

# The Peaceful Productivity Podcast

## Ep #86: Managing Self-Doubt in Business



## Full Episode Transcript

[The Peaceful Productivity Podcast®](#), with your host *Kim Christiansen*

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Welcome everyone. I'm Kim Christiansen and this is the Peaceful Productivity Podcast where I share strategies to help you get the most outta your time and feel better in the process.

Hi everyone. Welcome to another episode of the Peaceful Productivity Podcast. Today we're gonna talk about self-doubt, and the thing that I think is kind of tricky about self-doubt is that many of us don't even realize that we have self-doubt, or if we are aware of it, we might not experience it as a problem. I know this was true for me.

If you had asked me, I don't know, five, 10 years ago, I would not have owned that. I had self-doubt at all. In fact, I think that it became very, very common for me to fake it till you make it so assume this, this air of self-confidence that became my habitual thinking pattern, so much so that I did not acknowledge or even realize that I had self-doubt or that it was a problem. I think the reason that we might overlook it is because we assume that self-doubt is just negative self-talk.

We believe that it sounds like something like, I can't do this or I'm not good enough, and that type of negative self-talk is definitely self-doubt for sure, but it can be a bit more insidious than that. It can be a little bit more subtle. Some of us, myself included, aren't even aware of the thoughts in our brain or we're not aware that they are just thoughts.

We become so accustomed to that talk track that's going on in our head that it just becomes like background noise. It's not even really noticeable. Or if you are aware of your thoughts and that they are just thoughts, they might sound a little bit more positive. So we don't often associate them with self-doubt. Some common examples are thoughts like, I don't feel like doing this right now. I'll have more time later. This is going to take a lot of time. This is going to be complicated. I'm not sure how to do this. I don't know. Those thoughts are all indicative of self-doubt.

We know these thoughts are associated with self-doubt because when you think about the energy and action that comes from self-confidence, they look entirely different than the thoughts and actions that are associated with self-doubt. There are also some telltale behaviors that can signal self-doubt, things like procrastination or avoidance, allowing yourself to become distracted, seeking out validation from others, people pleasing, compare and despair where you're comparing yourself to others and beating yourself up about it.

Overthinking can be a symptom of self-doubt, perfectionism, of course, and analysis paralysis, so getting into your head and not necessarily taking action. All of those things can be symptoms of self-doubt. So if you are showing up to your work or your business and you're feeling overwhelmed or disorganized, it could be that self-doubt is this limiting belief system that is fueling those feelings of overwhelm and disorganization. Self-doubt is a very common experience for many people.

In fact, research suggests that most people experience self-doubt at some point in their lives. It can be triggered by a variety of factors including personal experiences, relationships, and cultural and societal expectations. Even though self-doubt is quite a common experience for many of us, it can look different

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for different people. Some people may experience it in specific situations such as public speaking or maybe taking on a new challenge. While others may experience more generalized self-doubt that affects their overall sense of wellbeing and self-worth, not only is self-doubt quite common, it's also very valuable.

It's kind of a protective mechanism that helps prevent us from acting impulsively, and it also helps us to make informed and cautious decisions. So the self-doubt is not the problem. What is problematic is the denial of the self-doubt, pretending that there is no self-doubt there and having it drive decisions at a subconscious level, that's when it becomes a problem.

We often don't acknowledge self-doubt for a variety of reasons. For example, there's the fear of being judged. If I were to acknowledge that I was feeling doubtful about my capability in some area, I might worry that others would think of me as weak or incompetent. So I would be reluctant in that situation to admit that I was feeling doubtful goes back to that, fake it till you make it type of thing.

Acknowledging self-doubt can feel embarrassing or even shameful, which also makes it very difficult to acknowledge or address. It puts us into maybe a state of vulnerability. It can make us feel vulnerable and exposed, which can feel uncomfortable. The final reason why some might be reluctant to acknowledge self-doubt is because they have a belief system around self-reliance. They believe that they could and should be able to handle everything on their own, and that admitting to self-doubt is admitting that we're not capable of doing something on our own.

So in order to manage self-doubt, the first step I believe, is to acknowledge that self-doubt is common, and not only is it common, but it's also quite useful in many contexts. Having an awareness of self-doubt is having a deeper, stronger connection to oneself and understanding oneself is the key to understanding what it is that you want and how to go about going after your goals.

When we push all that down and repress it all, that's when we start to lose touch with what it is that really lights us up, what it is that we want and what our goals are ultimately. So the first step in managing self-doubt is just acknowledging that it is part of the human experience and that it can be quite useful. It can be quite helpful in terms of personal growth and self-improvement.

It can also help to build that courage muscle because it does take courage to acknowledge and address our vulnerabilities, our limitations. So by recognizing and working through self-doubt, you can learn to overcome your fears and achieve your goals. What feels scary today can then feel just like second nature tomorrow. We see this all the time in business. Self-doubt is a normal and natural part of business. My clients will often tell me that they can't be successful in business until they have eliminated the self-doubt.

What we work on together is rather than eliminating or repressing the self-doubt, it's acknowledging, owning it and channeling that self-doubt into productive activity within the business lifespan. Self-doubt is common at all stages. It doesn't mean anything about you as a business owner. I see this all the time.

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When we get through the initial stages of the business, we have this belief system that once we get to the next stage, then we will no longer experience self-doubt and then we get to the next stage and there's still self-doubt, and that can be quite frustrating and discouraging because we had this belief system that once we got to a certain level that we would no longer have self-doubt.

So that's why it becomes even more important to learn to manage the self-doubt because the self-doubt never goes away. It just becomes manageable, and once you learn how to manage the self-doubt than it no longer becomes a reason to stay stuck, to stay in the comfort zone, it just becomes part of the package of running your own business.

It makes sense that there would be self-doubt all along the way when you're building a business, and the reason why is because it is an identity shift in the beginning. It's shifting your identity from your role previously, whether that was employee or part-time entrepreneur to full-time business owner. That's an identity shift. And then shifting from full-time business owner at the beginning stages to full-time business owner at the middle stages and then shifting again, it's shifting that identity over and over and over again. It makes sense that that would come with a lot of self-doubt.

So the sooner that we're able to learn how to manage the self-doubt, own it and manage it, the sooner that we can take back control of our decisions. I like to think about it like moving the self-doubt from the driver's seat to the passenger seat, or even from moving it to the passenger seat to the backseat, because when we put self-doubt in the backseat, we're still acknowledging that it's there. It's still a voice and sometimes it's an important voice, but it's no longer in charge of our decisions.

The sooner we separate our decision making ability from our self-doubt, the sooner we'll be able to enjoy greater self-confidence, stronger leadership skills, improved problem solving, and maybe most importantly, increased resilience. When you're confident in your ability to figure things out in your capability, you start to find that your business relationships improve because you're more in touch with your authentic voice.

One of the top reasons that small businesses fail is that the business owner simply gives up, and I can definitely relate to this. One of the most challenging aspects that I've found with owning a business is that perseverance to keep going even through the low points. I found that the more that I work on my belief in myself, in my services, and in my clients, the more resilient and patient that I am with a longer game.

Now, I've found that it's about tempering my expectations around the quick wins and the overnight success, allowing me to focus on building a foundation of systems and strong relationships that are going to sustain the business over the long term. So I'd like to offer three strategies today if you are interested in learning how to better manage self-doubt. So the first strategy is creating self-awareness.

What I mean by self-awareness is, I mean hearing those thoughts that are really self-doubt thoughts, owning those thoughts and then challenging them. What I'll often do is I'll often write a whole page of

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nothing but negative thoughts, as someone who was brought up to not complain and to not be negative. The simple act of writing all of this down can be very challenging for me. However, once those thoughts are out in the open on a piece of paper, it's so much easier to see what their effects are on me and my behavior than when they're just simply existing in my head, especially if they're constantly running below the level of my conscious awareness.

If I take the time to visit them, see them and write them down, then I can check to see if they're grounded in reality or if they're just being distorted by fear. For those of you who are familiar with coaching, you'll know that that's a great place to start looking at your self-limiting thoughts and beliefs. A coach can also help you to explore alternative perspectives and look for evidence that contradicts your negative beliefs, cuz that's something that we do as humans is we're always looking for evidence to support our existing beliefs.

So seeking out evidence that contradicts our existing beliefs is something that takes deliberate thought and energy. The next strategy for managing self-doubt is exercising self-compassion. I've talked about self-compassion on the podcast before and I think it's so valuable. I've come to believe that it's not only instrumental for our mental health, but it is imperative when we're pursuing and achieving goals.

If self-judgment keeps us stuck, then it's self-compassion is the thing that gets us going. Again, it's the fuel. Dr. Kristen Neff has identified three pillars of self-compassion. I really love the way she talks about this. She says There's common humanity. So for example, we all experience self-doubt. It's up times in our lives. The second one is mindfulness. Being aware of the thoughts, feelings, and sensations around self-doubt and looking at those things without any judgment or without any avoidance.

And then the third pillar described by Dr. Neff is self-kindness. So treating yourself with a warmth, care and support that you would show to a loved one. What I like to do is I like to imagine what I might say to a loved one who's hurting or even to my eight year old self, what might I say to that person and then that's what I apply to my own talk track in my head. The third and final strategy that I'll talk about today in terms of managing self-doubt is taking action.

Sometimes when we discover thought work, we might spend all of our time trying to analyze why we're feeling self-doubt and how it's impacting our lives. While that awareness, it's really good and it's really helpful, it can also prevent you from taking action. So acknowledging the self-doubt is really important, but then breaking your goal into smaller, manageable steps and then taking actual action one step at a time.

Because our brains like to seek out evidence for what we already believe to be true. When we give ourselves evidence for our ability to accomplish a goal, we're nurturing that growing belief in ourselves, then celebrating those accomplishments along the way, then you're gathering more and more evidence for your own capability.

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In addition, when you ask for help or support when you need it, you're also building that belief in your own resourcefulness. Asking for help shows that you're willing to be vulnerable and that you value your own wellbeing enough to seek out the resources you need.

When you ask for help, that's further evidence that you can manage self-doubt. Having that evidence that you can manage self-doubt helps you to shift to that new identity. As a person who doesn't let self-doubt stand in their way, it really does take a lot of courage to admit that you don't have all the answers and that you need assistance, but doing so can really open you up to new opportunities. Sometimes when I'm feeling discomfort, I'll ask myself, how is this an opportunity for me?

The beautiful thing about asking for help is that you can tap into the expertise and the resources of others who have already navigated similar challenges or who have specialized knowledge in a particular area. Being self-confident doesn't mean the ability to always do it alone. In fact, being self-confident means that you're able to recognize and own your own limitations.

When you ask for help, you can be provided with guidance and support and feedback that helps you to avoid some of the common pitfalls to work more efficiently and to achieve your goals more quickly. In summary, managing self-doubt is the key to achieving your business goals because it can help you to overcome limiting belief systems and those behaviors that are keeping you stuck in the comfort zone.

My favorite reason for doing this work around self-doubt is that it can cultivate a real sense of empowerment. Like this belief that you have the ability to succeed and achieve your goals. You get to change the narrative in your head from, I can't do this to I can do this, and even from I can do this to I will do this. It's like climbing up the capability ladder.

When you're able to manage your self-doubt, you can better handle the ups and downs of business, and you can navigate challenging situations with greater ease and confidence. To feel better, you don't have to change anything about you. To feel better, you simply have to change how you talk to yourself because what you believe becomes your reality.

If you believe that you are capable of figuring it out, you will prove that true to yourself. If you would like to learn more about coaching on self-doubt and creating more self-confidence, I'll invite you to check out my website, [financialwellnesscoach.ca](http://financialwellnesscoach.ca). Have a great week everyone.

Are you looking for a coach who will help you increase your business profit, while protecting your time and your wellbeing? If so, I'll invite you to check out my website, [financialwellnesscoach.ca](http://financialwellnesscoach.ca).