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Click for section: [Features](#) [Offers](#) [Resource](#) [Tip](#) [Where](#) [About](#)

a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Insecurity in Leaders

All people in leadership positions have at least one pocket of insecurity. There are no exceptions. Regardless of status, gender, experience, or income, leaders representing every industry on Earth “suffer from” some form of self doubt. It’s part of being human.

Many of you know that, prior to starting my business in June 2008, I headed up a fourteen county health-related nonprofit organization. This entity,



funded by the federal government and the Commonwealth of PA, was one of seven statewide service planning coalitions. Four times a year the senior leadership from each of these alliances convened in the Capitol Complex for intensive day-long meetings with Department of Health officials.

Also on a quarterly basis we gathered on our own to learn from each other, deal with constant change, and solve complex problems.

One year I noticed that a relatively seasoned colleague from another region rarely said a word. She'd gone silent for months. Finally, over lunch in a Commonwealth cafeteria I decided to ask her about it. I wanted to know why an intelligent, capable, respected professional who'd been part of our group for three years wasn't talking. The answer to my question surprised me. "The more I listen to everybody else, the more aware I become of my personal knowledge gaps. I'm embarrassed by that," she said.

Who would have guessed that this particular woman felt so insecure after several years on the job? It was her secret alone—until I inquired. All leaders carry the burden of insecurity. Sometimes others see evidence of it; sometimes not. Read my feature article below to get acquainted with fifteen different signs of insecurity. Where do you see yourself in this list?

[back to Ezine top](#)

FEATURE ARTICLE

15 Signs of Insecurity in Leaders

We're often quick to identify insecurity in folks around us, but we're wise to recognize our own. Insecurity, whether blatantly observable or hidden, comes in many forms. Take a look:

- ***Defensiveness:*** Are you sensitive to comments and criticism, or deny them?
- ***Shrinking from challenge:*** Do you prefer to play it safe?
- ***Taking all of the credit:*** Do you take credit for things you didn't actually do?
- ***Making it all about you:*** Do you require staff to run everything by you first?
- ***Dodging difficult but necessary conversations:*** Do you ignore or minimize problems that won't go away on their own?
- ***Disciplining employees in public:*** Do you feel superior by calling somebody out in front of others?
- ***Needing to be liked:*** Do you conduct yourself in a way that ensures other people will continue to like you instead of just doing the right thing?

- ***Comparing yourself to others:*** Do you judge yourself harshly or minimize your own accomplishments when you think about the really successful folks in your arena?
- ***Forcing people to agree with you:*** Do people have to endorse your views and ideas in order for you to value them?
- ***Diminishing others in order to shine:*** Do you have a need to put others down?
- ***Cutting people off:*** Do you have a habit of taking control of conversations?
- ***Choosing not to acknowledge others' success:*** Do you pretend that their contributions and accomplishments aren't very important?
- ***Monopolizing conversations:*** Do you talk too much during meetings at the expense of others?
- ***Stifling employee advancement:*** Do you make decisions that block employee growth and development? Do you deny promotions, even when they are possible?
- ***Failing to attract or retain key talent:*** Are you threatened by employees who are more educated, skilled, or experienced than you?

You can't manage your pockets of insecurity until you know what they are. Though difficult to face, these are areas that can keep you stuck unless you do something about them.

[back to Ezine top](#)

What Clients Say

When I finally realized that retaining my place on the payroll largely depended on overcoming my fear of public speaking, I decided to contact Sylvia. Nothing made me feel more insecure than standing at the head of a conference room table and giving a talk in front of my boss to convince a prospective client to hire our company. For me this was agony. Eventually it got so bad that I was making myself physically sick before these presentations. After working with Sylvia for three months and acquiring the set of skills I desperately needed, I began to snap out of paralysis mode. While I still don't particularly enjoy speaking in front of groups, at least now I can do it with a certain amount of proficiency. I can't tell you how liberating this feels!

— Pamela P., Construction industry, Northeastern PA

[back to Ezine top](#)

Offers and Opportunities

60 Seconds to Greater Security

Want to know how to feel more secure in your leadership/manager role? Briefly sketch your individual situation in a message to Sylvia by Friday, May 13, at midnight EDT: sylvia@launchinglives.biz. She will laser coach you via email within 24 hours after receiving your communication. Remember: When YOU are more secure, others are too.

[back to Ezine top](#)

RESOURCES

List of Reasons Behind Leaders' Insecurity

The insecurity we feel comes from our experiences, circumstances, and interpretations of messages delivered to us throughout life. Most insecurity develops in childhood: Within our families of origin, school settings, interactions with friends, and community activities. Frequently, what gets started at a young age follows us for decades. But sometimes things happen to us in adulthood that create deep scars. Consider this list of reasons why YOU may feel insecure. Check off all that apply.

- My parents criticized me often, no matter what I did.
- Historically, I didn't learn new things as quickly as my peers.
- I was shy; I am shy now.
- I don't have a graduate degree or special certification.
- I assume that many people don't like me.
- I have a need to be right about everything.
- I felt devalued as a child or as an employee at some point in my career.
- I never developed effective people skills.
- I feel in over my head in my current job.

- _____ I feel less educated, less skilled, less experienced than the folks around me.
- _____ I never learned how to be resilient.
- _____ I fear change.
- _____ My ego runs my life.
- _____ I feel like I am not good enough for...
- _____ I am afraid of significant or ongoing responsibility.
- _____ I feel judged by those around me.
- _____ I view the world as a scary place.
- _____ I have a deep seated need to win in every situation.
- _____ I have known failure in my professional life .
- _____ I don't receive much positive feedback from my supervisor.
- _____ I was turned down for many jobs/promotions throughout my career.

[back to Ezine top](#)

TIP

Since we all experience insecurity (regularly or periodically), each of us needs to figure out how to manage it day to day. Even if people can't visibly *see* manifestations of your insecurity, they are impacted by it in both conspicuous and subtle ways. The next time you're experiencing a period of insecurity, set aside twenty minutes to list your ten best talents, qualities, characteristics, and traits. Then recall your top five professional accomplishments over the last six to twelve months. Once you complete this exercise, you'll be amazed at how strong, confident, and solid you feel.

[back to Ezine top](#)

Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On May 25, 2015 Sylvia will attend the all-day Central PA Business Women's Forum to be held at Messiah College in Grantham. Featured this year as a speaker, she will present an interactive breakout session in the leadership track entitled "The Magic of Influence: How to Create Allies to Succeed in Business".

[back to Ezine top](#)



Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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[back to Ezine top](#)

About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created

tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

[back to Ezine top](#)

Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

[back to Ezine top](#)

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