PAULADONNAN ADVISORY

Where Do You Hold Back at Work?

Understand what feels difficult and choose a useful next step

You may be doing your job well while finding some situations harder than other people realise. This self-check helps you notice where you hesitate, what may be contributing and what could help.

Think about the past four weeks. Tick one answer for each statement that applies to your role.

1 Notice where you hold back

At work, I find that...	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I hold back a useful point because I worry about getting it wrong.	☐	☐	☐
I feel nervous before everyday conversations with my manager or colleagues.	☐	☐	☐
I repeatedly check work or seek reassurance when I could reasonably use my own judgement.	☐	☐	☐
Feedback stays with me and makes me question more than the specific issue raised.	☐	☐	☐
I avoid asking for clarification because I worry about how it will look.	☐	☐	☐
I struggle to explain my achievements without playing them down.	☐	☐	☐
I agree to additional work because discussing my capacity feels uncomfortable.	☐	☐	☐
I pass on a responsibility or opportunity I would otherwise like to explore.	☐	☐	☐

There is no total score. Notice situations that recur or have the greatest effect on your working life.

The situation I most want to handle differently is

_____

It is affecting my: ☐ Time ☐ Energy ☐ Contribution ☐ Development

2 Consider what you need

Thinking about the situation you chose, tick anything that fits.

☐ **Knowledge or practice**

Part of the task or conversation is unfamiliar.

☐ **Clear expectations**

I am unsure what is expected or which decisions I can make.

☐ **Support at work**

Feedback, workload or working relationships are contributing.

☐ **A fair view of my capability**

I overlook what I handle well or judge my whole ability by one difficult moment.

☐ **Help putting it into practice**

I understand what might help, but struggle to use it consistently.

Use these to choose where to start.

3 Choose a useful next step

Choose the next step that best matches the situation you identified. Start with one action rather than trying to change everything at once.

Knowledge or practice

Ask for an example, guidance or an opportunity to rehearse.

Clear expectations

Clarify the result, priorities and when you need approval.

Support at work

Consider who can help, such as your manager, a trusted colleague, HR or your employee assistance programme.

A fair view of my capability

Use Sections 4 and 5 to try one manageable action and review it. Record what you handled well as well as what needs adjusting.

Help putting it into practice

Personalised career confidence support may help you examine the situation, prepare responses and practise them with support.

4 Your plan for the next working week

Choose a real situation that is likely to come up. Make your action small enough to try, but specific enough to learn from.

Example: At Tuesday's team meeting, I will ask one prepared question about the new process. Afterwards, I will note how people responded and what I learnt.

This week I will

What I already do well that I can bring to this is

The support or preparation I need is

I will review what happened on

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5 Review what happened

What did I expect to happen?

What actually happened?

What will I repeat or adjust next time?

Look for progress in what you did, as well as how you felt. You may still feel nervous while asking a clearer question, making a decision or contributing something useful.

Would a conversation help?

If the same difficulty keeps returning, or you are unsure where to start, we can look at it together. I combine in-depth career development consultation with practical coaching to help you understand the pattern and practise approaches suited to your working life.

A free 30-minute Initial Briefing gives us space to discuss what is happening, where support could help and whether my approach fits your needs. There is no obligation to book a programme.

Book a Free 30-Minute Initial Briefing

Paula Donnan | Career Development Consultant and Coach
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This is a reflection tool, not a validated assessment. Responses do not establish the cause of a difficulty or determine whether coaching is needed.