

# Walk through each chapter of *Own Your Authority*, with Marisa Santoro

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*An 18-minute interview*

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And so before we get into your fabulous book of *Own Your Authority*, which there are so many amazing gems in here, and I can't wait to dive deeper into it, but would you mind sharing first for our listeners just more about your background?

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Sure. Well, I am a former IT executive, I grew up on Wall Street for about 20 years as a woman in tech, and was leading global data warehouse enterprise projects. And was pretty much in that industry for a long time. And then after being recognized from many people and feedback, that I also mentioned in my book, feedback being the critical principle of advancing in your career, that I should maybe move in another direction coaching and training because I was empowering a lot of people behind the scenes and long story short, moved into leadership training and coaching, which is where I am now. And the book is very much based on that journey, and many other people, I have worked with.

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So as you mentioned, you work in coaching and really mentoring a lot of people, what prompted you to write the book? And really, I mean, it's a lot of work to author one, but what inspired you to actually write it down?

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That's a good question. The book is actually based on years of the coaching program that I've been running and the online course that we have launched. So it's actually the system that I've been working through the years. It's actually my own personal system that I grew up with myself and implemented as a woman. And then it just kept refining and refining until, you know, one day someone asked me to do a TED talk, which I did, that was *Speaking Without Apology*, which is one of the chapters. And then after the TED talk, I got a book deal from McGraw Hill. So I really didn't set out to write the book, they sort of reached out and, and then went from there. So it was just a culmination of what I was already doing.

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I love it. I love how serendipity just kind of makes you an author now, as well as the coaching. One quote is important. Gordon Tredgold, who is one of the most influential people in the field of HR, said your book was quote, "Extraordinary. And the missing piece for many where it teaches the leadership mindset needed and how you leverage your skills to fulfill that potential and become the leader and you were meant to be."

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Yeah, I thought that was so powerful. So if you were to unpack for us the book, can you share? First off, what is leadership mindset to you?

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Leadership mindset really starts with self-leadership. It doesn't require the definition of manager, one to one, leadership, one to many. But my definition of leadership is self-leadership and being aware, very much aware of how you're being perceived, and how you relate to others. So if you're aware of that in any area, not just your career, also as a parent, as a partner, your finances, health, once you have that self-awareness, and that's really where you can move into other spaces, being vulnerable, making decisions taking risks. So that's really where I start in terms of the leadership mindset.

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I love that. And so you start the book with personal self-promotion. Can you share more about that?

03:16

Yeah, so self-promotion is something that I know, especially for women, I'll be perfectly transparent, the book really had a backdrop of women, women professionals, because that was really where I started, in terms of the work I was doing. But self-promotion is something that I found many women were not doing, myself included. And what I recognized for myself, and I never would survive that industry. It's such an abrasive industry for many reasons, right? Male dominated, very abrasive, being in tech - several points.

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I found that self-promotion was not a negative thing. It was selling yourself and not just yourself not to be narcissistic about it, but really selling your team and your results. Right, you go into a meeting and your whole team has worked three weekends in a row to get something out and nobody's mentioning it and everyone's sort of packaging it up with a nice big red bow and saying it's just done. That's not really going to be impactful to your results. And to also the credit that's due and so self-promotion is very much leaning into that in terms of being yourself, not selling yourself. And recognizing that if you're not doing it, especially going back to self-leadership, right? If you're not owning that, then why would you expect other people to own into you? And so, it's this beautiful love affair. If you think of it that way. It's, it's really a nonnegotiable to advance.

04:40

It reminds me of also of the work that Susan Cain did in her book Quiet and talks about how specifically looking at introverts and women that women don't self-promote as much as their male colleagues. And so the idea is to be aware of it and then also address it in the same way. So to your point it's not about ego and to be more specific, it's about promoting all the good things.

05:03

There's one section I loved it was the next section that talks about owning your authority and really the book's title. But you mentioned that experts are made not born. Can you share a little bit more about that?

05:16

Yes, I'm glad you picked that up, because I wanted to really stress that sometimes you say more with less. And that for me is recognizing that we, if you work for a company, or you work for yourself, you're an intrapreneur, or an entrepreneur, either way, you have clients. And I don't believe women who work for organizations. And I apologize, it's not just for women, this book is for men and women. But you get the backdrop, I don't believe that professionals really walk into their work every day and say, Oh, I'm an expert. I'm a professional expert. That's just not something that comes out of your head. And so I really wanted to hone that in, because you have to consider yourself as an intrapreneur or entrepreneur, you have clients, you have expertise, and that's getting swept under the rug. And the other objection, which we often say, and this book was really about answering the objections. Answering, why I'm not good enough, why I don't have value. And so I don't believe

even if someone says they're an expert that they actually are owning that and so if the next question is around, "yes, Marissa, I am an expert, but I don't believe I'm being perceived that way, or really give a lot of value", then my answer to that through the book is, well, then let's hold up the mirror and recognize what you have brought to the table. And that brings up Impostor Syndrome, and all types of other things. But again, you have to really own it as a foundation level, if you're building a house, this is your value, you are an expert, you bring a lot of things to the table, soft skills, expertise, skill sets, and you have to own it so that you can communicate it, project it and self-promote it.

06:46

Love, love, love that I was going to start writing all this stuff down really fast. But then I realized, you know, it's all in your book. So write down the notes quickly. One section that I absolutely loved and really resonated with me is the third section that talks about, there's a thing that I've been sharing with other people, that is your network is your net worth. And I fully believe that your ecosystem who you have either personally or professionally in your ecosystem really matter. And so you have a section about fearlessly networking.

Yeah.

Can you talk about that, and how that's so critical and really important, whether male or female, or introverts, but why that's so critical?

07:23

Yeah, well for the most part, for the professionals, I worked with and myself included, once upon a time. I believe there's a lot of fear, and resistance to networking. And yet, it's the number one thing that can really move the needle in your career. And so I talk a lot about, well I devoted a whole chapter around that, I try to relate it to almost a sales point of view, if you've ever been in sales, you have a pipeline, you have clients, I tried to bring that in, again, that entrepreneurial mindset, because I think that most people don't take action until they really need to take action. And I mentioned that - the no action actions. And so I don't believe again, people wake up, professionals wake up in the middle of the day or the morning and say, "Hey, I should go networking today." Like it's not top of mind. So that chapter is really to bring home that it is part of your strategy. And it's something that you want to think about before you need your network, not when you need it, because then you're sort of scrambling and you're like under pressure. So it's cultivating relationships. And if you can do that on the friendship side outside of work, you can do that at work. And for myself, personally, every opportunity I got including even growing my business and resigning from corporate was strictly on networking and I consider myself an extroverted introvert. I'm not a social butterfly, I don't wake up to meet 10 people every day. It was a struggle. But that book was devoted to those types of professionals who I consider myself as well.

08:52

I love it. We have a lot in common I think I'm an extroverted introvert also, because I have worked with a lot of people, need to communicate a lot with people and they just assume I'm an extrovert. But my definition I'm actually an introvert. So that resonates with me.

09:03

One section of the transition to that we also have in common is that we are children of immigrants, and my parents came over from Vietnam, but you had a section in the YES! exclamation point, the power of that word, and to ask and expect it every time which I love. One section, it talks about Think like an Immigrant, but if you

can share with people who are listening, what the YES or the power of YES means, what you meant by that section and also the specific part of Think like an Immigrant.

09:29

Yeah. appropriately. Well, first of all, I really fundamentally believe that in any area of your life, whether you're looking to find a new partner or looking to lose 50 pounds, you've got to kind of work at it every day and just be affirming about what you can create, you know, ask for miracle every day, assume people are going to give you the yes in a meeting, whatever that might be. That's really what that chapter was about. I think a lot of us also tend to walk around going into a meeting or conversation thinking "oh, they're going to say No." Well, if you've already put that out there, that energy, well, you know what you're creating then you're going to get the No. And so you're sort of responsible for the outcome of the results that you create. That's what the chapter was about, but Think like an Immigrant, I have to say, I was a little hesitant of putting that in there, because I certainly didn't want to insult anybody. You know, I'm a product of an immigrant family. And so I feel like that was a big influence on me, because I learned to be desensitized to asking. And so, I put a couple of stories from my parents, we were a Sicilian family. And I just saw so many examples of just knocking on doors, asking people for favors and not worrying about whether they say no, or being uncomfortable about it. And if you apply that to your career, it's a numbers game. That's what immigrants do well, it's a numbers game, they don't care if they get rejected for a job, they're going to keep on moving on. They're like Teflon and they're very resilient. And so, I think that when you have that type of mindset, you're just sort of desensitized to it, you're like, who cares? There's plenty of other opportunities around the corner.

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I love that, and I'm so glad you included it and I took it as a completely positive thing. I'm biased, but I thought it was a wonderful chapter and one line that I absolutely love.

You become what you believe.

So simple, so powerful, very kind of the American dream, right? And you make your own, create your own destiny. I love that. And maybe that's a perfect transition to the next section, which is Speaking Without Apology, which, you know, we talked about this and the impact on women and how a lot of women and colleagues think about or speak in different ways and so if you could talk a little bit more about speaking without apology, I think that's so important.

11:40

Yes. Speaking without apology is something that kept coming up. It came from the root, the root source of that was seeing women consistently apologizing, while they were talking or making a phone call, myself included. And I just realized, what if we just removed certain words out of our speech? How would we show up and when I did that, for myself, I felt like a whole new person my back straightened up, I was getting meetings for clients, I never got. I was getting the Yes and so it really physically made a big, emotional and physically it also made a big difference. So that chapter is, I guess you say more of a technical chapter. I did a TED talk on it. It's more about recognizing the little speech qualifiers that we weave into our everyday speech, that are diluting our value. And if you remove them, such as I'm just calling to see if you have a status, or I'm just wondering if we can meet like just the word JUST is automatically putting you into a subservient position where you're inconveniencing someone when actually you're at the same level, at the table with someone. So, I wanted to make people aware of that. And I have to say everyone who's either read that chapter or watched the speaking without apology talk has shared with me that once they are aware of that language on email, or verbal, they will

never do it again. It's like once you know, you can't not know. And that's the self-awareness, right being aware of your dialogue.

13:06

I love that. And it's really powerful. Once, one person recommended me to speak as if I'm writing, and not many people will write, I'm just writing this down, no, take out the words, words matter. And it's the power of being succinct and concise. And so I fully agree with that. I wish I would have learned that earlier in my 20s. And 30s. It kind of goes to your last section about intuition and honing that.

Can you share your thoughts there of how to sharpen it, how to trust it, and how to allow it as you as you mentioned?

13:35

Yes, I put that chapter in because when I launched into coaching and training, I led with the Gutsy Leadership platform. And that truly is, leading with your gut, leading with that sixth sense. So that chapter is all about recognizing that there are instinctual thoughts that come out of nowhere. And if you don't act on them immediately, and I say in that chapter within 17 seconds, that's sort of the universal principle, if you don't act on the energy frequency around that thought, where you will get supported where you will get the Yes. If you don't act on that thought, instinctually, you will talk yourself out of job opportunities, you will walk out of meetings thinking that you should have said this, I should have said that. It's agreeing to disagree or dropping a bomb in a meeting. It's just instinctually acting on the thoughts, thoughts are energy. And so I talked about trusting it by following the 17 second rule, recognizing past decisions you've made when you didn't follow your gut, and just trusting yourself and so that chapter is really about self-trust, you know we talked about self-awareness. That chapter was about self trust, which is completely tied to following your gut instinct.

14:41

I love that so helpful. I mean, it's a really like a life manifesto and life hack for me this book and applying these principles, but I'm looking forward to doing more.

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For people who are wondering, Okay, I've read the book. I think it's wonderful. I agree with all the things and this has helped me level up, but I just can't continue to do it, or do it consistently, what advice do you have for whether it's students or professionals just to continue to maintain it? Do you recommend a group setting a coaching setting? Or how do you recommend people continue with a lot of these principles that you wrote about?

15:13

Well, the first thing I recommend, and it's not overnight, I certainly don't want everyone to drink from the firehose after reading. It's a handbook, you can take any chapter doesn't even have to be an order. The first thing I really recommend, and I don't recall if I put this in the book, but I know, I coach on it often, is waking up and being intentional to at least three things a day, where you're getting outside of your comfort zone, whatever that might be, if you could just pick a spot anywhere in the book, or what comes to you instinctually. And just wake up every morning being willing to be uncomfortable, comfortable being uncomfortable. I promise that that will become a daily habit, where you'll look back, if you did three things a day, five days a week, you will have 15 Gutsy Moves that you've made. And just by reflecting and celebrating yourself with it, I talk about compliments, in chapter one, celebrating and giving yourself compliments, as well. I guarantee it will work like a muscle like you can ride a bike at 10. And not again, until you're 50, your body doesn't need to remember, it

will just pick it up muscle memory, right. So that's like the fast path to really getting into the habit. But you have to start and be aware of your 'no action' actions, which is doing nothing.

16:22

So, so helpful. And I feel like we could talk for hours and so much more advice. But let's keep it short. And maybe one last question. As the students and alumni involved at the Chico Foundation, listen to this, what is one key takeaway that you would share for leaders as they navigate ahead in this volatile period in business and markets

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in more in life? Ahead in 2022? And maybe be honest, but one thing to take away to share?

16:51

Yeah, I would say right now we are hungry, hungry for connection, the human connection. And I think that in the stress and chaos that we've been in the middle of, these last few years, you react. It's understandable. But you know, one thing is, is when you're in the eye of the storm, there's calm, there's not chaos. And so I would say for all leaders, no matter what level, recognize that the human connection is probably your most powerful tool that you have in your hip pocket. If you're starting off work on a Monday for example, rather than talking shop and jumping into work mode, ask about people's lives, show an interest. I know that was always important before, but now more than ever, people really want to feel valued and appreciated and that you care. And, and I don't think you can really put a price on that. You know, people really need that. I know I need that as well; we all do. So I think that's not something you wake up every day thinking of, but definitely what I would say for everybody.

17:51

Brilliant, brilliant reminders. Thank you and where can listeners find out more about you and your work you're coaching and your book?

17:56

You can find out about the book is on all platforms. It's also an audio book on all platforms. Audible, Google, Apple, Amazon, Barnes and Noble. As far as my work my website is [www.InRShoes.com](http://www.InRShoes.com). In Our Shoes is where we started with the Gutsy Leadership movement and lots of resources associated with that. And if you loved Speaking without apology, I have 101 ways to communicate confidently on the site and LOTS of other resources.

18:32

So thank you.





**MARISA SANTORO**, a former Wall Street IT executive and the founder of the career learning platform In Our Shoes ([www.InRShoes.com](http://www.InRShoes.com)), is a keynote speaker, career coach, corporate leadership trainer, diversity and inclusion consultant, and author of [Own Your Authority](#) (McGraw Hill).

Her expertise in leadership and professional development, as well as effective business communication, has been brought in to support business leaders across clients in diverse industries such as Merck, American Express, UBS, Anheuser-Busch, Allianz Global Investors, Sony Music, S&P Global, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), New York Council of Nonprofits, Women in Tech International (WITI), Aetna Healthcare, New York University (NYU), NYU Langone Medical Center, New York and New Jersey city governments and many more.

She is a TEDx speaker, and honoree of the Woman of Influence award from New York Business Journal and BizWomen.com for her years of mentoring and coaching midcareer leaders, executives, healthcare professionals, and sales leaders to achieve higher levels of influence.

She also writes a [career column for American City Business Journals](#), covering their how-to career and business strategy sections, with articles published across 44 cities in the United States. Her [TED talk, "Speaking Without Apology,"](#) guides on how to detach from language that feeds into the "Sorry Syndrome" and make subtle tweaks in your speech to springboard

you from diluting your value to spotlighting your assets immediately.

She guides professionals how to reclaim their confidence, tap into their instincts and embrace their inner dialogue using proven tactical tools, and strategies in proven step-by-step career leadership programs coaching on ways to authentically build trust as leaders and advance in their careers.

She delivers seminars, workshops, webinars, coaching, microlearning "just in time" modules, and self-paced multimedia courses to fit your organization's training needs. Her work has been integrated to launch Women's Leadership Initiatives, Leadership Academies, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, New Hire Programs and used in learning and development programs across government agencies, nonprofits, and organizations in the financial services, health care, real estate, education, and wine sectors.

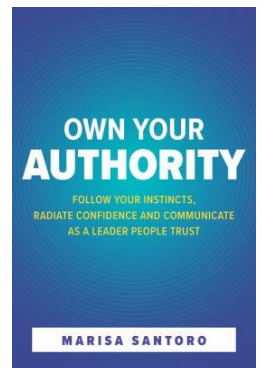
Prior to any coaching or training program, she delivers a pre-assessment clarity questionnaire to every participant in order to assess where they are struggling in their career, what the pain points are and where they would like to be in their career, in 3, 6, 12 months' time – their breakthrough career goals.

In the world of leadership development, there's no shortage of advice on what to do to drive career success—but very little is said about who to be and listening to your intuition. While leadership skills are important, self-trust is the foundation that great leadership is built upon—and developing it is a deeply personal process. In [Own Your Authority](#), career leadership expert Marisa Santoro provides the knowledge, tools, and insights you need to understand and embrace your authentic personality and trust your intuition.

"This is the heart of increasing confidence in any area," she writes, "taking on risk in small increments, stepping into new territory, facing fears, learning, failing, growing, and circling back to take on more risk that will stretch but not freeze you."

Great leaders communicate clearly, speak up when it matters most, and thrive on taking on measured risks. Through self-awareness, they embrace acts of discomfort every day—all in the name of learning, growing, and achieving higher levels of influence and leadership.

And it all comes with self-trust and confidence.



[The CONFIDENCE FORMULA: 101 Ways to Confidently Communicate Your Value At Work. \[REPORT\]](#)