

# Why can't you take YES for an answer

 By [Catherine Milward-Bridges](#)

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That awkward moment when you pay someone a compliment and they 'retaliate' with an argument, as to why your compliment is not warranted. Sound familiar?

You may not ever have gone to these extremes, but most people can relate to having come up with various reasons why they're not worthy of something like praise.

Your unwillingness/inability to recognise your own value can have far-reaching consequences in various areas of your life.



## In your personal life

Though research shows that women are more likely to second-guess themselves than men, our testosterone-oozing counterparts are not left unscathed. While women talk more freely about their feelings of inferiority, men see this as a scourge, and therefore keep their feelings well-hidden.

The effects of these perceptions - because that's really what they are - on our personal lives could range from troubled relationships, to untold loneliness and self-loathing.

We're more willing to say and do things that will build OTHERS up, than we are to do it for ourselves. Start with YOURSELF.

## In your career

When was the last time you bragged UNAPOLOGETICALLY about an achievement at work?

Those who are comfortable talking about their achievements - without rubbing their colleagues' noses in it, of course - are more likely to graciously accept praise.

There's nothing out-of-line about saying something like this during an appraisal/meeting: "I'm really proud of the way I ran this project; and how I managed to stick to the deadlines, regardless of setbacks."

The more you demonstrate being comfortable with praise - even if you're giving it to yourself - the more likely people are to give it to you.

## In business

It's astounding how many businesses don't have a 'brag file'. Most business owners are so transfixed on mending what's gone wrong in their business, that they totally forget to celebrate and savour their achievements. Documenting them would be the ultimate, of course!

The ability to market your business starts with having a healthy view of your own worth, as well as that of your business. I say 'healthy', because arrogance (the other extreme) could be as destructive as low self-worth.

Furthermore, whatever your product/service, you need to have 'sold' it CONVINCINGLY to yourself first, before it can even begin to pique the interest of potential customers; not to mention your competitors.

At networking events, how do you respond to: "So, what do you do?" Are you forthcoming about the value you're adding to the business landscape? Do you even dare to cite some of your business achievements - in a humble but confident way - and WHY you're proud of them?

## Shake it off!

Unlearning your automatic tendency to reject positive input is NOT going to be easy, but here's a headstart:

1. Ask 'dumb' questions, and see how others follow suit.
2. Admit to failing, and be okay about it.
3. Be generous with praise for others, and for yourself.
4. Take negative feedback on the chin, and CHOOSE to learn from it.
5. Embrace your ignorance in certain areas - nobody knows EVERYTHING.

## We have a name!

The likes of Maya Angelou, Kate Winslet and Don Cheadle are amongst up to 70% others who have suffered from it. Coined in the 1980s, it's called the ["Impostor Syndrome"](#).

This is a psychological phenomenon in which people can't accept their accomplishments; despite external evidence of their capabilities. They're faced with the conundrum of differentiating between giving their best and being the best. Is this you?

Watch [Margie Warrell](#), author and executive life coach, give the lowdown on this condition.

## Tips on how to overcome the "Impostor Syndrome":

1. Recognise your innate value: each individual has something special to offer the world.
2. Acknowledge your success, and that you've earned it: it didn't happen by chance.
3. Don't compare yourself to others: you'd be doing yourself a GRAVE injustice.
4. Take risks, without fearing failure: otherwise, you'll always wonder what the outcome would've been.

So, whether it's a new job, a successful pitch to a client or a new love in your life, you're the best person for the 'job'. The next time you get YES for an answer, accept it, relish it and celebrate it!

## ABOUT CATHERINE MILWARD-BRIDGES

Catherine Milward-Bridges is a passionate communication specialist and founder of [simplyput.co.za](#). Catherine guides her clients in taking their engagement efforts from good to great; and helps them optimise social media with strategic know-how.

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