



Roundtable Mentor,
**Nancy Tavares, CHRL,
CTDP**, Senior Leader,
Learning & Talent
Development, 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?

We all may find ourselves feeling this way at some point in our careers, particularly during periods of change. I know I sure have! Self-doubt is challenging but something that we can control by channelling our thoughts and adjusting our actions. It sounds like there are a few key areas of opportunity in this situation that can be addressed.

DOUBT AS A LEADER

Remember that you've been brought into a leadership role for a reason. You may be a subject matter expert, or an awesome people leader, for whatever reason, you have been put into a leadership role. Take a moment and write down at least five things that make you the leader you are. This could be anything from your progression as a professional, developing others in the workplace, or exceptional influencing abilities. Having trouble? That's okay. Ask a friend or colleague, past or present, to help you with this question, you may be surprised. Once you've got it, allow yourself to process your list of leadership strengths. Now that they have sunk in, acknowledge these abilities and encourage yourself to do more of the same in your current interactions. Now that you have adjusted your thoughts, you can use this to address your confidence.

CONFIDENCE

Often in human resources, we talk about how important it is to understand the business and company that we work for. I feel this is true for every position within an organization. Become a student of the business. Honestly take some time to objectively assess any current gaps you may have related to your work and role. Is there anything more that you can learn to fill those gaps? Start to build a plan to tackle these.

Your plan may include things like scheduling a coffee or lunch with other leaders to learn more about their department and goals. This can also help to break down silos and build relationships with other leaders. Who knows? Maybe you will find a mentor that you can connect with going forward to share ideas and insights. This way you will feel that you have someone on your side to champion you during important work meetings.

Perhaps your plan includes some more formal learning to fill gaps you identified. Have you found yourself in a role that requires a lot more project or people management (soft skills) than you have had in the past? Or, are you a subject matter expert and a refresher course would really solidify and affirm things for you? A college, university or professional program just may be the thing that you need to increase your knowledge and confidence. Learning today is more accessible than ever before. There are plenty of classroom,

online and flexible learning options out there. Anyone can become a lifelong learner, you just need to create your plan and do it. No one can do this for you, you need to take charge of both your informal and formal professional career development.

COMPARISON TO OTHERS

What can you learn from other leaders you work with? What leadership styles and behaviours do you want to emulate? Empathy, compassion, assertiveness, expertise or great verbal communication? What behaviours can you observe that you do not want to duplicate? Bullying, manipulation, dishonesty, malice or actions taken in bad faith? Observations and thinking about this can help us to shape our own leadership identity, but it shouldn't be the only thing.

We are all unique and no one is perfect. Realize that others may feel the same way you do at times and strive to bring your best self to work every day. Remember those strengths you bring to the team and push forward.

LEADING WITH THE RIGHT ENERGY

Develop strategies that will help enable you to bring the energy you would like to every situation. This can vary from person to person. Does being prepared help you to deliver the impact you would like? Perhaps time blocking 30 minutes prior to important meetings will allow you to go into situations feeling fully knowledgeable and prepared. This can also help you to get into the right mindset and find the right energy that you need. The same can be said with allowing yourself some time after sessions where you may want to document your takeaways and action plans so that they are not forgotten. Having the right energy requires a balance between work, exercise, home life and sleep.

To the best of your ability plan ahead to accomplish the things that are most crucial. I like to think of this as triaging the "to do" list. This list will never be complete, so prioritization is key. Time to move forward from feeling you don't measure up.

You got this.



Nancy Tavares is an approachable, energetic, and analytical senior human resources leader who has over 10 years of experience working in the learning and talent development field. Currently, she is a director of Learning & Development. Her speaking engagements have included appearances at the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) and the Canadian Society of Training and Development (now Institute of Performance & Learning) Annual Conferences. She is committed to employee learning and career advancement that drives a work environment centered in creativity and accountability.

Nancy has a varied educational background that includes a psychology degree, diploma in human resources management and graduating from Toronto dance theatres post-secondary professional training program. Currently, she is working towards her Masters in Human Resources Management at York University.



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.