

Women in Business

Many women face crippling self-confidence issues while working in management or running a business. Getting comfortable with who you are will release your potential for success.

During the many hours of networking I've participated in, being a small, home-based business operator, I've observed that many women running their own business struggle with self-confidence.

Because it feels very much like a 'man's world' out there, we wear the suits, present an almost masculine image by trying not to be giggly, talking the jargon, even using such NLP techniques as lowering our voice pitch in an attempt to earn respect when liaising with our male business counterparts.

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We sacrifice 'ourselves' in our efforts to progress our career or business. And I think this compounds our self-confidence problem. We feel we cannot be ourselves AND 'make it' in the business world. It's one or the other – never the twain shall meet – or, if they do, we fear that it's to our personal peril.

We're insecure about being who we really are.

Problem is – who we really are is usually the very thing people love about us. And when people enjoy being around us, they WANT to work with us. It's paramount to be who YOU really are, in order to generate business.

People either want to work with you or they don't. No matter how good or poor your skills are. If they like you, they'll work with you. On the other hand, they may not like you, but if your skills are highly valued in the marketplace it doesn't matter what you're like, they'll pay for your services anyway and put up with 'you'.

People work with those they like working with.

Sometimes they like you, respect and need your service, but cannot afford you. Other times, they won't like you, though they recognise the quality of your service and, though they can afford you, won't take you on. There are any number of reasons why people do or don't choose your services. Money, personality, timing, distance, convenience – the list is endless.

Since WHY people choose to work with you is subject to many variables, why hide who you are? You may as well be yourself and enjoy your life along the way!

The truth is, many of us undervalue ourselves.

We don't recognise that our skills, qualities and personality are as equally valuable as the next person's. They bring an equal amount of variety, enjoyment or effectiveness to the business world, which, let's face it, could do with a bit of pepping up at times.

We fall into the trap of thinking that 'looking professional' means never smiling, being 'stuffy' and that making mistakes is the unforgivable sin.

Many of us are subject to the historical, ingrained thinking pattern that women 'just don't meet the mark'. Women were chosen during World War II as a last resort to meet the demands of industry while the men were off fighting. It was expected that they would return to home duties once the war was over. Well, the plan backfired big style – women loved working and decided to carry on. The idea of women being second rate employees become a subtle part of our subconscious. Here we are today, still fighting it off.

Then of course we all have our Black Box of life experiences. In many of our treasure troves, there is at least one person who impacted our life for the negative. 'You can't do that! What makes you think you could do that?!' An inner voice that discourages us, laughs at us or hinders us in some other way in our thinking and personal development. We contend with these people and their opinions, these voices from the past, instead of leaving them where they are ... in the past.

You can overcome your confidence issues with a little effort and determination to be the woman you really are on the outside as well as on the inside.

**You can overcome the
hindering voices from
the past.**

Sure, some of that comes with age - the older you become the less you give a damn about what people think. In the meantime, you can retrain your inner thought life - see some special messages below. Next, practice taking chances 'being yourself' in your business dealings and watch the results.

Renew Your Inner Voice

Pick your favourite statement from below or create your own. Write it out and pin it up in your office, your car, your makeup bag! (Yes, carrying a make-up bag is an acceptable thing to do as a business person.)

'I bring as much value and skill to the business world as my male counterparts.'

'My personality and skills are an important contribution to my business.'

'Other businesses need the variety and enjoyment that my personality and skills provide.'

Now practice saying it every day until it replaces your negative, subconscious messages that are picking away at your confidence.