



Roundtable Mentor,
Krista Mclay, Senior Brand
Manager at Nando's
Canada, shared her tips
for overcoming feelings of
self-doubt as a leader.

Mentoring **MATTERS**

Q

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?

Impostor syndrome

or im·post·er syn·drome

[im-pos-ter sin-droh-m]

noun

anxiety or self-doubt that results from persistently undervaluing one's competence and active role in achieving success, while falsely attributing one's accomplishments to luck or other external forces. A persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud".

How many of you read that and thought... yup, that's me? And for those of you who don't relate at this moment, I hate to tell you, but your time is yet to come.

As we advance in our lives and we experience success and growth, we often can't help the feeling of "I don't know what I am doing" or "I don't think I am ready for this." If you think you somehow landed the new role or project by fluke, I am here to tell you, you didn't.

Someone (most likely more senior than you) saw something in you that made them believe you are capable of what was given to you. It is so important for you to dig deep and understand where you are losing your confidence. Is it a skill that you need to master? Is it a new title that you don't feel worthy of? Take the time needed to understand what it is so you can put a plan in place.

Step 1

Talk to someone you work with and trust. Opening up to someone about your deepest, darkest fear of being an impostor is not easy. Tell them why you are feeling this way and they should be able to validate if this is a rational fear.

Step 2

Irrational Fear: If you have confirmed that your fear is just living inside your head, it is time to do some self-love talk. Remind yourself of that awesome thing you accomplished, reflect on your last reviews and the feedback. Make a list of your accomplishments and take a moment to let that all sink in.

Another great exercise is to pretend you were doing the hiring for your job/project. Write down all of the attributes which that person would have to be a great candidate. Once that is complete reflect on what attributes you have to offer. You may be surprised about how great of a fit you are for the role.

Rational Fear: Ok, so after talking to your trusted colleague you both have come to the conclusion that you have a rational reason to feel unprepared for the job ahead. This is great, because now you know what you need to work on, so get upskilling. Take a course, reach out to a mentor, do some reading. Whatever it is that you need to do to fill that gap, you are capable of making it happen.

Now what if we were to take all of that ugly self-talk, doubt, fear, and vulnerability and spin them into something incredible? What if you realize that all these things are actually your leadership super power? If you think I have lost my mind, just stick with me on this.

Think of some of the greatest leaders you have had the pleasure of interacting with during your career. Ask yourself what made them so incredible? Were they assertive, compassionate, focused, humble, or positive?

If we look at those qualities that made them great, they most likely all had one thing in common: Self-awareness.

Self-awareness is a beautiful thing. It allows us to be better leaders, show off our strengths but it also comes with great awareness of our gaps. A self-aware leader is able to find support to fill those gaps. It could be hiring a team of experts in their area of little knowledge, it could be upskilling and educating of an area unknown. Whatever it is, you need to identify the opportunity before having a solution.

Allowing others to know that you are aware of your areas of opportunity shows vulnerability which will help to build trust and transparency. This will allow for a more productive work environment for you and others you work with. All of the incredible attributes that your favourite boss possesses most likely came from a place of self-awareness and internal work.

Try to change the connotation to those words in your head.

Think of a world where:

fear = opportunity

vulnerability = authenticity

doubt = humility

If a great leader had all these qualities: humility, authenticity and the ability to see opportunity - so can you.

Remember, how you 'show up' teaches others how to interact with you. If you are constantly self-deprecating, lacking confidence and wavering, others will notice and start seeing you this way. We all have areas we need to improve on, but it is essential that you don't spend your energy convincing your colleagues of your downfalls. Focus on your capability, but if you come to an area where you need some support, say it. Showing vulnerability and being able to identify that something is not your strength and putting a plan together to fill that gap is one of the best leadership skills you can have.

Keep in mind that everyone has had a first day. A first day at a new job, promotion or opportunity. Even your CEO had their first day of being a CEO.

It is ok to acknowledge that we don't know everything on day one. But ask yourself, what if you were as good as they thought you were? What would you do if you were not afraid? Take those answers and do it!

Always remember, you are exactly where you are supposed to be.



Krista Mclay is the Senior Brand Manager at Nando's Canada for the past 5 years. Krista believes there is a world of opportunities to get people engaged with brands and truly make an impact. A small idea with a little effort and clever execution will reach the right audience and can create a meaningful relationship- if executed with the right philosophy. During her Marketing career she has worked on innovative brands in varying stages of development and evolution. Her experience ranges from working with global brands, building communication strategies, rebranding, project management from ideation to concept as well as tactical execution.

Specialties: Brand strategy, internal and external communications, team building and collaboration, local store marketing, innovation, relationship management and brand campaigns.

Interests: Horseback Riding, Yoga, Travel, Scuba diving, documentaries and live music.



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.