



### **3 Ways Women Can Sabotage Their Careers**

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Imagine the following scenario: You walk into the office, just days after your promotion. You're happy you've upgraded to a new office, a better parking spot, and a better salary. You're proud of yourself, and you should be, you've worked really hard for this.

So, why are the rest of the women in the office whispering to themselves when you walk by? Why have they suddenly stopped inviting you to lunch? And why is there a nasty rumor about how you "really" got your promotion, spreading around the office like wild fire? It's called relational aggression and it's just one of the many ways women can sabotage their careers.

### **Ways Women Can Sabotage Their Careers**

Leadership and strategic communications consultant, Susan Tardanico, shares some of the ways women can impair their careers, and potential ways on how to fix those problems:

#### **1. Relational Aggression**

As I already described above, relational aggression is when women work to sabotage other women in the workplace. The typical catty syndrome, where women are competitive in all of the wrong ways. "Behaviors include things like backstabbing,

gossip, rumor-mongering, bullying and icing people out,” said Tardanico. “This not only hurts women, but it’s a turnoff to many men, too, and can prevent a woman from moving up in her career.”

Though there’s been a significant rise in entrepreneurship, there still seem to be gender gaps in those leadership positions, particularly in the U.S. That being said, one would expect more women to help each other in the workplace, but instead, they tend to criticize and even sabotage each other.

## **2. The Good Girl Curse**

Though this certainly doesn’t apply to all women out there, that doesn’t mean this problem doesn’t exist. I, myself, am guilty of falling victim to the ‘good girl’ syndrome. As Tardanico describes, the ‘good girl’ curse stems from years of messages that tell women they shouldn’t “rock the boat, [they should] get along with others, be the peacemaker, don’t talk back, be selfless and soft-spoken, make friends,” said Tardanico.

Though these routines seem okay when one is younger, Tardanico states that these types of attitudes can be harmful in the workplace. There are several situations when capable women work hard on projects in the workplace, but at the first sign of challenging feedback, the good girl retracts and forgets all about her research, all to avoid conflict or confrontation.

## **3. The Impostor Syndrome**

We’ve all carried feelings of self-doubt, it’s in our nature as human beings. However, with the impostor syndrome, it’s more than just self-doubt. It’s “a condition of such deep rooted insecurity that we feel like we’re an impostor – faking how good we really are,” said Tardanico. “And deep inside, we’re afraid that someday, someone is going to realize the truth – that we are really incompetent and undeserving of our position – and our dirty secret will be out.”

Such strong feelings of self-doubt can cause employees to sabotage their careers by not striving for promotions simply because they don’t believe that they can, or they become “intense micromanagers” which can make an employee susceptible to burning out quickly because they are constantly trying to “overcompensate for their lack of confidence,” said Tardanico.

Fortunately, there are solutions to these problems, and it all begins with recognizing these behaviors. “In all three cases, awareness is a crucial first step,” said Tardanico. “Often, women don’t realize that these sabotaging thought and behavior patterns are within their control... they can make a new choice.”

Search within yourselves. If you have any of these behaviors in the workplace and it’s negatively impacted your career, find out what’s keeping you from excelling at your talents and actively seek to make changes for a more positive, successful career.