

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 79: DEFEAT SELF DOUBT

Today we are going to talk about HOW to get over self-doubt and take the actions you know you need to take in your business.

“Every time I go to do something, I am stopped by self-doubt.”

“I’m not sure I’m good enough.”

“I’m not big enough for that yet.”

“Oh, they probably won’t accept me, or buy from me, or want my thing.”

I hear this all the time from the makers I work with. This is self-doubt.

This not, as you might tell yourself, the desire to get better or be better, because we want to be the best we can be. This is the belief that we aren't good enough - and the fear that we might never be.

And this is a HUGE problem for your business.

It’s keeping you from doing what you need to do to grow.

It’s holding you back from applying to shows, approaching shops, or charging a profitable price.

The worst thing is that we don’t always know that it’s self-doubt. It often presents as the voice of reason. “Oh, you’re not ready for that yet, wait a little bit.” “Oh, you shouldn’t try that yet, you don’t want to fail.”

But businesses are only built on trying. They are ONLY built on failing and trying again.

You can not do anything interesting in your life if your doubt and fear hold you back.

But you're not alone in feeling this doubt. One of the insidious ways it works is to tell you that the doubt is a sign that you're really not ready. That if you were ready, or good enough, you'd have no problem at all. But that's just not true. Thanks to nature AND nurture, some of us always feel at least a low level of self-doubt, no matter what. In fact, the book *The Confidence Code* dives in to a lot of the reasons that women seem to have less confidence to speak up or try something risky than men do. They examine the science and discover that it has to do with genetics, brain biology, the way our body processes hormones like cortisol or serotonin, and environmental factors, like how much we were challenged and encouraged to fail as kids. But the most important discovery, backed by the science of neuroplasticity, is that we can change. We can rewire our brains, not so that we never lack confidence, but so that we can take action ANYHOW. So that self-doubt doesn't stop us.

So, it's totally ok that you feel self-doubt, and yes, you may feel it a bit more than others, but that has NOTHING to do with your skill or ability, and you can - in fact, you NEED TO - take action anyhow.

How?

There's a few sentences in the *Confidence Code* that perfectly sum it up:

"Confidence, at least the part that's not in our genes, requires hard work, substantial risk, determined persistence, and sometimes bitter failure. Building it demands regular exposure to all of these things. You don't get to experience how far you can go in life - at work and everywhere else - without pushing yourself, and, equally important, without being pushed along by others. Gaining confidence means getting outside your comfort zone, experiencing setbacks, and, with determination, picking yourself up again." (page 123)

Let's boil this down into some changes you can make, right now, to defeat the self-doubt that's holding you back.

1. **Do things!**

That's right, you can't build confidence without actually trying things, especially things that seem a little out of your reach.

2. **Acknowledge what you're afraid of.**

It's that simple: just recognize what you're really afraid of and spell it out. Often, the fears are FAR beyond what is reasonably likely to happen, and just noticing that can help tame the self-doubt demons.

3. **Take your self-worth into your own hands.**

Studies show that, "Confidence that is built on other people's praise is a lot more vulnerable than confidence built from our own achievement."

In other words, don't wait for someone else to approve of you. Don't wait for someone else to give you permission to take the next step.

1. *If you do, that outside approval might never come.*
2. *If your confidence is built on other people's approval, you're always at risk of losing it.*

4. **Learn the right lessons right from failure (I suck vs I survive)**

Sometimes you'll fail. That's part of doing stuff and trying stuff and stepping outside your comfort zone. But what I have seen so many times in makers is that they take that failure to BUILD their self-doubt, instead of their confidence. They walk away and say, "see, I knew I sucked, now I have proof." Instead, the lesson to take from any failure, is "oh, I survived that, I can survive anything!"

5. **List three things you're proud of**

Every Friday on Periscope, I ask viewers to join me in celebrating their week, by listing at least three things that they accomplished that week that they're proud of. This "acknowledging success" is part of my online programs, as well. Why? Because you build confidence by doing things and surviving them. But often we gloss over what we've already accomplished and only see the gaping void between where we are and where we want to be. By acknowledging your success, you remind yourself of how far you've come. This feeds the Competence -> Confidence Loop, which is the process by which you feel confident, because you know you are competent, and so you take bigger, scarier actions. When you survive them, you increase your competence, which increases your confidence, which gives you the push to take the next step which will increase your competence. You see, neither confidence NOR competence is built without DOING stuff!

6. **Reframe failure.**

Often, when we fail, we take it as a sign of our own self worth, instead of looking at all the possible reasons the situation might have turned out the way it did. In fact, women are more likely to look at internal reasons (I wasn't good enough), while men are likely to look at external reasons (the economy is bad). So when you do fail, after you've taken the lesson "Hey, I can survive anything!", look at how you're framing that failure and look for a few other frames. What if it wasn't you? What if it was...?

How are you feeling now? Have you recognized yourself in this?

If so, that's ok! You are certainly not alone in this, and as I've said, it's totally normal. But now it's up to you: What are you going to do about it? Are you going to let self-doubt sideline you? Or are you going to take action?

Please tell me what action you're going to do - even though you're scared - on Instagram, with the hashtag #exploreyoureenthusiasm.

Thanks for listening and have a brave day!