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Being a leader with social anxiety: how to overcome your fear

Fear/anxiety is a basic human instinct, and no leader is immune to it. What way do leaders have to overcome it? Such a way includes several steps [based on 1-3].

1. Working with social anxiety.

Around 6.8 percent of the US population suffers from social anxiety or social anxiety disorder (SAD). That's around 15 million adults. So, let's just agree that for now, you're not alone. Just like you, there are numerous people, all struggling with their own battles.

What you must do to win this battle against your anxiety is learn how to overcome it, or at least control it.

2. Acknowledge it.

The ostrich-style head-in-the-sand trick isn't going to work and you know it. If you have anxiety, or if you know you have symptoms of anxiety, acknowledge it. It's hard to do so, but by accepting that you have anxiety, you're really doing yourself a favor. You're scared that something like this has power over you. You have to let yourself know it, that you accept it and you will not let it overwhelm you.

3. Don't overwhelm yourself.

This is a common mistake. Don't go cold turkey and just start pushing yourself to do everything, otherwise you will get a full panic attack. Understand that overcoming your fear isn't a one-day or one-week journey. You have to take it, one day at a time.

4. Know the difference between thoughts and truths.

When someone says, 'don't let your anxiety bully you', it's easier said than done, but it's not impossible. Start by learning the difference between what the truth is, and what your mind is pushing you to believe in. If you're not getting a call back from a potential client, it might be because they don't have the funds yet, not because of your marketing skills; someone says they forgot to send you an email, it's because they really did forget because of their own workload, not because they don't like you. Get in the habit of noticing the distinctions.

5. Overcoming fear.

Not much can get in the way of leading well, making good decisions and moving your organization forward like fear. Fear of the changes that are bound to happen, how you'll handle them and how your team will react. The fear of making

the wrong decision. All the risks and “what ifs” that can stop you in your tracks – from economic changes or market shifts, to the specter of job cuts or restructuring, to global crises.

6. Dealing with stress and anxiety.

With all of these leadership challenges staring you in the face, you’d be well within your rights to feel a bit stressed out. It’s natural. But the anxiety these leadership challenges create can itself be a significant challenge to your leadership. The fear, the self-doubt, the cascade of problems and expectations that leaders often face – it can all add up to a level of stress that puts your ability to lead in danger.

Because we act differently in times of stress. It’s harder to be patient. It’s tough to stay focused. We can become angry and fall back on defensiveness – it’s the old fight-or-flight response that can effectively turn off our rational brain.

That’s why it can be so valuable for leaders to learn more about how they react to stress, understand their behaviors, and better avoid the pitfalls to leadership that happen when anxiety goes unchecked.

7. Delivering bad news.

Life isn’t all sunshine and rainbows. We all know this. But that doesn’t make it any easier to be the bearer of bad news.

Things don’t always go as planned. Mistakes happen. Problems need to be addressed. Sometimes leadership means having to deliver the bad news about what went wrong or what needs to change. Sometimes it means being “the bad guy.”

It can be challenging to be in that position. But it’s the leader’s calling to be clear and decisive. Empathy is important, but so is clarity and understanding. It’s hard work to be honest. To deliver information clearly. Bad news can be dramatic – it’s your job to deliver it and manage it in a way that stifles drama before it contaminates your culture.

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Environmental-sustainability leadership

Since the the last century world is going through various difficult global challenges and perhaps most importantantly ones that are based on environmental factors. Climate change is widely recognized and been in the center of focus for debates and scientific investigations on the other hand for some it is overexaggerated and faced with denials. “Climate change” encompasses global warming, but refers to the broader