



Getting Credit at Work: Behind Every Successful Woman is Herself

By Joel Garfinkle, Executive Coach and Author | Secrets to Your Success



(Photo: Getty)

Conventional wisdom says that women in the workplace don't always **get the credit they deserve for the work they do**. Recent scientific research backs up that theory and describes certain situations where women are even less likely to take credit and more likely to give unwarranted credit to male counterparts. Affirm the value and **provide recognition to the women leaders** you work with.

Not getting the credit you deserve happens frequently, and not just to women. Anyone who tends to be laid back, shy, or just plain introverted is more likely to stay in the shadows and let more outgoing types bask in the spotlight.

Here's what a recent study from the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin (May, 2013) revealed. Study participants were told they were working with another participant on a "male sex-typed task." When they received positive feedback about their team's performance, women and men passed out the accolades very differently. Women gave male teammates more credit for team success-and the men willingly took the credit. However, when women were told that their teammate was another woman, they shared the credit equally. Psychologists who conducted the experiment referred to this as "attributional rationalization." We call it **giving away your power**.

Are you doing this? And if you are, how can you turn it around? Here are three scenarios to consider:

- 1. People-pleasing.** We all want to be liked. A lot of our reluctance to claim credit where it's due comes from underlying fear of alienating others. So what if Harry gets the accolades for the fantastic client presentation you put together? If you toot your own horn and embarrass him in front of the boss, he'll be furious. Better to just smile and let it ride.
- 2. Listening to your inner critic.** Your team is wrapping up a major project and the boss stops by to see how it's going. Immediately, Forward Frank steps into the spotlight and gives the overview, implying-of course-that he's the guy who made it all happen. You want to **speak up** and tell your

boss that everyone's contribution, including yours, contributed to the end result. But the gremlin on your shoulder says, "Well, you didn't really do all that much, and what if they don't like your stuff anyway?"

3. Discounting your passion. You want to do what you love, but right now it doesn't feel that way, because nobody even knows you have a passion. Part of doing what you love at work includes getting acknowledged for your unique talents. If you're afraid to show off the real you, you may spend the rest of your career trudging through the trenches instead of smiling from the stage.

Here's how to handle these three scenarios more effectively and walk away with the credit you've earned:

WHAT HAPPENED

Harry took credit for the presentation you created.

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT IT

"Thanks, Harry. I thought the statistics you found on the competition really pulled the presentation together. My graphs and summary wouldn't have been as effective without your input."

WHAT HAPPENED

Frank makes it look like you didn't do much, and you (mentally) agree with him.

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT IT

"Frank has given you a great overview, Mr. Smith, and this really was a team effort. I did all the market research and Sally put the presentation together. I think we pulled off a winner."

WHAT HAPPENED

You're hiding your true self. No one knows how creative you really are.

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT IT

"I just loved finding those crazy cartoon inserts. I think using humor to lighten up those statistics really helps get our point across. I'd love a chance to try some more of these techniques in the future."

Develop ways of making your point without discounting or alienating others. Start to notice situations where are you giving your power away. What false beliefs have you bought into? How would you act differently if you had unlimited courage? You have-just find it and use it, starting now.

Joel Garfinkle is recognized as one of the top 50 executive coaches in the U.S. He is the author of seven books, including "Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level." More than 10,000 people subscribe to his Fulfillment@Work newsletter. If you sign up, you'll receive the free e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!"