

AW Ep. 5 (Edit 3)

[00:00:00] **Intro:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the advancing women podcast. We're ambitious women come together to challenge the status quo, advance their careers and up-level their lives. The advancing women podcast is hosted by gender equity, expert and executive coach Dr. Kimberly PCMO welcome warriors to the advancing women podcast.

[00:00:26] **Kimberly:** [00:00:26] Nobody likes to fail, but for some people failing can be so psychologically and emotionally threatening that it can Trump motivation. And we too often hear about how women's fears can exceed the motivation to process. Women are afraid to fail. They don't take risks. We hear this all the time. Often as part of the explanation of women's lack of advancement, you have to go out on a limb to get the good fruit.

[00:00:57] The thing is research shows that women take [00:01:00] failure, particularly hard studies have shown, for example, that women don't apply for jobs unless they feel a hundred percent qualified men of course will apply. Even if they only have 50% of the qualifications, they're confident to apply. Other studies have shown that women receiving a lower grade in a core college course are more likely to shift out of that major.

[00:01:23] They get that B in science and they're out of stem or engineering. There is an often cited Cornell study from the early two thousands. And the findings show that women have different standards, higher standards, in fact, relative to their own competencies. So they don't apply for the big seat at the table jobs when men, even with 50% of the qualifications will this type of finding naturally leads to questions regarding women's competency, self-efficacy self esteem and their desire for power.

[00:01:58] This is the old, they just don't want it [00:02:00] as much narrative. That's why they're not advancing. They just don't want it as much. Other studies show that women are so averse to failure. They avoid taking chances and risks, sometimes risks that could put them in more high profile opportunities. Situations with risk of course is increased chance of failure.

[00:02:19] And the research has shown that women also are shown to take failure and negative feedback more personally, and that the feedback has a more lasting, negative impact on them. And this is all meant to provide evidence that behaviors are creating additional barriers. You know, the storyline we're getting in our own way, but the thing is I'm calling Bolshoi on that narrative.

[00:02:41] I just can't accept this warrior. Rather than oversimplifying this as women just don't take risks. Can't take criticism, don't have high self-efficacy or high self esteem. Don't have high confidence or just don't want power as much all explanations that quite honestly, don't serve women at all. [00:03:00] And sounds nothing like the women I've encountered professionally and personally, these exhalations are really just the Wolf in sheep's clothing.

[00:03:08] Blame. The woman notice a pattern. Fix the women fix the problem. This is so frustratingly resilient. Let's identify the real problem and the relevant patterns of bias that

could be influencing this. I would argue women's hesitancy is understandable when women do fail, the research shows women are judged more harshly than their male counterparts.

[00:03:35] And of course it's easier to take risks and accept your mistakes and failures when they are quickly forgotten. Don't have that huge negative impact on your professional cap. I mean, the reality is we take failure hard because it is hard, very hard on women's professional capital and advancement failure tends to be more public than successes, or at least we perceive it to be that [00:04:00] way.

[00:04:01] Let's talk for a minute about men applying to jobs where they have only 50% of the qualifications because of this study and studies like it are cited all the time. When we are giving that best practice advice to women, you know, negotiate harder. Don't always be a perfectionist. It's up to you to go out there and grab it.

[00:04:20] If you want it don't hesitate, but men can actually get jobs. They only have 50% of the qualifications. Not so much for women. So when men apply with 50% of the qualifications, they know they've got an app that this is not the case for women. Remember the episode a few weeks ago, where I talked about Tazzy mystic bias, where the criteria for hiring and promoting can be highly gender biased.

[00:04:46] The qualifications that are prioritized are often the one the male candidate has. And so this is what happens when men apply with only 50% of the qualifications. A lot of. Prioritization is given to the [00:05:00] qualifications. They actually do have, this is not. So for women, remember, prove it again, bias because of prove it again.

[00:05:08] One of the main biases identified in the literature that women report creates barriers. To their advancement. Women must prove their competence and ability over and over again, much more so than their male counterparts and how the research shows that men are often hired or promoted for potential. So clearly they can confidently apply for jobs with criteria they don't meet, but I assume they can at least eventually meet the criteria.

[00:05:35] It's that being hired for potential. And again, women are not afforded that same benefit of the doubt. So, yes, it's fear, but a logical and well-founded. There are many unfortunate outcomes of privet again, but one of the most unfortunate outcomes is how it puts women in a more likely situation to operate in fear.

[00:05:58] If you know your mistakes are [00:06:00] going to be remembered, punctuated and result in more lost your professional capital, is it really shocking that women tend to take less risks? That women are afraid to fail, to take those risks, go out on the proverbial limb. There's just no safety net for women when they're out on that limb.

[00:06:16] So clearly it's scarier because the damage, when we fall can be devastating, then we have the unfortunate barrier of feeling the weight of our actions on perceptions of all women, former United States, representative Clare, Boothe, Luce nailed it. When she said quote, because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed.

[00:06:38] If I fail, no one will say she doesn't have what it takes. They will say women don't have what it takes. And quote, of course, women take failure harder. Imagine feeling like

you have failed half the population with your failure. That's a pretty hefty price tag. And I had pretty heavy weight to carry. And the way organizations respond to women's mistakes [00:07:00] differs it's harsher.

[00:07:02] And when we consider research that shows men's mistakes are often attributed to bad luck while women's are attributed to incompetency. Again, it isn't surprising that women take mistakes more personally. They're told essentially that it is there a personal mistake. This type of narrative is embedded in the way we respond to women's mistakes from the offset very early on in our first interactions, there is a large body of research that shows that in early school years, when girls make mistakes, they're more likely to interpret the setback as the sign.

[00:07:34] They lack ability to factors much harder for girls to change. Boys. On the other hand, tend to attribute failure to more controllable circumstances. Why though? Well, it's traced in part to how educators give gender feedback to their students. Studies show that this is the case in observational study.

[00:07:55] Educators are far more likely to correct girls from mistakes related to [00:08:00] ability. While boys tend to get more behavioral corrections, you know, settle down, behave, you get the idea. Boys can easily control their behavior. So when they get that feedback, they can fix it. If they just settle down, it's a bit more challenging for girls who are made to feel like maybe they're just not capable because this is really a function of.

[00:08:20] Their ability. And so this contributes to women and fear, fear of not being enough, not making the cut. Another contributing factor is stereotype threat too often when a woman fails at just about anything, it serves to affirm stereotypes, whether those stereotypes are women aren't as good. They don't have what it takes.

[00:08:41] They're not tough enough. This matters because when we're constantly fighting that narrative, that we're not as good. That we don't belong when we see so few women in those top leadership roles, it can lead to taking any mistake that we make very hard because it reflects the two [00:09:00] common voice in the back of our heads that says not good enough here.

[00:09:05] Again, research shows how the stereotype threat begins very early on placing a burden on young girls. So when dealing with the stereotype that they're bad at math and science, for example, and there's tons of research showing this is the case, gender bias and stereotypes against women in the stem fields.

[00:09:22] It can make the threat of failure, more bruising for girls. So why is this such a big deal? Well, when girls are constantly faced with stereotypes, that they are bad at math, but they don't, um, they can't get it done. They don't see it a missed problem or a poor grade as a small correctable issue. It can lead them unfortunately to confirming what they constantly hear, that they simply have less ability.

[00:09:48] And this can follow women through the professional lifespan, always needing to prove we belong, but also always with the weight on our shoulders, that we are one failure, one [00:10:00] mistake away from proving the haters and the naysayers, right? Oh. And by

the way, letting down our whole gender in the process, certainly that would create fear in anyone, fear of the pain, of not belonging, fear of not being good enough.

[00:10:18] And let's face it. That's more realistic of 21st century world fear. We're not really chased by lions anymore, but that fear of not belonging, the threat of humiliation judgment, that is the fear that we operate in today. Fear that is amplified for women due to these inequities. Honestly, all of this is so much, there can be no doubt that pure exhaustion from the weight of it all can contribute to women.

[00:10:46] Making more mistakes research shows that women report significantly higher fear of failure than their male counterparts, but also on sub-scales of fear of experiencing shame, fear of embarrassment, fear of having an uncertain [00:11:00] future gender bias impacts. Fear. And this discussion of fear is important because research shows that people just don't perform as well in a climate of fear.

[00:11:11] We're in a culture of criticism. Part of this though, is our interpretation of, and response to fear. We want to find that sweet spot where fear meets courage and mistakes need resiliency. This can be especially challenging though, for women who are more openly judged and publicly criticized. And so this is a great segue into the discussion of social media.

[00:11:37] The last episode, I talked about the positive side of social media and promoting the persist hood women standing together and supporting each other. We have to consider a culture with so many opportunities for public criticism, given social media and how it contributes to fear, especially for women who, in addition to experiencing high levels of objectification, sexualization, [00:12:00] misrepresentation are also criticized and critiqued, more viciously and more commonly on social media.

[00:12:07] A recent Cornell university study found women, Instagram influencers, endure criticism and harassment, both for being too honest about their lives and also for seeming to fake another damned if you do damned, if you don't paradigm. There are always going to be the spectators, the peanut gallery, the ones in the cheap seats, spreading fear, criticizing critiquing, shaming, and judging.

[00:12:31] And of course, anything deemed a mistake will be more highly criticized and remembered and talked about. And now we'll be out there forever to be commented on in perpetuity, but here's the good news. Beer itself. Doesn't have to be a problem. In fact, as mark Twain famously said, courage is not the lack of fear.

[00:12:54] It is acting in spite of it. Action in the face of fear is [00:13:00] bad-ass. As I always point out, we have to disrupt the parts of narratives that don't serve us and build on the parts that do. It's not the story of women and being more afraid. It's a story of resilience, grit. Anti-fragility. We can embrace the future.

[00:13:15] Author Steven Pressfield says in the art of war breakthrough, the blocks, and when your inner creative battles quote resistance is experienced as fear, the degree of fear equates to the strength of resistance. Therefore, the more fear we feel about a specific enterprise, the more certain we can be that the enterprise is important to us and to the growth of our soul.

[00:13:38] And, and so this is where we can use the TKD process, what you think, what you know, and what you do as it relates to. It's a lot about mindset, skillset and toolset, Carol Dweck notes in her book mindset that women who struggle with failure or falling prey to a fixed mindset. So even going back to my example of a [00:14:00] female student, getting one bad grade, a student with a fixed mindset, I look at a poor grade as a criticism of her core self, rather than a reflection of her particular effort or skills.

[00:14:11] And that's important because if it's just a reflection of effort or skill. Work harder or learn more, but if it's deeply part of your core, that has a much, much more negative impact. And so we have to interrupt these self limiting beliefs and replace them with success stories, star stories that we can access that demonstrate our capabilities even mentally to ourselves, but also externally interrupt fear with a mindset of competence and confidence, confidence that you have an impact because a mistake is not a reflection of your core competency.

[00:14:47] It's an opportunity for growth and to further hone your skillset. And when the critique or criticism comes from the outside, especially from people whose opinions really just don't [00:15:00] matter. Like those social media comments, that's difficult. But you have to interrupt those two. When I started this podcast, I got a lot of positive feedback and nice comments and some good constructive best practice tips from other podcasters, which I greatly appreciated.

[00:15:19] I want to learn more and grow from those in the arena, but I also had some people criticize and advice who don't podcast at all and who are very fond of. Simply just critiquing auditors. And we have to remember that there will always be critics and we can't give in to the fear that if we create or take risks that we'll get negative criticism, we absolutely will.

[00:15:41] There's no question. We have to feel the fear and do it anyway. We have to get over the fear of that public embarrassment that emerges so often for women who are. Just largely criticized and feel that, prove it again, bias that makes you feel like you can't make [00:16:00] mistakes. I love what Bernay brown says about this.

[00:16:03] I have her words posted in my office for these moments to help me get my head right. When I hear that criticism that leads to fear and resistance, that limiting mindset. Renee brown says, quote, if you're not in the arena, getting your ass kicked on occasion, I am not interested in or open to your feedback.

[00:16:24] There are a million cheap seats in the world today filled with people who will never be brave with their own lives, but we'll spend every ounce of energy. They have hurling advice and judgment at those of us trying to dare greatly. Their only contributions are criticism, cynicism, and fear-mongering, if you're criticizing from a place where you're not also putting yourself on the line, I'm not interested in your feet.

[00:16:49] And quote, I just love that this is all to say that we have the power to take that which serves and reject that, which does not. And if you struggle with this, I'd [00:17:00]

reiterate the advice that my guests in episode three dinette Sudduth gave, you know, if you care what people think. Find a couple people you really trust who will give it to you straight.

[00:17:11] I have a small group of warrior women that are my people that will help me get my head right. When I let fear have too much power. When I launched my first episode and then listened to it, I felt all the fear, all the inner criticism, the, you know, inner saboteur tour with all the negative. Self-talk the mental saboteur telling me how I got it all wrong, how I should've done things differently or better.

[00:17:36] So I reached out to my best friend. My most trusted warrior confidant with all my fears, my fears of all the critics who would emerge as I put myself out there, I was just feeling so vulnerable and she didn't lie and say, everyone will love it. It'll be great. She was real. And of course, empowering and supportive.

[00:17:55] She sent me a text back saying simply do not let the trolls. And I [00:18:00] promise there will be dull. Your shine press forward. You were born for this medium trust, the process. Just a couple sentences, but it totally helped me manage my fear gain perspective and get my head right. To see the bigger picture. It's natural to have fear when we take on new endeavors.

[00:18:21] And it's hard to know who the folks are, who are giving you the real feedback and who the folks are, who we don't really want to listen to. And sometimes we take that fear to me and maybe we shouldn't be pursuing what we're pursuing. And when you hear people applying for jobs and they only have for 50% of the qualifications and when women don't always have the confidence to do that, all of those things, you know, the, the criticism and should I be afraid and why aren't they afraid when I am afraid?

[00:18:52] I want you to think about another Steven Pressfield quote. If you find yourself asking yourself and your friends, am I really a [00:19:00] writer? Am I really an artist? Chances are you are the counterfeit innovator is wildly. Self-confident. The real one is scared to death. That really rings true. When you feel that fear as you are daring greatly, it is comforting to know that you're supposed to feel the fear.

[00:19:20] You need to embrace the fear and pursue your goal. So that's mindset getting your head right now. We need to talk a little bit about skillset. Nothing gives you more confidence than competence, fight, fear with competence. Do what scares you over and over, and you'll feel better. You'll do better and you'll feel less fear and your mistakes will have less power.

[00:19:45] Think about simple things that'll illustrate. Okay. So. You go to pour a nice glass of wine on a sunny afternoon to sit by the pool and you spill your drink. Okay. Do you sit there and say, wow, I'm terrible at pouring [00:20:00] drinks. I'm never going to pour wine again. Of course you don't ridiculous. Cause you should never commit to not pouring wine again.

[00:20:06] That would be terrible. But the point of all this is that the reason you're not beating yourself up about spilling your drink one time is because you actually feel pretty confident. You do indeed know how to pour a drink and you understand that that mistake is just a blip and just something that happened and you don't have to ascribe too much to it.

[00:20:28] Okay. I just made a mistake and you move on. And that's competence. So sometimes we just have to get a grip. When we make a mistake, you just move on. You don't give it more meaning than what it has. You know, you gave a presentation, it was going really well. You messed something up, you got something wrong.

[00:20:47] It's just a mistake. It's just a little spilled wine. You got to get back up, do it again and not give it too much of your mental, emotional. Attention and energy because [00:21:00] it doesn't speak to your competence. And if it does then get more competent. If you find yourself at a skillset deficit, this is wonderful.

[00:21:09] This is learning. You went out there, you made a mistake, you realized you needed to hone a particular skill. And now you've got that information and you'd go, and you do the hard work and you improve and you get back. But you need to take perfection off the table because no matter how good you get, I don't care how skilled of a speaker you are.

[00:21:27] Sometimes you're going to make mistakes. Perfection is not on the table. To build confidence. You can also recognize and keep track of your achievements, write them down, keep them in a file or journal. Use them to interrupt the voices that mental saboteurs, the outward and inward critics, that constant diet of not good enough, not enough because you are so enough when you pay attention to your achievements and focus on those, the fear and the mistakes begin to lose their power.

[00:21:58] And finally there's [00:22:00] toolset right? Find inspiring women to emulate, but also to serve as examples, surround yourself with warriors who helped bring out your inner warrior, trust your talent, but also how that group of people you trust, not a bunch of people are just going to, co-sign your bullshit. I'm talking about those people who will accurately call you out when you get it wrong, but also tell you that you think you can't do it, but you can't.

[00:22:26] Because they know you and they know that the fear is not a factor when it comes to what you're able to accomplish. And so often the tool set is surrounding ourselves with that inspiration. Find inspiration every day that can help you interrupt the negative messaging that creates fear and makes you feel more confident.

[00:22:48] The books, the podcasts, the social media sites, and inspire, empower, and support the people, the family, whatever it takes, you are a warrior. So surround yourself with warriors and [00:23:00] listen to them because they are your people. Wrapping up it's mindset, skillset, tool, set, competence and confidence. And those are all things that are in your power.

[00:23:14] They're all things that you can access that are in your tool belt, because you're a warrior and you're a bad-ass and getting it wrong once in a while and making a mistake and falling down just means you're in the arena when you're in the arena. You fall, you get knocked down. That's just how it goes.

[00:23:34] There's a quote. I remember reading once that said don't live the same day for 75 years and call it a life. And I think what the takeaway from that is, is that we have to put ourselves out there and fear is a part of that process. And that's okay. Right. We have to embrace that fear and we have to press on.

[00:23:54] Anyway. Fear is good. It tells us what we have to do. The more scared we
[00:24:00] are of something we're working on, the sure. We can be that we have to do. And I
think that's so interesting because if we're not afraid, if we're not feeling the fear that how
really important is the thing to us, how attached are we to a thing that we're not afraid of at
all?

[00:24:19] We're afraid because it matters. So do the things that matter and accept that the
fear that you have is good. Each week, I end with a manifest statement, a practical
takeaway. And so this week, my manifest statement is actually an acronym that you can take
away a challenge to brag that acronym Bragg B R a G stands for big radical audacious goal.

[00:24:49] Have them and pursue them. Fear does not go away. The warrior uses fear to be
fierce. All you warriors [00:25:00] listening who want to continue to transcend barriers and
thrive. You won't want to miss next week's episodes. Make sure to hit that subscribe. For
more resources, you can visit my website, www.advancingwomenpodcast.com and connect
on Instagram at [advancing women podcast](https://www.instagram.com/advancingwomenpodcast).

[00:25:19] I love getting your feedback and ideas on topics. You'd like to hear me cover in
more depth or new topics. You'd like me to explore. So please email me. Okay. Dr. D
[simone@advancingwomenpodcast.com](mailto:dsimone@advancingwomenpodcast.com) with your ideas and feedback. That's D R D E S I M O
N e@advancingwomenpodcast.com. I just want to thank my producer, Joe Jacobs, the audio
warrior, who wrote the music for this podcast.

[00:25:47] It's totally bad-ass and I love it. And a huge thanks to Heather Harris, the creative
warrior who designed the advancing woman podcast logo. And thanks to all of you for
joining me here today. [00:26:00]