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# Promoted, or Passed Over? Women Who Overcome Fear Can Create Courageous Careers

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Contributed By: [Melinda Zemper](#) | Oak Tree Communications, LLC

Kay Fittes  
CEO, High-Heeled Success

Despite 50-plus years of being in the workforce, in 2018, girls are still taught that fear is a signal to stop. Boys, on the other hand, are taught to power through their fear.

This may be one reason why more women than men fear success in the workplace.

Realistically, we know women do have more to fear than men. The “Me Too” movement indicates sexual harassment is a problem. And women are treated differently and paid less than men at work.

McKinsey & Company and Lean In report that 100 women are promoted for every 130 men. Women tend to receive fewer choice assignments, are more reluctant to speak up in meetings, and have less access to leadership than men.

A study by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission two years ago estimated that 25 to 85 percent of women have experienced workplace harassment.

More importantly, more than 75 percent experienced retaliation when they spoke up.

So what’s a working woman to do? Take charge to overcome your fears.

Women commonly have four main fears in the workplace: fear of having and holding power; fear of conflict; fear of risk; and fear of being in the spotlight. But these are learned behaviors and can be unraveled. Women who learn the skills to minimize their fears will find a smoother path toward job satisfaction and promotion.

Here are five ways to identify and eliminate career fear:

-- Know yourself. Get clarity on the root of your fear. Something as simple as journaling and asking yourself, “If I wasn’t afraid, I would...” can provide valuable insights. Once you have a clear understanding of what your fears are, learn new skills to counteract them.

-- Identify the skills you need to succeed. Many women need conflict resolution, negotiation and presentation skills. Attaining those skills may not fix everything, but they can make a big difference in how you’re perceived at work.



-- Stop overthinking. Sometimes women become paralyzed by fear. They procrastinate, blame themselves for conversations gone wrong, and avoid confrontation. A great book by Mel Robbins called the “The 5 Second Rule” can help.

-- Conduct a fear assessment. Rank your fear of doing something difficult before beginning the process of accomplishing the task. After you’ve completed the task, conduct a satisfaction estimation. The difference in scores may indicate how few of your fears actually come to fruition.

-- Take baby steps. You can desensitize yourself to fear. Working on a small scale builds confidence and competence. If you’re terrified of speaking in public, for example, begin by addressing small groups. Work your way up to addressing that 200-person ballroom in Pittsburgh.

Almost 47 percent of women today are in the workplace, yet we are still paid less, overlooked and passed over more than men. So what’s a woman to do? Decide today to power through your fears to create a courageous career.

Kay Fittes of Madeira is CEO of High-Heeled Success, a women’s business coaching and career consultancy she founded and leads. She’ll offer a workshop for women on “Steps for Overcoming the Fear Factor” Saturday, June 9 from 9 to 4 p.m. at the Quality Hotel in Cincinnati.

Focus will include a gender realization that will catapult your career; five truths that will shift your view of fear; and a tool that will revolutionize your actions. Readers who enroll by June 1 pay \$149. For information on this or other events, visit [www.highheeledsuccess.com](http://www.highheeledsuccess.com) or call me at (513) 561-4288.