

# MISTAKES WOMEN MAKE AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

## LESSON 3: PROFESSIONAL POWER MISTAKES

The four exercises in this Lesson will help you develop a stronger sense of yourself and your leadership abilities. No matter what job you have or what level of experience, women tend to fall into mistakes that negatively impact their leadership and their professional power, leading to us feeling less capable and ill at ease with the value we actually bring to the table.

Use a notebook or journal to complete the exercises below and keep your reflections together throughout the Lessons below and the entire series.

### EXERCISE 1: NOT SETTING CLEAR GOALS

Setting clear goals gives us focus about things that are important to us and allows us to measure our progress. No one knows exactly how to get to any big goal in the beginning especially when they're stretching themselves and the goal is either something they have not done before and they don't have a track record for doing that specific thing. No stretch goal comes with experience, so if you want to dream big, which I think is a fabulous idea, don't worry if you don't have all the answers as to how you will get there as you start. Dream big and figure it out as you go along taking one easy and doable step at a time as your new strategy.

**PART ONE:** Select a goal for yourself. Use the S.M.A.R.T [template](#) and populate it with your specific details and then go for it. Consider getting an accountability buddy or coach to hold you to your commitments. <https://www.sandiego.edu/hr/documents/STAFFGoals-PerfPlanningGuide1.pdf>

**STOP:** Consider stopping here and completing this template before going on to the next exercise.

### EXERCISE 2: NOT SETTING CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Setting clear boundaries takes courage, protects your time, and builds self-confidence. When we don't set clear boundaries, we are engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors which reduces our personal power and self-advocacy.

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**PART ONE:** Identify a goal for yourself – maybe you use the same one from above in Exercise 1 or something else you really care about. Ask yourself: What might stop you from reaching this goal? Write down 1-2 things that are getting in your way. You can make a longer list if you want. Now, examine if there might be something you can say no to, or someone you can inform that might help you move past these obstacles or eliminate them all together. Give some thought to whether you are the obstacle or it's you that is allowing the obstacle to be one in the first place. Here is an example. Years ago, I had a goal to have my own TV show about women's leadership. The 1-2 things, although my list was a lot longer, that was getting in my way is that I had no experience and no time in the way my calendar was currently looking to devote to this goal as I thought I would have to in order to succeed.

**PART TWO:** What clear boundaries would be good ones for you to have in order to make your goal a reality. Here is an example. A boundary I made was to not do other client work on Fridays so I could dedicate that day to the TV goal. I had to tell clients, who wanted to work with me on a Friday that I was sorry I was unavailable. Many people need boundaries in order to have a better balance between work and their personal life, making time for both. An example of strong boundaries here might be, Not working after 6PM, not answering emails in the evenings, not working on the weekends at all or at least on Sundays, being available to read at night with the kids, not missing a game that any of your children are playing, etc. To get started figuring this one out for yourself, begin by deciding first what you really want and then pretend anything is possible so you don't limit yourself too early in the process. Of course, the next step is to figure out how to put these into real action, into your schedule, and on your calendar on a regular basis.

**STOP VIDEO:** Consider focusing on these items before going further.

### **EXERCISE 3: WORRYING TOO MUCH ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS**

Developing relationships is important however, putting too much emphasis on them disproportionately can create problems that are unnecessary.

**PART ONE:** Read Huffington Post article by Gary Trosclair, [What Others Think: Why It's a Problem and What to Do About It](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/6-signs-you-worry-too-much-about-what-others-think-why-its-a-problem-and-what-to-do-about-it_b_8028604) that has great guidance on how to determine if your relationships are managing you versus the other way around and if so, what you can do about it. I really liked the "6 signs that you worry too much about what others think." ([https://www.huffpost.com/entry/6-signs-you-worry-too-much-about-what-others-think-why-its-a-problem-and-what-to-do-about-it\\_b\\_8028604](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/6-signs-you-worry-too-much-about-what-others-think-why-its-a-problem-and-what-to-do-about-it_b_8028604))

**PART TWO:** Answer the following five questions and decide after you are done with them all, what changes you would like to make:

1. What 1-2 things are you doing now in your life that you don't want to do and you feel some resentment about?

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2. What is something that you are biting your tongue about and not saying because you're afraid of the repercussions?
3. Are you spending time with people you don't like or fear?
4. What decisions do you dislike making on your own where you might be passing your personal power over to someone else?
5. Who do you imagine is upset with you that you have no idea if it's really true?

**STOP:** Consider focusing on these before going further.

#### **EXERCISE 4: FAILING TO BUILD A STRONG BRAND PROFESSIONALLY**

A strong personal brand will help you achieve your professional goals and aspirations whether you're working in a company or running one of your own. The first step to developing a personal brand is to deepen your own self-awareness about what makes you stand out positively and uniquely from other people. It's your own personal superpower. Simply put, a personal brand is an asset that defines the best thing(s) about you. Once you have it, you then must showcase it strategically on a regular basis.

**PART ONE:** Review **Module 4** in this series – **Create and Lead with Your Professional Brand.**

**PART TWO:** Read my blog post, **Professional Pitfalls Women Experience**  
<https://visionquestconsulting.com/professional-pitfalls-women-often-experience/>

**PART THREE:** Make a list of the following:  
What am I good at?  
What do I love to do?  
What am I best at contributing at work?

#### **JOURNAL AND REFLECTIONS**

Reflecting on what you learned from doing all these exercises in this Lesson will give you more clarity about yourself and maybe even some next steps to implement. If we, as women, work on *not* falling into these ten mistakes in this Module, we can elevate our confidence and personal power. Get yourself some [training](https://visionquestconsulting.com/womens-programs/) (<https://visionquestconsulting.com/womens-programs/>). Develop a strong female support network. [Learn some more](https://visionquestconsulting.com/womens-leadership/) about women and their leadership (<https://visionquestconsulting.com/womens-leadership/>). Harvard Business Review conducted research that showed that women in leadership positions were perceived as being every bit as effective as men. In fact, while the differences were not huge, women scored at a statistically significantly higher level than men on the vast majority of leadership competencies they measured. So, let's start believing in ourselves and work on diminishing the common mistakes professional women often make.

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Journal your answers to the questions below. Journaling is more about writing stream of consciousness versus getting it right or making it sound pretty. Journaling is a process that unearths curiosity and wonder within us. After completing the exercises above, answer the following questions...

What top 3 observations do you have?

What patterns, if any, do you notice?

What specific things resonated most or seem right on target for you? And why?

What resonated least or seems less relevant for you? And why?

What are your biggest ahas or take-aways?

What did you learn about yourself that delighted you most?

What are 1-2 next steps you will take with this information you now have?

### **FOLLOW UP**

If you want more help understanding what this all means and how it relates to where you are or where you're going, reach out to me at Wendy Capland, [wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com](mailto:wcapland@visionquestconsulting.com) to schedule a one hour 1:1 Coaching Session. Investment-\$500.