

The Three Myths holding women entrepreneurs back from thinking bigger

As women entrepreneurs, we often encounter unique mental roadblocks that limit our ability to think bigger and achieve greater success. These barriers are not external but internal - myths we tell ourselves that deeply affect how we approach opportunities, risk, and self-worth.

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The three most pervasive myths are the scarcity mindset, imposter syndrome, and the fear of failure. Each of these can hold us back, but when we learn to dismantle them, we unlock the potential for exponential growth and greater impact. Here are actionable steps to overcome these myths, inspired by my own journey.

Myth 1: The Scarcity Mindset

The scarcity mindset convinces us that there isn't enough—whether it's success, money, or opportunities—to go around. It leads us to believe that resources are limited and that someone else's gain must mean our loss. This myth results in fear-driven decisions, such as playing it safe, hesitating to invest in ourselves, or underestimating our business potential.

Reframe scarcity into abundance.

Challenge yourself to see the world through the lens of abundance. For example, think about a competitor in your field. Instead of viewing their success as a threat, reframe it as proof that there is demand in your market. Ask yourself: “How can I create opportunities for collaboration or leverage this to strengthen my own business?” By seeking abundance, you create space for creative solutions and unexpected growth.

Myth 2: Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is the persistent, false belief that we don't belong, that we're not enough, or that our success is somehow undeserved. It's that voice inside your head whispering, “You're not really qualified for this,” or “You've just been lucky so far.” This myth stops us from seizing opportunities, stepping into leadership roles, and taking credit for our hard work.

I vividly remember struggling with imposter syndrome when I began pitching Under Canvas to investors. Despite the success we had achieved, I felt inadequate standing in rooms full of experienced venture capitalists. I had to remind myself that investors weren't just betting on our idea—they were betting on me. I had to own my expertise and value, and recognize that I was more than capable of leading my company to success. We often wait to feel “qualified” before stepping forward, but the reality is that no one ever feels 100% ready. The key is to act in spite of the doubt, and let your actions prove your capability.

Own your achievements and celebrate small wins.

Start by writing down a list of your accomplishments, no matter how small they may seem. Whenever imposter syndrome kicks in, go back to this list as a reminder of how capable and qualified you truly are. You didn't

get lucky—you earned your success. This practice can help reframe the narrative in your mind from one of self-doubt to one of self-worth. Remember, success isn't about being perfect; it's about persevering and pushing through challenges with confidence in your own abilities.

Myth 3: Fear of Failure

Fear of failure is perhaps the most paralyzing myth of all. It often keeps us from taking risks, trying new things, or expanding into unfamiliar territory. Society conditions us, especially as women, to avoid failure at all costs. This leads us to stay in our comfort zones, only pursue goals we know we can achieve, and settle for less than our full potential. But the truth is, failure is not the enemy. In fact, failure is an inevitable and necessary part of success.

In 2010, Under Canvas took a huge risk when we agreed to rent hundreds of tents for a major music festival. We had never done anything on that scale before, and we weren't sure how we would deliver on such a massive order. The risk could have ended in failure, but it didn't. Instead, it propelled us into an entirely new line of business, giving us the assets and experience to build our brand further. That risk, which could have been disastrous, turned out to be a game-changer for our company. It reinforced a critical lesson for me: taking risks and embracing the possibility of failure is the only way to achieve growth.

Redefine failure as a learning opportunity

Ask yourself: "What is the worst that could happen if I fail?" Then, ask: "What is the best that could happen if I succeed?" Most of the time, the potential upside far outweighs the downside. Failure isn't a reflection of your worth or abilities—it's simply feedback. It tells you what didn't work

and offers you a chance to adjust your strategy. Every successful entrepreneur has faced setbacks, but the key is to use those moments as fuel to drive growth, not as reasons to give up.

Breaking free from the myths

Overcoming these myths requires a shift in mindset. We must learn to recognise scarcity thinking, push back against imposter syndrome, and embrace failure as part of the entrepreneurial journey. With each step, we free ourselves to think bigger, take risks, and build the impact-driven businesses we're meant to lead.

These myths are just that—myths. They don't define us, and they don't need to hold us back. When we change the stories we tell ourselves, we unlock limitless potential for growth and success.

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