



Roundtable Mentor,
Heather Lastiwka, Head
of Talent, Leadership
& Performance, ATB
Financial shared her tips
for overcoming feelings of
self-doubt as a leader.

Mentoring **MATTERS**

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I am constantly finding myself doubting that I measure up to other leaders. I've noticed my doubt is affecting my confidence and in turn changing the energy I am leading with. How do I move past comparing myself to others?

Who do you think you are?!

How many nights have you awoken to a list of things you almost forgot, or worse, failed to do? How many mornings have you looked in the mirror with the nagging thought, 'I have no idea how I got to this place in my life' or 'how will I solve a problem that's nagging me?' How often are you battling self-doubts that you aren't good enough, someone is better than you, you're not where you intended to be in your career? How many times do you question your ability to deliver on responsibilities and over-promises?

Here is what I've learned about self-doubt along the way.

Self-doubt exists both when we're succeeding and when we're struggling. It's pervasive and dominates the brain's capacity for creativity, problem-solving and skills like empathy, ethics, learning and system thinking. Self-doubt doesn't stop on its own, and the more senior you are in your career and position, the more often you will ask yourself doubt-inducing questions.

The good news is, no matter how many times these nagging thoughts occur, you're not alone. Every single person wakes up waging the war with inner critics. What you need to remember is, these self-doubts aren't truths. It's your brain on a loop and this loop is fed by questions and thoughts from life moments, such as past relationships, perceptions of what people think of us and what we think of others, and our fear of the unexpected.

Take comfort in knowing it's possible to channel the energy you consume through self-doubt into achieving your goals and aspirations, rather than detracting from them. How? By flipping your vicious cycle of self-doubt and defeat into a virtuous cycle of rinse-and-repeat learning that includes four steps: identify, derail, replace and practice.

IDENTIFY

First, it takes noticing and being self-aware. When am I doubting myself? What's happening that triggered doubt? What do you notice about others around you during this moment or upon reflection? When you're noticing, don't judge yourself, justify it or action it. Simply notice the feeling. Jot it down in your notebook, phone or journal either during the moment, or at the end of the day. Use these notes to start noticing patterns you can later address to turn your self-doubt cycle into valuable learnings.

DERAIL

Once you identify patterns, observe how you typically react. Are you short of breath? Tense jaw? Clasped hands? Still engaging, over-engaging or withdrawing from the conversation? Listening more or less to others? There are ways to derail spiral reactions to allow you to learn from these moments. Try taking three deep breaths; excusing yourself for a quick break; standing for a few moments rather than sitting; jotting down notes to clear your head; or shifting your focus to those around you. These simple actions can re-direct your attention from moments of self doubt and refocus your mindset to a more positive place.

REPLACE

Start to craft new messages to play over the old ones. Perhaps it's a sentence you received from a peer that was a reflection you are proud of, a list of the strengths and value you bring to work or personal situations, or a list of the people who you trust and love and respect you. Memorize three "go to" repeatable sentences to replace old, negative thoughts when they pop into your head. Soon, the cues from "notice" will lead directly to "replace."

PRACTICE

Ask for feedback. The more vulnerable we are with those who respectively challenge us and who we trust, the more we practice factual reality. Slaying invisible dragons is much harder than those right in front of us. Our desire to grow with vulnerability leads others to do the same. Not only will you be developing your own capacity for a growth mindset, you will be helping others do the same. This enables us to crave and seek out listening, learning and practicing, rather than defaulting to doubt and despair. Just as self-doubt crowds out creativity and problem solving, a growth mindset crowds out doubt and denial.

Who do you think you are? You are doing your best in this life, and that's all anyone can expect. Forward momentum is exactly what you need in this moment, so embrace it and be courageous to unlock your virtuous cycle of identify, derail, replace and practice. After all, you deserve to know who you really are and take charge of who you are becoming with confidence.



Community. Corporate. Vulnerable. Strategic. Persistent. Adventurous. A walking oxymoron of beliefs and passions. Yes, all these things can be present at the same time. **Heather Lastiwka** has been part of the ATB Financial family since 2015, guiding the full suite of Talent Management. She has lived the full spectrum of global executive leadership to entrepreneur while being mom, friend, volunteer and partner. She guides leaders to solutions that unleash business capability through people practice. Her career spotlights the revolution of the expected HR partnership and the criticality of strategically aligned culture.

Heather specializes in org effectiveness, strategic planning, leadership, succession, as well as talent consulting within the context of the 'future of work'. She is the recipient of 2 awards of excellence in leadership development; a black belt in lean process improvement; Strategic HR, Organizational Development and Adult Learning Diplomas - and some 'emerging' skills on the dance floor to boot. Above all, getting to unique value in the face of a complex, ambiguous, volatile future (whether organizational or personal) gets her the most energized. (Along with the challenge of interior design, fostering connected neighbourhoods and most of what her kids are passionate about!)



Glain Roberts-McCabe is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.