, observer of yourself. For example, after I give a workshop or presentation, I reflect on the experience. I consider what I might do differently next time and then I spend more time reflecting on all the things that went well. Most of all, I congratulate myself, for “getting out of the way” and remembering that the purpose of the presentation was to inspire others. Yes, learn from your experiences, but keep the big picture perspective.

Walk tall today. Know you have unique gifts to share with the world. Confidence is attractive...let yours shine!

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Ann delivers smart, simple ways for people to acknowledge what they love to do and do more of it. Her articles, products, and books have motivated and inspired readers in numerous print and online publications. She regularly leads coaching programs, tele-seminars and live retreats, bringing the message to audiences internationally that living a passion-based life will bring prosperity and success.

She was recently selected from a nationwide search to be featured in Discover Your Inner Strength. The book features best-selling authors Stephen R. Covey (Seven Habits of Highly Effective People), Brian Tracy (Million Dollar Habits), and Ken Blanchard (One Minute Manager). <http://www.authenticlifeinstitute.com/selfemployment.htm>