

Women in Leadership

Own Your Power!



Tammy Alvarez, CEO of Coral Consulting Group takes a compelling look at how to empower women within our business communities. This whitepaper discusses what's happening in today's business climate and provides insights and actions for women at all stages of their career.

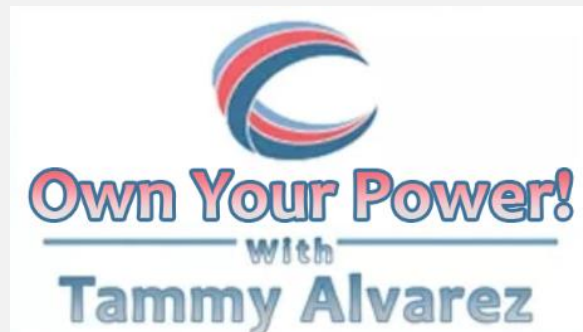
"I've seen too many talented women fail to meet their fullest potential and become increasingly disenfranchised. It doesn't have to be that way. When more women are at the leadership table, companies are more successful and everyone wins. I founded this company to help more women accelerate their careers on their own terms."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ **Greater authenticity translates into more success**
- ✓ **Monetizing your value is essential**
- ✓ **Asking for help is not a sign of weakness**
- ✓ **Get comfortable with being uncomfortable**
- ✓ **Imposter Syndrome feelings are a good thing**

We will guide you through

- The five things women must do to accelerate their career
- Identify common derailing behaviors that should be corrected
- Discover techniques that can help you **Own Your Power!**



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WHEN YOU SEE THESE



Ideas for
you to try



Common
behaviors
to avoid

OWN YOUR POWER!



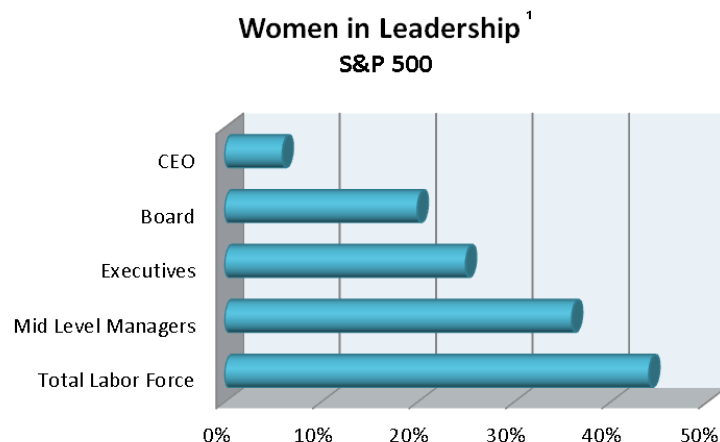
Are You Ready to Own Your Power and Lead Authentically? 5 Power Moves Every Woman Needs to Accelerate Her Career

Press coverage on gender inequality in the workplace continues to be headline news. Eventually, the hype will settle down and the press will move on to the next news cycle. How will you make sure you carry your personal momentum forward and advance your career?

This is a great time for women to close the gap and lead. Public awareness and intolerance of the gender gap is at an all-time high. It seems like people are finally starting to 'get it'. Unfortunately this won't get fixed overnight and the statistics remain absolutely shocking in terms of the drop-off of women in leadership

roles as you move up the corporate ladder. What starts as a healthy representation of nearly 50% in entry level management tails of to less than 8% when you get to the top spot.

Despite the desire to close the gender gap, we have decades of inertia and bias to unwind. We need more women who are prepared and willing to lead. It's up to each one of us to be personally accountable for making sure we are ready and well positioned to take that next opportunity.



¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employed persons by detailed occupation, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity," available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

In terms of leadership preparedness, there is never a one-size-fits-all solution and we need to find a unique balance between leading effectively and authentically. It's time to break away from the status quo and chart a new path forward to be the impactful leaders we know we can be. When we lead on our own terms we begin to own our power. Here are five things every female leader should be thinking about.

Strengthen your voice as a leader. People are watching our every move. Everything we do and say sets the tone for those around us. If we're uncertain, unclear, or inconsistent it's no surprise that our teams will respond accordingly. We need to find a way to adapt our natural style with our leadership values to set the right tone.

"True leadership stems from individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed... Leaders should strive for authenticity over perfection."

~ Sheryl Sandberg

Monetize your value. Move beyond the personal brand conversation and dig much deeper into our commercial value to the company and the broader marketplace. We should be able to answer the value question quantitatively at a moment's notice.

Prioritize growing your professional community. Building a community and developing strong relationships comes naturally to many of us and we all know your vibe attracts your tribe. It's time to put a plan together to build a lasting network that will support you throughout your career.

Reset your risk tolerance levels to match your career aspirations. You can learn how to take the right risks at the right time. Countless women struggle when asked the question "What do you want next?" That answer should come immediately and with resolve. If only it were that easy. Having a career and moving up the corporate ladder involves risk and tradeoffs. The hesitancy doesn't come from not knowing where you want to go, it comes from the uncertainty of the tradeoffs that come along with it.

Lead with courage. We all define personal courage differently and our perception of courage is often what defines us as a leader. Building the skills to lead with courage and conviction takes time and practice. We need to start getting comfortable with being uncomfortable. It is absolutely worth the effort.

Let's take a deeper look at how to **Own Your Power** and advance your career as far as your experience and aspirations will take you. We hope you'll discover something amazing about yourself along the way.

Strengthen Your Voice



Is Anybody Out There?

By now, we've been told countless times to stop apologizing every ten minutes. We also know that we lose our effectiveness and credibility every time we pre-qualify a statement with things like "maybe this is a dumb question" or "I'm sure I must be missing something here". Yet many of us continue with this behavior and too often we don't pay enough attention to messages we're sending out.



We go about our daily routines, attending meetings, discussing business challenges and opportunities, setting strategy, fixing a problem or two and call it a day. It's in these everyday moments our voice and leadership tone is being established. When we focus on strengthening our voice, it should go well beyond the basics. And when done properly it can be highly effective in defining who we are as a leader.

Having a strong voice provides much needed clarity for your team and business partners. The lack of it is very often the thing standing in the way of your next promotion. If you find yourself doing a great job and feeling good about getting things done, but then attending a Happy Hour celebrating someone else's promotion instead of your own, maybe you should take a look at the leadership tone you've established.

There are five key areas you should focus on to make sure you're putting your best voice forward.

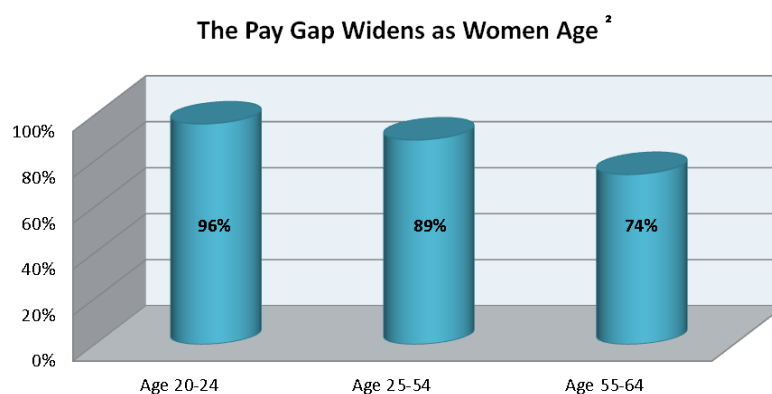
Establish a tone that aligns with your core values. When we look at our unique set of core values as a leader, there are often a few non-negotiables that we have.



Whether it's honesty, integrity, transparency or continuous improvement, we should all have values we anchor to. Some women set a leadership tone that is inconsistent with their core values and it holds them back from reaching their full potential. As an example, if you place a strong emphasis on transparency yet continually spring big news on your team at the last minute, there's a misalignment between what you say and what you do. It should come as no surprise that the teams and stakeholders become confused, uncertain and may even begin to mistrust you. There are three simple rules here: Know who you are; Say what you do; Do what you say.

Are you the carrot or the stick? While every situation calls for a specific response, we all have our natural preferences in how we communicate, motivate and deal with difficult situations. If you are a peace maker, you may focus on the positive with reaffirming communication techniques. If you are hard-driving and no-nonsense, then you probably skew to having more direct conversations. What's the right tone? The one that feels most authentic to you. What's important is that you use your natural style to your advantage and adjust for each situation to get the best out of people.

Set clear strategies and goals. Establishing an inspiring vision and strategy and aligning attainable goals are critical elements when setting the tone for your organization. As you set the tone for your teams, you need to emphasize the purpose



and the “what’s in it for me” into your messaging. It’s an element many leaders overlook. If your strategy doesn’t resonate, you can’t inspire followership. If the goals don’t align with the strategy or are perceived as too

lofty, your team will give up before you even get started. It’s important for you to own your messaging, inspire passion around the vision and make the necessary connections for all levels within your team.

² The American Association of University Women (AAUW) <https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>

Don't be afraid to have high expectations. In order to get the most out of high performing teams you need to have high expectations. Many women fall into the trap of working their tails off to be successful yet they make allowances and excuses for their teammates who fail to deliver to the same standards. Leading by example is a great way to set the tone but it's not enough. You need to communicate performance expectations and clearly define what success looks like. If each member of your team cannot clearly and simply define success, you have more work to do. The best leaders continuously reach for more and help their teams do the same. Don't be afraid of setting the bar high and falling a little short. With the right support and a little room for error, the business results will be far better than if you had set the bar lower and succeeded.

Demonstrate Consistency. Inconsistency is a silent killer for women in leadership. Unfair though it is, the rules are different for women and we need to be constantly aware of what we're putting out there. We're not suggesting that you always have to be happy or intense or the perpetual motivator, but you do need to have situational awareness and respond as consistently as possible. Be sure to celebrate the wins, correct the mistakes, have the difficult conversations, and lay down the hammer when the team needs a swift course correction – but do these things consistently and authentically. Inconsistency often stems from taking the situation too personally, when your objectivity gets a bit murky and your responses lack the pragmatism your team needs from you. The important thing is stay objective and do what feels natural. Hone your skills so they are effective for your teams and stay the course.

When you establish a tone that is authentic and consistent, actively listen, and focus on transparency, you can be a leader with a strong voice. Your teams will appreciate you as someone they can rely on which will result in fewer missteps and better business outcomes for everyone involved.

Building Your Value



What Are You Worth?

Our on-demand culture is not limited to Netflix and Grub Hub. It is pervasive throughout all facets of our lives including the expectations of today's leaders and the value they bring to their organizations. Long gone are the days of deep and meaningful relationships built over time with your boss and colleagues. With countless reorgs, musical chairs at the top of the house, high turnover within the ranks, and frequent acquisitions and divestitures, it's important to be crystal clear on your value and to make sure it remains relevant as business conditions shift.

We should constantly be asking ourselves what value we bring to our teams and businesses. If you can't answer that question quickly and quantifiably or if your answers skew to the intangibles, the ideas below will help you get back on track.



Start with your personal branding. As the saying goes, perception is 90% of reality and it's important that your personal brand is in high demand. Come up with the first three words you want people to associate with you, and then build your brand based on that. In today's on-demand business environment it's important to take things a step further. Your personal brand isn't only about what you want; your brand should complement the organizational priorities and fill a leadership gap when possible.

You need a good mix of leadership and tangible value. Leading a high performing team is all about getting the intangibles right. Fostering a good culture, creating productive tension, and making room for innovation are all extremely

important but we cannot rely on the intangibles alone. It doesn't matter which part of the organization you lead, you need to be able to monetize your value using metrics and measurements your company recognizes as legitimate ways of measuring performance.

Be the “go-to” person for something important. There's often a particular person who is actively sought after by colleagues when things become difficult or uncertain. We need to become the advisor that people turn to not because they have to but because they want to.

Flex and adapt to the conditions around you. Just when you have your personal brand solidified, have found a way to monetize your value and are finally the leader people turn to – bam! Your boss gets promoted or your company acquires a competitor or there's a massive reorganization and the entire corporate value chain gets disrupted. The good news is you are still in a great place because you've focused on building your brand and demonstrating your value. You may need to work on re-aligning yourself with

changed priorities, but you don't need to start from scratch.

"If you are committed to creating value and if you aren't afraid of hard times, obstacles become utterly unimportant. A nuisance perhaps, but with no real power. The world respects creation; people will get out of your way."

~Candice Carpenter Olson

Getting good at quantifying your value is easier when you have a successful track record to start from. What if you have had a few missteps along the way or find yourself out of alignment with what the organization views as important? Don't panic! Recovering from failure is what separates the men from the boys (so-to-speak). Businesses don't expect perfection but they do expect correction. If

you're unsure how to course-correct on your own, work with a strong leader who will give you direct feedback on the collateral damage, provide insightful perspectives on the organization's strongest priorities, and help you to realign your standing within the leadership community.

The combination of strengthening your personal brand, demonstrating you are focused on results and becoming a highly sought-after thought leader will dramatically improve your ability to lead. People gravitate to those who are successful and who inspire others around them to share in the success. Building your value will not only position you for the next opportunity, it can inspire your teams to hold themselves to the same standard and raise the bar for everyone.

Build Your Professional Community



Who's In Your Tribe?

Many of us have a natural tendency to focus on relationships and build a strong community in our personal lives. This untapped talent should put us in the driver's seat when it comes to building and maintaining a strong professional network.



Why do women find it so hard to transfer these skills to a work context? Why don't more women prioritize building a professional network that will set them up for years to come? Many start to focus on it at the worst possible time... about ten minutes before they need it. Building and maintaining professional relationships should be an ongoing process that we don't put on the backburner. You want to create a strong and diverse network long before you actually need to rely on it.

Whether you're an expert networker or don't even know where to begin, here are four best practices we should all be mindful of and include in our weekly work routines to create and sustain a healthy and vibrant professional network.

Leverage social media but don't use it as a crutch. Like it or not, technology and all things social media-related are here to stay and will continue to evolve. You should make sure that your work-related social media sites are updated and provide an accurate reflection of you. It's always a good idea to go back every six months to give it a little refresher. That being said, nothing replaces actual human interaction. At a minimum, you need to connect with people verbally and in person whenever possible. It's where all the action happens and deeper connections are made. Remember, it's not about who you know. It's about who knows you.



Expand beyond your current power base. It's very easy to stay within the same comfy circle of friends and colleagues at work. You all know each other, maybe you go to lunch or an occasional happy hour, share the same experiences and life is easy. A stagnant power base though, will result in a stagnant career. If you never branch out, how are you ever going to learn something new or gain a different perspective?

Building broad and deep relationships can be very rewarding but where do you start? The best relationships begin when you share an experience that has purpose and meaning. Attempting to establish a relationship for the sole purpose of adding to your network lacks depth and is nearly impossible to sustain. Remember how awkward those "Will you be my friend?" moments were on the playground? No one wants to do that. Find ways to collaborate with each other on a specific work or philanthropic activity and the relationship will begin to solidify and deepen.

"The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first."

~Iyanla Vanzant

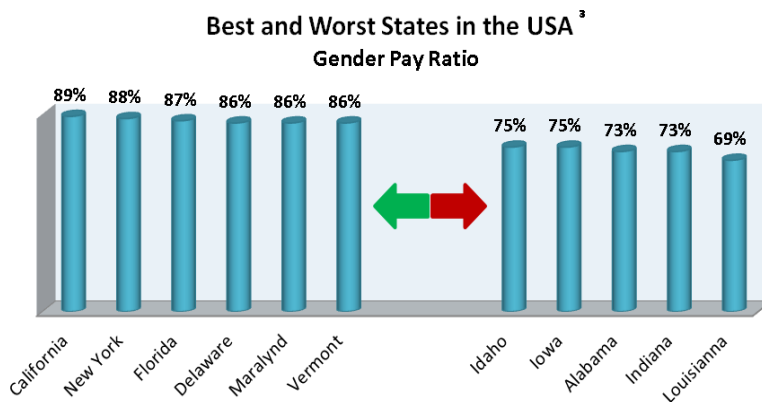
Here's an exercise you can use to strengthen your network. Ask 10 people in your inner circle to each introduce you to one person you don't know very well but who are still within your work structure (it

could be a technology partner, sales person, legal department – someone connected to your day to day work). Make time to meet these 10 new people and find ways to engage on a work related activity. Six months later, do the same thing with your new network and so on. In 18 months you'll have 30 new colleagues in your professional community with meaningful relationships.

Trust but verify. We need to get real about women supporting other women in the workplace. While there is so much good that is going on out there, Sheryl Sandberg's book "Lean In" should have been named "Lean In Without Getting Punched in the Face". So many women have been on the receiving end of a surprise attack – from another woman!

Business is competitive but we have got to stop cutting each other down. Alternatively, it shouldn't be every successful woman's responsibility to care for and nurture all those around her. Finding a balance is crucial because there is so much more to gain by supporting each other. Women tend to support other women when they don't have anything to loose and we need to get beyond that. Don't assume every smile implies a good intention and every frown a bad one. Actions speak louder than words. Pay attention to body language, your gut instincts and what *isn't* being said, before aligning your inner circle.

It's a small world after all. People change jobs often, but less typical is to change industries. As your network shifts outside your company, be sure to maintain the relationship and look for opportunities to build your network with people at other firms. If you don't have colleagues playing musical chairs, look for people who have similar jobs at other companies. A simple networking lunch to discuss a common challenge facing your industry would be enough to start broadening more meaningful relationships outside your current company.



Want to diversify from all work and no play? We all love our special causes. Tune up your philanthropic spirit, do something good and build your network at the same time with like-minded people.

With a million competing priorities at work and home, there never seems to be enough time or energy to really focus on building a strong community. To succeed in business, having a strong, diverse and meaningful network isn't a nice to have; it's imperative. Building your network is a lot like exercise even if you don't have a solid hour every day to work out, finding 15 minutes several times a day can make a big difference in your long term results.

³ The American Association of University Women (AAUW) <https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>

Define Your Risk Tolerance Levels



Is Risk Avoidance Holding You Back?

Conventional wisdom would have you believe women take fewer risks than men. We believe that generalization is inaccurate and unfounded. While men and women address risk differently, many women are highly capable of taking the right risks to accelerate their companies and careers.

Women who are exceptionally good at balancing risk and reward have three things in common. They understand their natural risk tolerance levels, are able to assess the risk level each situation calls for and they make room for imperfection.

In assessing your personal level of comfort when taking risks, you need to understand your natural instincts. Reflect back on when you've had to make a big decision. It could be a career move, taking on a new project, making a go/no-go decision on a product launch or hiring a new team member. How much certainty did you need to come to a 'yes' decision?

People typically fall into one of four risk profiles. Some are very comfortable going 'all in' with very limited information, some will take a chance if the upside is immediately obvious, some will take a risk with a chance for some upside potential down the road and some are completely risk averse. Which one most accurately describes your comfort zone?

The concept of no risk/no reward is important but you also don't want to take so many risks you find yourself out the door and looking for a new job. How do you strike that perfect balance between your personal risk profile and the level of risk each situation calls for?



Making no decision is making a decision to do nothing and hope is not a strategy. Women need to have the ability to identify and balance the benefits and tradeoffs of their decisions. Here are a few ideas to help you make better decisions and take risks like a pro.

Use the best information available. Data is always imperfect. Don't let perfection get in the way of progress. Get your information from several sources, compare and contrast the information and come up with baseline data that you are comfortable with.



Imagine the worst case scenario. Are you comfortable with it? If you're not, go back and revisit the solutions until you get to a point where you are.

Know your advisors intentions. Having trusted advisors is critical when making decisions that involve a high degree of risk. Make sure your advisors have the right interests in mind and not their own personal agendas. While you're at it, make sure you understand what your own motivations are and make sure you are on the right track for the right reasons.

Know your tipping point. Before you even get started, establish a point when you are willing to pull the plug. Many people get overly committed to an idea. Then when things start to go terribly wrong they can't pull the plug and keep throwing good money after bad for far too long.

Hedge your bets. In a high risk situation the "all or nothing" approach may not be the smartest move. Take small steps to achieve your goals or pilot your idea with a small group and give yourself the ability to pull back and revise as needed.

Be a short-term skeptic and a long term optimist. If you don't believe a proposed solution will work, no-one else will either so you need to lead through these situations with conviction and optimism. However, a healthy dose of skepticism is useful in determining everything that can possibly go wrong. You can then build a plan to minimize the risks or even eliminate them completely.

Don't let mistakes define you. The best leaders make room for mistakes and are able to recover from them. Taking risks is not about being perfect; it's about being effective. Make room for mistakes at the onset and address issues head on with a high degree of transparency. Learn from your mistakes and course correct quickly.

A big part of accelerating your career and company is taking appropriate risks. Understanding your natural biases and leveraging these risk-taking techniques will bring your decision-making into perfect balance. It's an essential part of becoming a strong leader who makes a lasting impact.

Find Your Courage



Should You Embrace Feeling The Impostor Syndrome?

We often find ourselves in a vicious cycle when we try and balance accelerating our careers and feeling like a fraud. If we take on something new, we often find ourselves out of our depth, and having to fight to get past feeling like we don't belong. If we play it safe and stay within our comfort zone, we get bored and we begin to miss that sense of purpose and fulfillment. This can feel like a no-win situation for many women but rest assured there is a way to be courageous and feel like you belong.

The Impostor Syndrome is real. The good news is that it's temporary and happens to everyone at some point. There's a lot of discussion on how to avoid the Impostor Syndrome. If you don't feel like this from time-to-time you're not pushing yourself hard enough. You should be willing to step out of your comfort zone if you want to accelerate your career.



You need to minimize these feelings so you can get back to running your business. Here are a few ideas on how you can get over that hump.

Realize this is temporary. In most cases you're the only one who believes you don't belong there. These feelings will pass but until it does, fake it till you make it and never let them see you sweat.

Do what energizes you. Staying in your happy place outside of work will give you the strength you need to be a high performer at the office every day. The stress of leading through a new situation while fighting the impostor syndrome can be exhausting. Keep your personal and family life as balanced as possible.

Record your successes. We forget all the great things we do and tend to focus on all the things we haven't done well. Keep a "Thatta Girl" file for all your wins big and small. When you're starting to feel uncertain or outmatched re-read it and remind yourself of how awesome you really are.

Learn from others. Find someone who you admire and who represents what you want to be in this new role. Watch and learn from this person, reach out and make them a part of your network. You'll realize you have more in common than you think.

Admit you don't know. A new role or project stretches your capabilities. If it didn't, you wouldn't be having these feelings. It's okay to admit you're unfamiliar with a topic. As a leader you should be asking more questions, challenging the status quo and accepted lines of thinking. Combining leadership with learning should come naturally.

Make room for error. You are going to make mistakes. You made mistakes in your last role and recovered like a champ, but now things seem so much worse. Don't overthink

"Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen."

~Brené Brown

this. Make room for learning (aka mistakes), be transparent and recover. Chances are good you're making a big deal out of it when no one else has given it a second thought.

Find Cheerleaders. During these times we all need a little pep talk from time-to-time. Find people who know and love you enough to tell you you're being ridiculous and move on. Then actually listen to them!

Keep the bar high. Keep the bar high and put in the extra effort to catch up. You're the only one who knows you feel like an impostor. Your team is expecting a strong leader and your manager is expecting a high performing team. Don't disappoint your team or the people who put you there.

Give yourself a break. Women can be their own worst critics at times, especially when we're fighting the Impostor Syndrome. Find a way to refocus that negative voice in your head. Be proud that you're working out of your comfort zone and becoming a better leader in the process.

If you want to reach your fullest potential, you need to learn how to face fear head on and give it a giant punch in the face. Courageous women have the ability to dig deep to find out what they're really afraid of. They imagine what would happen if everything went horribly wrong and they build a strong mitigation strategy. By understanding the worst possible scenario and having a plan if everything fails, fear becomes largely manufactured and puts you back in the driver's seat.



Here are a few things you may want to try so you can unleash the fearless leader within you.

COURAGE

Cut to the chase – People are busy. Be clear and stop pre-qualifying your statements with an apology.

Openly challenge – No more waiting for “off line” conversations. Discuss issues as they are happening.

Unflappable – No one knows you're uncomfortable. Breathe and stay strong.

Revisit issues often – When yes doesn't mean agreement, go back until it does.

Analysis – Get enough supporting data to make you comfortable to challenge.

Group – Find like-minded people that support your position on an issue.

Empower – You and your team need to take action on your ideas.

Once you've mastered your courage you're going to find yourself in new situations all the time. This is awesome! At some point you might struggle with feeling like you don't belong and it's only a matter of time before they discover you have no idea what you're doing. Now that you know how to work through the feelings of the Imposter Syndrome, taking new chances should come much easier.

When a woman finds her courage she finds her power beyond anything she thought possible. Once you get there, remember it's normal for those feelings of self-doubt to creep in. Just remind yourself that it's not actually true, and try to minimize how long you feel that way. We all have courage. You just need to take that first step towards finding it!

About the Author



Tammy Alvarez is the CEO and founder of Coral Consulting Group, a business performance and leadership development firm that develops senior executives into strong transformational leaders. Tammy is recognized globally as an award winning and patent holding transformation expert. With over twenty years as a senior executive leading large-scale global business, she brings a pragmatic approach to coaching and leadership development. Her passion for empowering women to lead authentically and reach their fullest potential inspired her to create ***Own Your Power!***, a leadership development program serving women business leaders and entrepreneurs globally.



Marlo Pool
Senior Vice
President
Wells Fargo

As a young woman in corporate America, I constantly found myself feeling as though I didn't actually deserve a seat at the table. I spent years using an unassuming, almost apologetic tone when asking questions, even when they were thought-provoking points no one else was bringing to the table, because I was afraid to say the wrong thing or even worse to look incompetent. I believed that I was only as good as the leader or mentor that I attached myself to instead of relying on my own talent and capabilities to excel.

Tammy helped me reframe my thinking in order to see the value I bring to the table – ANY table. I can confidently walk into any job or situation and quickly add value but also have the courage to proactively address when a job or situation just isn't right for me. Coral Consulting Group enabled me to see that no matter what obstacles I face, I am the solution.

Are You Ready To Own Your Power?

Take our FREE QUIZ and find out!

***I Want To
Know My
POWER SCORE!***

Our work is driven by our commitment to:

Perseverance - because change is hard • **Innovation** - because learning is a continuous journey
Inspiration - because we all should have a dream • **Pragmatism** - because results matter