

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

of what their male counterparts were. To make up this difference, women would need to work 47 extra days per year. And the gap is larger for women of color.

Amy Vetter • Jun. 19, 2018

Although Equal Pay Day was on April 10, we're still a ways from a world where professionals are paid the same regardless of their gender. A recent study from [Pew Research](#) found that, in 2017, women were paid 82 percent of what their male counterparts were. To make up this difference, women would need to work 47 extra days per year. And the gap is larger for women of color.

In addition to the obvious economic disparity this pattern creates, it also has psychological effects on women across all professions. A [Women in the Workplace](#) report conducted by Lean In and McKinsey & Company notes that, "women are less optimistic they can reach the top." When you look at the numbers in the report it's not hard to see how the gender pay gap runs parallel with what might be called a "confidence gap."

Despite this gap, self-confidence can be coached, trained, and harnessed. It's a [learned behavior](#), not an entirely innate one. Mindfulness, along with new technology like biofeedback — the electronic monitoring of body functions — can help women close the confidence gap.

The Confidence Gap Is Real

A study in the [Journal of Personality and Social Psychology](#), led by Dr. Wiebke Bleidorn, investigated the difference in self-esteem and confidence across genders and found that women tend to lack in these qualities compared to men. While the study didn't delve into reasons for this gap, Dr. Bleidorn was willing to offer a hypothesis as to why it exists. "I can speculate that in Western societies, women are

more likely to compare themselves to men,” she states. “Men tend to have higher-

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

disenfranchised) to break out of it.

Training for Confidence

We've all heard the phrase “fake it ‘til you make it” or “mind over matter.” It might be a cliché, but there's some truth to it when it comes to developing a sense of confidence in professional environments, and when it comes to critical times in your career. If confidence doesn't come naturally to you, you have to hit the confidence switch consciously. How can you do that? You do this with a lot of practice and not worrying if you hear the “no's” along the way.

Our bodies can undergo measurable physiological changes based on our state of mind. That is why there is a field of study known as biofeedback wherein scientists can track these changes. [Biofeedback therapy](#) has been used to transform those neurological processes that were once automatic to become voluntary instead.

Biofeedback therapy isn't yet affordable and accessible to everyone, but you don't need to use high-tech machines to learn from biofeedback principles. You can glean a great deal about how your physical state and mood are interconnected if you pay closer attention to it and respond accordingly.

The next time you acknowledge the feeling of confidence — on those days where everything feels like it is going right — pay attention to how you feel physically and emotionally. Note your heart rate, breathing patterns, and any other markers you are able to identify. Then, when you're feeling less-than-confident (maybe you're about to give a presentation, or attend an important networking event) try to take yourself back and replicate the physical characteristics of your most confident and authentic self. You'll find that putting your body into a state of confidence will produce a similar feeling in your mind. You might say that creating an experience of “mind over matter” or being more mindful of your surrounding and how you are feeling can

benefit you at the most critical points in your day or week. Alternately, you can think

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

settle your nerves and allow you to approach an uncomfortable situation with confidence. I talk about it more here on my YouTube video about the [Confidence Gap](#).

You should use any mindfulness techniques that allow you to decrease your heart rate and lower stress levels when you need it most so you don't hold yourself back from something you want. You don't need reams of data, after all, to know when you're feeling up and when you're feeling down. Maybe one day, we'll all have the option to experience biofeedback therapy and understand the precise physiological markers of our moods. Until then, we'll have to rely on old-school methods of listening to our bodies and putting ourselves in a confident mindset.

Closing the gender pay gap won't happen overnight, but it's a battle that benefits everyone in the workplace, not just women. We often look outside ourselves for others to fix it, but with practice and consistency of pushing ourselves to approach career opportunities in a different way, we may be able to break that glass ceiling after all.

Accounting • Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved