

SEASON 1 · EPISODE 4 · FROM PEER TO LEADER

Why You Feel Like a Fraud

Seventy-eight percent of business owners and senior managers surveyed report the same feeling, and more than half say it affects how they lead. It isn't a readout of your ability. It's one of two conversations in every hard moment — and it runs the other one until you see it.

SEE IT · SAY IT · LEAD

1 THE ROOM WHERE YOU KNOW THE LEAST

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "If I ask this, they'll see I don't belong." It's protecting your image, not your judgment — and it costs you the decision.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Asking isn't the exposure. Nodding along is."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

The disclaimer feels like humility and works like a warning label. Everyone at the table reads labels. Credibility comes from surfacing what's unclear before you decide.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"I want to make sure I understand this before we decide. Can you walk me through that last part?"

2 THE COMPLIMENT YOU THROW AWAY

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "If I accept this, I'll have to live up to it." It's keeping the bar low enough that you can't fall off.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"A compliment is evidence, not a promise."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

55% of those surveyed said praise from colleagues can trigger the feeling. Batting it away deletes the only outside data you have and teaches the team to stop.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"Thank you. What specifically worked well? I want to repeat it next time."

3 THE CALL YOU'RE NOT QUALIFIED TO MAKE

SEE IT — INSIDE YOU

The sentence that fires: "Who am I to make this call?" Every extra opinion is a co-signer. The stall is insurance, paid for with your team's time.

SAY IT — TO YOURSELF

"Ready is a feeling. Decided is an action."

SEE IT — ACROSS FROM YOU

The stall never ends on its own — the feeling isn't connected to the information. Thursday's numbers won't change how you feel. Checklist confidence, not gut confidence.

SAY IT — OUT LOUD

"Based on what we know now, here's the decision and why. If you see a risk I've missed, raise it. We'll review the outcome on [date] and adjust if the evidence calls for it."

TRY ONE THIS WEEK

1. Before you answer this week, catch the sentence that fires first. Then ask one basic question with no disclaimer in front of it.
2. Take the next compliment whole, then ask what specifically worked, and write it down in their words.
3. Put a review date on the decision you've been gathering one more opinion about, and announce it.

Pick just one — small reps beat big plans. Want the five-day version? Grab a Challenge Sheet at theworkingleader.com/challenge-sheets.

LEAD

The feeling isn't a verdict. See the sentence it's hiding behind, say the hard thing anyway, survive it, and the confidence shows up behind you — built out of things you actually did. **The first person you lead is you.**

You can do this!
— Matt

REMEMBER THIS

"I have written eleven books, but each time I think, 'uh-oh, they're going to find out now.'"

— MAYA ANGELOU

Eleven books. If accomplishment automatically cured the feeling, hers should have.

GO DEEPER

Grab the free starter toolkit — checklists, scripts, and this week's challenge — at theworkingleader.com.

YOUR NOTES · THE SENTENCE YOU CAUGHT · THE ONE THING YOU'LL DO DIFFERENTLY