

Mastering the Lion's Den Your Inner Rockstar

by Amy Carroll

Boosting your business presence will pay off. With women climbing the ranks globally and, in some cases, getting better results in business than men, many may think we have arrived!

"Women are now seen as equally or more competent than men", finds a 2020 meta-analysis led by Eagly (American Psychological Association. By Amy Novotney. Date created: March 23, 2023).

Yet, we still have barriers to break through, some of which can be eliminated with specific, behavioural tweaks.

As we know, maintaining resilience, showing creativity and being a determined female entrepreneur or businesswoman are all necessary traits for success.

Let's examine the more subtle behaviours that could be sabotaging your 'savvy':

- **Head tilting** – your intention may be to demonstrate listening and empathy but when done frequently, it weakens your presence.
- **Fidgeting** – also known as 'adrenaline leakage points' will communicate stress/lack of confidence/nervousness/lack of knowledge.
- **Resting poker-face** – appearing uninterested or too serious will get you into trouble (watch out for raised eyebrows too!).
- **Upward inflection** – ending your sentences that sound like a question will diminish the power of your message.
- **Overexplaining** - Giving too much detail or repeating yourself can make people stop listening or become impatient.

POWERFUL WOMEN, LISTEN UP! A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSWOMEN TO FULLY STEP INTO THEIR POWER.

Let's now examine what you CAN do to channel your inner Tina Turner and get more buy-in (from counterparts of all genders!)

1 / Reduce conflict in your life by eliminating the word 'but'.

Using the word 'but' will frequently increase defensiveness in others even when you're delivering good news. If you want to be able to say what you need to say (especially bad news), without the other person becoming argumentative or resisting, replace 'but' with one of the alternatives below:

- And
- Yet
- On the other hand
- At the same time
- Unfortunately (especially useful if you're preparing them for bad news)
- OR simply start a new sentence

For this to become automatic, remove BUT from your speech, emails and texts.



"WHEN MORE WOMEN ARE EMPOWERED TO LEAD, EVERYONE BENEFITS."

2 / Use the 'mountain' standing pose to neutralise aggressive behaviour.

For those yogis out there, think 'mountain pose.' Feet planted on the ground, hip-width apart, head straight and hands relaxed by your sides (this last part is surprisingly difficult for many of us). This stance is powerful because it communicates confidence, competence and openness, without you appearing defensive or aggressive.

Watch this video and see the incredible effects: <https://bit.ly/neutralstance>

Practise this at the bus-stop, in a lift or in a queue; make sure your hands are empty.

3 / Discover why a simple smile will transform any exchange.

For many women, we've had the shared experience of strangers commanding us to smile! This used to make me crazy. What I've discovered is that when we smile, the other person receives a message, "today you're safe" and, as a result, the exchange will more likely be positive. So be generous with your smiles and witness the magic.

4 / Master the downward voice technique to command greater gravitas.

The technique of downward inflection simply means lowering the pitch of your voice at every pause, even if it's in the middle of your sentence.

Think BBC reporter-style! The opposite is the upward-inflection or 'valley girl' tone where everything sounds like a question.

A lot of nice people, particularly women, are unconsciously socialised to use this to sound approachable and non-threatening. "My name's Amy? I'm a coach?"

On the contrary, it instantly sabotages our credibility. It's important to combine this with tip number 3 - add that warm smile and conquer those cantankerous colleagues!



5 / Deliver difficult and delicate messages successfully.

- Apply the above skills
- Prepare in advance what you want to say and practise it with a close colleague who can give you objective feedback. Be clear and kind.
- Give them a heads-up, and ask if they're willing to discuss the matter
- Talk about the observed behaviours, your feelings and needs. Make requests and ask if they have requests too.
- Let yourself be interrupted, repeat what you heard them say - this will help slow things down
- Organise a follow-up meeting to check in with them

Bonus tip: Make sure you are both fed and watered before the meeting and choose a quiet, private space or go for a walk, and move slowly.

Practise each of these five skills for between three and five minutes per day in low-stress situations for a minimum of eight weeks. You may choose to practise one skill at a time. You'll eventually feel empowered even when entering those challenging corporate arenas.

Having an all-female team for my own business, I know that when women come together, amazing things happen, so be sure to share these techniques with your friends.

My hope is that these tips will allow you to step into your professional powerhouse and get the results you desire.

"When more women are empowered to lead, everyone benefits. Decades of studies show women leaders help increase productivity, enhance collaboration, inspire organisational dedication and improve fairness" (American Psychological Association By Amy Novotney Date created: March 23, 2023). •