



Coaching For Female Entrepreneurs

How Life Coaching Can Improve Your Bottom Line

By Members of the Int'l Association of Professional Life Coaches



Chapter 9:
The Three R's For Female
Entrepreneurs

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The Three R's For Female Entrepreneurs

Ever feel hesitant to declare yourself an entrepreneur? I wouldn't come near the notion for many years. Too scary and ripe with responsibilities I didn't want to touch – like gain and loss, and the bottom line!

But after 4 decades of undeniable success, it was just silly not to embrace the title. This is important. Not declaring your female entrepreneurial status to yourself and others makes it that much harder to understand and manage the unique stress and challenges that go with it.

Over those 4 decades I'm grateful to have discovered a few keys that make professional success and personal happiness an easier and less stressful challenge for women.

We do have a particular challenge that men just don't have. And that's what I want to share with you in this chapter.

We Are Caretakers Of The Heart

First, let's acknowledge that putting others first is baked into us.

Women seem to be universally designed to care for others.

Whether it's our estrogen or our culture, we usually don't even consider it a decision. We just do it. This is one of our defining and differentiating characteristics. I'm going to call it the Unconditional Motherly Love gene.



In the past years, we began entering the business world in more powerful and challenging ways. This shift hooked up the Unconditional Motherly Love gene to the Super Woman gene.

This caused the emergence of a powerful push-pull dilemma for every female entrepreneur. This generated quite a cast of new considerations and conundrums. And these consistently play a powerful role in creating our successes (and failures) as solo entrepreneurs.

Here's our unique push/pull:

EITHER be a wonderful, giving, loving woman demonstrating the power of unconditional love

OR be a powerful, no holds barred, and cutting-edge leader capable of succeeding in a male dominated business world.

It somehow slipped into our consciousness as an EITHER/OR proposition. And that means it exerts a powerful influence on our decision making process, and ultimately, our financial success. There's more on that later.

It seems our beautiful feminine trait of caring without concern for ourselves also contributes to many of our painful and frustrating business failures.

I was puzzled by how something so intrinsic to the female nature (caring about others and putting them first) could also be one of the biggest contributors to my frequently falling flat on my professional and financial face!

These turned out to be things like:

- ♥ Not being comfortable setting good boundaries
- ♥ Not being able to say no or turn someone away
- ♥ Not asking for the fee appropriate to my skill level
- ♥ Letting my heart take the lead, against my better judgment
- ♥ Making decisions that pushed the limits of my energy & time

As a Life Coach and Behavioral Change Specialist, I've coached many women who were frustrated and unhappy with their businesses and their lives. And they couldn't quite put their finger on what was happening.

Working with so many women over the years made it obvious that female entrepreneurs have to address a fundamental challenge unique to them.

Whether you have a partner and kids, are a single Mom, or have taken the path less traveled and remained unmarried and on your own, this challenge remains consistent.

Balancing The Super Woman Gene & The Unconditional Motherly Love Gene



Let me reiterate the unique challenge again:

*EITHER be a wonderful, giving, loving woman demonstrating
the power of unconditional love*

OR be a powerful, no holds barred, and cutting-edge leader capable of succeeding in a male dominated business world.

Bottom line: no matter your circumstance, every female entrepreneur has this challenge:

EITHER I to attend to my own needs

OR I attend to the needs of others.

It makes no difference whether the 'other' is family, friends, clients, or the details of creating and maintaining your entrepreneurial enterprise. And curiously, the stress generated by this dilemma is often behind those financial decisions that don't turn out so well.

The Super Woman gene divides your work load between business and family/friends. You have to attend to both as the Super Woman gene demands. But you can only handle one of them at a time. This is why the scenario is so deeply distressing. Which do you choose?

You find yourself of 2 minds about the answer. On one hand, you have to take care of your business. But while you're doing it, you fear your relationships will suffer. On the other hand, you have to take care of your family and friends. But while you're doing that, you fear your business and financial commitments will suffer.

The real issue here is that an entire category of concern doesn't even reach the agenda. The Super Woman gene completely leaves YOU out of the picture and will demand you take up no room in the daily calendar.

Let's take a look at what I mean.

What We Unconsciously Expect Of Ourselves



I think you'll agree that the demands emerging from each of the following four categories eats up a huge portion of your daily energy, attention, and focus. With the Super Woman gene in operation, we don't even question the reasonableness of assuming so many conflicting pressures.

- **The Outer Face Of Your Business:** Making sure you put your client's interests over your own. That fundamental decision puts everything flowing in the right direction for both efficiency and effectiveness. It's the bottom line - hence, the name of my own business. If you can do this, success will almost certainly knock on your door. But if you don't do it

properly, you'll end up making your life about your clients, booking meetups and talking with clients without regard for your own personal time separate from work.

- **The Inner Face Of Your Business:** Attending to all the details of keeping your business running smoothly – attracting clients, blog posts, articles for LinkedIn and other platforms, social media presence, making videos, pod casts, accounting, and on and on. This includes continued learning that hopefully plops you right on the edge of your comfort zone. If you can do this, you'll learn a lot. But if not done properly, you'll feel overwhelmed and hear exhaustion knocking on your door (and hopefully begin to grasp the importance of out-sourcing).
- **Keeping The Home Fires Burning:** Making sure your household runs smoothly. This includes attending to an amazing number of details: food in the frig, changing the cat's litter box, walking the dog, paying bills, doing laundry, house cleaning, changing the sheets on the bed, and on and on. And isn't it amazing how long it seems to take to consistently manage each of these so that everyday life unfolds with a minimal number of glitches? Longing for an efficiency expert (or a maid) may begin to enter the picture.
- **Nurturing Your Relationships:** Continuing to foster your relationships with your own family, your family of origin, and friends. Aside from business demands, this is usually the strongest contender fighting for your energy, focus, and attention. This is where the push/pull dilemma can be felt the strongest. Nothing is more important than family and friends. But ... sometimes it has to be pushed to the side to wait a bit for your attention. When is a good time to do that??? As a loving Mom, partner or friend, is there ever a good time? When is a good time to push your business needs aside for a bit? Is there ever a good time from the entrepreneur's point of view? Hence the stress, worry, and frustration emerge.



What We Forget To Remember

There is another category of demands equally challenging. It's been relegated to something you know you should attend to, but just don't have the time (thanks to the Super Woman gene).

This is the confusing notion of self-care.

I've found most women don't really know what that is. At best, it means making time for our modern day version: exercise, better diet, more conscious attention to what's in our purchases at the grocery store, cooking more, eating out less, watching fewer TV programs, getting enough sleep, maybe even an occasional (or regular) massage!

But there are three additional CORE needs that most female entrepreneurs *absolutely require* and don't remember to weave into their day – every day! Know what they are?

*I call these CORE needs
the three R's for Female Entrepreneurs:
rest, renewal, and reflection.*

These are of fundamental importance to business (financial) success and personal happiness.

These three needs live deep in your heart and soul – outside the realm of your thinking mind. When you just keep chewing on your problems and hunting for solutions, you can easily ignore the presence of these deeper needs.

That's when their demand for your attention can expand exponentially. And as weird as it may seem, the heart and soul can create some pretty unpleasant ways to get your attention.

But what does this have to do with being a female entrepreneur? Well, hang in there. Because I've found it has a lot to do with the unique quality of the female entrepreneur's success and failure.

Not responding to the call of these three core needs plops us right into the hands of an everyday dilemma – one that few of us know what to do with, and rarely even recognize as the reason we're feeling so stressed out and overwhelmed. And, if you're not careful, it will negatively impact your business via your financial decisions

The Core Dilemma You Have To Manage Everyday

*Do I take care of myself now, or everyone and everything else first,
including my career?*

Once you realize that YOU are also a category that must be attended to as well as business and family and friends, the dilemma gets a bit clearer – and more difficult.

As you attempt to manage all of the above details of your professional and personal lives, this dilemma arises as a repeating question – whether you're conscious of it, or not. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day. And that's just not enough time to do it all!



When you add your own needs into the picture, the dilemma gets a bit more complicated. It rearranges itself from just *either* business *or* family/friends to *either* business/family/friends *or* you.

Although the dilemma and the answer will have to change with the circumstances, stress arises from the fact that each time the dilemma arises, you have to make a decision.

In other words, an either/or question demands an answer and a resolution.

As the moments of life unfold, circumstances and situations change. And so does the best way to answer this question.

Becoming conscious of this dilemma (the *either/or* question) and what to do with it when it arises, dramatically reduces your stress, anxiety, doubt, and frustration.

Here are a few common examples of how it creates distress in your business and personal lives:

- Do I do the dishes now or balance my accounts?
- Do I skip my kids' school play tonight or meet for drinks with that potential investor who can help me get out of debt and turn my business around?
- Do I spend my free time this afternoon watching that on-line training on how to get high paying clients, or do I grab these few hours and go grocery shopping which I'm desperate to do?
- Do I keep tweeting and blogging today, or honor my intuition that I really just need a day off, all to myself?
- Do I move away from my computer right now and just sit by the window and watch the rain, or do I stick it out until I get this program to start working again?

These are stressful questions requiring stressful answers. Why?

*Whichever option you choose will still leave you wanting,
or needing, to also do the one you didn't choose.*

Sometimes life helps out and changes the situation. If your kids' school play is cancelled, part of you is happy because now you won't miss the joy of seeing it. And you're free to meet with the potential Mr. Money Bags without guilt.

But of course, that rarely happens, right?

*So you're left with an additional layer of stress
that comes from making decisions you don't want to make in the first place.*

Is There A Way Out?

Is there a better way to manage these dilemmas? Well, you still have to make a decision. That's life. BUT ... there is a way to navigate this sticky situation without feeling guilt, stress, or frustration about the option you DIDN'T choose.



*In other words, you can learn how to feel good even though
you're feeling bad about your choice!*

And that is truly essential for staying on top of an entrepreneurial life.

This ability becomes available when you learn how to shift your attention. You want to move your attention away from the dilemma and its accompanying stress. Instead, you want to place it on fulfilling your three core needs: rest, renewal, and reflection.

Move them right up to the top of the priorities list. And with just a few little tricks, you can leave that guilt, stress, and frustration behind.

First: Play The 'As If' Game



Remembering you have core needs rests in a little trick you may have to practice. It's easy once you get the knack for the 'As If' game. The trick is simple:

- *Imagine as if* you really KNOW that the 'best' answer cannot arise out of stress, anxiety, or frustration – especially choices relating to your bottom line.
- *Imagine as if* you KNOW your best answer in the moment is alive and well and available by turning your attention to resting, renewing, and reflecting.

You see, your brain does everything it can to make what you think is true actually FEEL true. When this happens, you can comfortably make the choice that feels right to you without guilt or frustration.

Thoughts that leave you in conflict about which choice is the better one breed anxiety and doubt. You can change conflicting thoughts into positive ones that let you feel better about having to choose one option over the other. Using the *As If* game as I noted above is a great way to do this.

*And the positive thought we're talking about is this:
the answer to your dilemma will be there for you when you fulfill your three core needs.*

What can undermine this game is buying into the belief that your new positive thought isn't true. You'll hear something like: '*Getting some rest, renewing, and reflecting is not going to change anything!*'

Your mind will scan all the evidence it can find to support the negative view: continually rising debt, number of clients decreasing, strategy for generating social media presence not working, etc.

BUT ... if you understand the 'As If' game provides the groundwork for your brain to make the positive thought feel truer than the negative thought, you've won the challenge.

Not to be too repetitive, but here's the positive thought once again: the answer to your dilemma will be there for you when you fulfill your three core needs.

Second: Take These Precise Steps



Follow these steps and you'll find yourself ready to access your core needs.

♥ Acknowledge You Can't Wish Away Your Stress

There is no point in kidding yourself. Feeling overwhelmed is the most common experience of all entrepreneurs. So just take a breath and acknowledge you *are* feeling stressed.

Prove it to yourself by noticing the tension in your body, whether or not you're holding your breath, if you're feeling anxious, angry, frustrated, sad, hopeless, or helpless. Face up to the fact that this is where you're at right now. You can't manage what you won't allow yourself to recognize.

This is often the hardest step to take. The drive that made you want to become a female entrepreneur in the first place will not want to admit to what it sees as potential weakness or failure.

It's your challenge to remember weakness is only the precursor to strength.

For example, the muscle fibers in your body work together. They are not antagonistic. They actually complement each other. They efficiently keep your body both standing and moving via contraction and relaxation. Weakness and strength work together as well. They're a powerful duo dedicated to stoking the fires of motivation and commitment so they burn strong and long.



♥ **Grant Yourself Permission To Indulge In The Three R's**

Do you find yourself too often waiting for others to give you permission to breathe, to do what you know you need to do? Do you want others to grant you their approval or agreement, or to acquiesce to your need as being more important than theirs?

The Super Woman gene has a built-in resistance to recognizing the only person's permission you actually need to rest, renew, and reflect is your own.

No matter how scary it may seem to give yourself this time, keep playing the 'As If' game. KNOW the gifts (I'll list them for you in a minute) you'll receive from taking the time to rest, renew, and reflect far exceed anything else you could do for others or for yourself (and for your bottom line).

♥ **Inform Others Of Your Decision**

Let everyone who'll be affected by your time out know that you are going to take a short break – away from them or the situation. You don't need to explain it. You just need to declare it as so.

Use the tools that respond to email telling folks you're away from your desk for a while. And remember, it's not the end of your business (or your world) if you don't respond to your emails and texts immediately! Set your own limit for how long it's ok to wait before responding. I find the majority of clients will adjust.

Be respectful of others and their dependence on you. But remain firm in your commitment to making time for honoring and accessing your own core needs. The fulfillment of these needs holds the resolution to that dilemma this entire article is addressing.

♥ **Know These Actions ARE Self-Care**

Imagine as if these actions will take care of your stress. Engaging in rest and renewal, and

creating time for reflection and contemplation don't lead to self-care. They ARE self-care in action.

You don't have to do anything else. Your body and mind are each equipped to naturally restore balance physically, mentally, and emotionally (the goal of self-care). You don't have to do it for your mind and body. They know how to activate the effects of self-care on their own. All you need to do is rest, renew (relax), and reflect.

When you're stressed out, angry, anxious, or frustrated, the frontal lobe of your brain is not in the lead. That's the part of your brain that handles all executive functioning and critical thinking.

Instead, the 'fight or flight' dictate behind stress is being generated by your amygdala, or your primitive brain at the back of your skull. You need your frontal lobe to kick back in and take over. Taking the time to fill your core needs allows that to happen naturally.

Your heart and soul/spirit are also equipped with an innate drive to be happy and carefree. Again, you don't have to do it for them. You just have to give your heart and soul/spirit the time and space to do what they know how to do. Then you just show up and enjoy.

Core Needs Balance Your Drive To Care For The Other & To Care For Yourself

As women, we are blessed with a natural desire to infuse our lives with love, compassion, and caring. That's a beautiful thing. But does that increase our financial bottom line – the core concern for all entrepreneurs?



You've probably been enticed by a very common notion that actualizing love, compassion and caring requires you to 'be' and to 'do' things in a certain way.

Insisting your actions *always* reflect love, compassion and caring for others can produce a lot of confusion and frustration. Juggling the fulfillment of your personal needs and the needs of everything else in your life just isn't that simple.

This is an inner tug-of-war that is particularly strong in our feminine hearts. Not only are we *conditioned* to be care-takers, it is the natural bent of the female psyche to rise above fight or flight and to *befriend*. But when you do that too much, your gross income may go into cardiac arrest!

This befriending aspect tips the ‘me or you’ scales to an imbalanced position. You may be left wondering what to do with *your* desires at the end of the day when there is no more time or energy left.

Women have come a long way at moving differently in the outer world. But most of us still feel a confusion or nagging doubt in the inner world that something is not yet fully right.

Melody's Story



Melody is a 35 year old entrepreneur with a 3 year old professional editing business. She is also a self-professed supermom with a traveling husband, and a couple of kids to take care of, as well as a cat named Gorgeous George and a dog named Mr. Tex.

She was convinced that having her own business would be the icing on the cake. She longed for the freedom she believed came with being her own boss. Melody was certain it was the key to her fulfillment and happiness. Yet when she came to see me, anxiety was her constant companion and her stress level was off the charts.

One day, desperate for relief, Melody flew into my office, gripping her Starbuck's coffee cup so tightly I thought she was going to crumble it and slosh coffee everywhere.

She literally threw herself onto my couch and began to cry. *"I try my best, but I just can't keep things under control. I can't keep my partner happy, the kids focused on school, the house clean, enough money in my business account, and stay sane. Tell me what I'm doing wrong."*

She grabbed the Kleenex box, wiped her nose, and continued: *"I can't deal with all the choices I have to make every day. There has to be a better way! My life is driving me crazy!"*

I knew Melody wanted to be happy. For that to happen she needed to find some wisdom about what was going on. She had to find a practical way to better manage her responsibilities.

She told me she wanted to stay calm and make decisions without going in circles, worrying if her choices were right or wrong. Here's a few of the decisions she was facing on a pretty regular basis:

- pick up the kids' clothes or leave them lying around for a day
- cook good organic food for dinner or eat out at a fast-food restaurant
- finish the art project out in the garage or go to the networking event
- have coffee with her friends or hang out at home by herself
- go over her finances or go to the movies

Melody goes in circles because she wants to feel good and pick the right choice to get her there. But not knowing how to manage these dilemmas (either/or decisions) makes feeling good impossible.

These dilemmas can leave you feeling paralyzed, corner you into arguments, catch you in a power trip, amplify your desire to control things, debilitate your health, rob you of the courage you need to stand up for yourself, create exhaustion, turn you into a workaholic or codependent, hook you into other addictive behaviors, and block you from doing what actually needs to be done to keep your business thriving.

All of this can and usually does happen. But only because you may remain unaware or unable to access your core needs for rest, renewal, and reflection.

When Melody learned how to access these deeper needs, things began to change. She discovered she could stop fretting over whether her solutions were right or wrong when she faced an either/or decision.

That's because she now had new resources at her fingertips. As promised, let's take a look at the gifts Melody received by accessing her three core needs on a consistent basis.

The Gifts of Rest, Renewal, and Reflection

Your capacity for rest, renewal and reflection must be activated in order for you to receive the following cornucopia of gifts. This activation simply requires your presence. YOU are the key. Focusing your attention is what triggers the release of these presents.



Many powerful and supportive gifts rest within you and are always available to assist in the decision making essential to both professional and financial success as well as personal happiness.

Your only job is to invite them forth via rest, renewal, and reflection.



The following are twelve of these highly prized gifts essential to the continuity of motivation, commitment, and tenacity essential to your professional accomplishments:

1. **Wisdom** - the intelligent application of your current life learnings. Wisdom draws out a deeper knowing and understanding that triggers a new level of creativity into action. Wisdom offers encouragement and a sense of emotional safety. Wisdom guides you to learn from your personal experience. This wisdom remains out of reach when your body is in the grips of stress and worry.
2. **Calm** – a sense of relative freedom from anxiety and skeletal muscle tension. Renewal stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and a return to greater physical calmness and emotional stability via the relaxation response. Stress stimulates the sympathetic nervous system and the fight or flight response that keeps your decision making rooted in worry and fear.
3. **Trust** – the balancing factor to doubt. Trust generates a confidence in the reliability and availability of your own inner guidance, as well as the positive value of doubt. This accelerates your willingness to schedule time for rest, renewal, and reflection into your daily routine. Without trust, the three R's can become just a distant thought.
4. **Faith** – the result of discovering how trust and doubt work together to keep you present, mindful, and willing to access your inner sense of knowing that there is a best decision for you in each new situation. Faith opens the door to new angles of vision and freedom to contemplate seemingly impossible possibilities. Without it, giving up can enter the scene.
5. **Clarity** – seeing with sharpness, lucidity, and coherence. The ability to allow the issue in question to be not only a problem or challenge but also part of the larger whole working for you. For example, let's say you have a favorite tapestry hanging in your office. Stress results when you focus on the tiny flaw you just noticed in the lower left corner. You worry about how to fix it. Clarity shifts your focus to the presence of the whole tapestry, or the bigger picture. Focusing on the whole that holds the flaw within it opens the door to new perspectives and options previously unseen. Without clarity, confusion reigns.
6. **Joy** – a happy and delightful state of mind that redirects the heart to cheerfulness and a warm delight. This changes your physiology and brain chemistry allowing you greater access to your frontal lobe and the critical thinking so essential to effective decision making. Without an occasional dose of joy, business becomes an unwelcome burden.
7. **Guidance** – directions from a higher aspect of yourself. Until you connect with this inner guidance, it remains just a lovely notion. But once you've touched its' presence within yourself, you can more easily let go of stressing out. In this way you create space for the best way to handle the situation to arise.

8. **Gratitude** – a feeling of thankfulness for the reality of your own inner guidance which can only emerge when you are rested, relaxing, and reflecting. Again, gratitude impacts your chemistry and physiology moving you away from stress and toward the awesome fact that you are alive.
9. **Strength** – the granting of fortitude. Strength is the determination to resist being moved or at worse, shattered, by an external circumstance or internal negativity. Strength is called forth most easily by acknowledging the presence of weakness.
10. **Courage** – a unique quality of mind or spirit that allows you to stand up to difficulties, pain, and experiences of loss without allowing fear to take the lead. Courage is called forth most easily by acknowledging the presence of fear and trembling deep within.
11. **Understanding** – the power to comprehend, mentally grasp, interpret or explain the current circumstance from a different and usually larger perspective. This allows more room for creative action to arise. Understanding sheds lights on dark situations and offers new avenues of resolution that can't be found in the dark.
12. **Insight** – to catch, in a flash, a glimpse of the inner nature of a situation, what it's all about, and what you are to learn from its presence. Insight often combines all of the above gifts in a swift flash of understanding, clarity, and gratitude that leave strength, courage, trust, faith, and wisdom reverberating in its wake.



The Most Important Bottom Line Is Fulfilling Your Core Needs

Too many bad decisions, financial and otherwise, arise out of the stress and frustration that accompany dilemmas. The way around this is consistently dedicating time to the three R's.



This is so easy that it's actually difficult. We're just not used to taking care of our core needs because all they actually require is our presence – not thinking *about* them, but being *with* them. That gives them all the room they need to do their thing.

So here's the scoop:

Just sit down. Stop doing. Stop being an entrepreneur. Stop thinking about problems and their solutions. Stop worrying about money and your branding.

Switch the focus of your attention to reflecting on what's going on in the exact moment you're in. Is what's happening in your awareness the sound of the wind, the traffic, the growling in your stomach, the feel of the surface you're sitting on?

Whatever it is, approach it with the same exploratory view as your tongue does when it rolls over the space where your tooth used to be. It's trying to get a feel for the space, the size of it, what's there and what's not.

Your tongue doesn't need to draw any conclusions. It's just getting a feel for what is new and different. Likewise, you don't need to draw any conclusions either. Just let your mind contemplate or reflect on what's in front of it. It's still thinking but it's not problem/solution focused. It's like meandering down a country lane or a city street when you're not in a hurry. There's nothing to do and nowhere to be.

Don't make it difficult. It isn't. You're just not used to allowing another aspect of you some time to discover and explore itself. Even though it doesn't seem logical, this is the process that grants you the best way to manage the decision making around those either/or questions.

And this is the single most powerful way to stay calm whether your financial success is going through a challenging downtime or a joyous upswing.

Some people meditate, pray, read poetry or fill up with other words that inspire. Perhaps you're a lover of mindfulness. That will do too. There's just nothing easier (and harder) than simply being here and being now.

Whatever you do, stay with the notion that there's really nothing for you to do here. Just give your three core needs some time and space. They'll grant you so much in return you'll start making them an everyday priority you wouldn't miss for the world.

What To Do Next?



Click on to the following link and pick up your free gift – [*The Three R's Workbook: Check List & Action Guide*](#) to help you actually use what you've learned in this chapter.

Don't let any dilemma disrupt the joy and delight of being an amazing woman and creative female entrepreneur. Here's to your enjoyment and continued professional success, and personal happiness.

Much love to you,
Ragini



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YOUR THREE CORE NEEDS

REST



RENEWAL



REFLECTION



THE 3 R'S
COMPRISE
THE MOST
VALUABLE
BOTTOM
LINE.

AFFECT YOUR
ABILITY TO
REMAIN
CALM,
CENTERED,
AND PRESENT
WHETHER
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