



Mission: Mentorship – An Astronaut’s Guide to Breaking Barriers & Propelling Upward Together

Featuring:
Katya Echazarreta

At Marshalls, we believe that women deserve the good stuff in life. But for so many reasons, the things they want can feel just out of reach. That’s why we’re creating programs to help provide women with the tools, resources, and communities they need to feel financially empowered, make meaningful connections, embrace their self-worth, and show up with confidence. All in service of helping women access the good stuff in life. Because we want to bridge the access gap between where they are now and where they know they’re capable of going. Between their vision board and their reality.

In partnership with Katya Echazarreta – electrical engineer, science communicator, and the first Mexican-born woman to go to space – we’re bringing you actionable tips for finding game-changing mentors, harnessing the power of support to break barriers like imposter syndrome, and uplifting others on your journey to new heights.

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Part 1. Finding Your Launch Crew: Tips for Identifying & Connecting with the Right Mentors

Mentorship is a formal or informal relationship where a more experienced mentor guides and helps a less experienced mentee grow personally or professionally.

These types of relationships are vital as you seek to carry out your goals, but it’s not that person’s job to do anything for you, rather, they are there to guide you as you forge your own path.

Tips for Finding the Right Mentor & What to Look For:

- ♥ ***Seek Alignment:*** Look for someone whose expertise, career path, AND personal values align with your own goals and code of ethics.
- ♥ ***Engage with the Community:*** Networking is often misunderstood. It may not be enough to simply attend industry events, join professional groups, or connect on LinkedIn to find potential mentors, although that is almost always step 1! The best types of mentorship relationships are born from organic conversations that may require follow-ups to maintain and develop the connections.
- ♥ ***Prioritize Accessibility & Willingness:*** A great mentor should be approachable, open to sharing insights, and willing to invest time in your growth. On the other hand, the same must be true about you.

It can be awkward to seek out mentorship, especially if we have more of an introverted personality, but when you put yourself out there, voice out your goals, and find the right people, the result can launch you in ways you never even imagined.

Part 2. Flight Plan in a Male-Dominated Orbit: Harnessing Support to Overcome Bias & Imposter Syndrome

Impostor Syndrome is defined as “a psychological condition that is characterized by persistent doubt concerning one’s abilities or accomplishments accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of one’s ongoing success” [1].

Impostor syndrome is notably prevalent among high achievers, with some studies indicating that up to 82% of individuals may experience it at some point in their lives. A 2024 survey revealed that 71% of U.S. CEOs have experienced impostor syndrome. These statistics suggest a strong correlation between high levels of achievement and the prevalence of impostor syndrome [2] [3].

Session notes:

Recognizing and Battling Imposter Syndrome

Have I personally felt it in the past? Of course! Here are some tips that help me when I feel it creeping up:

- ♥ ***Acknowledge & Reframe Negative Thoughts:*** Recognize self-doubt as a common experience, not a true reflection of your abilities, and reframe all thoughts that minimize your own capabilities.
- ♥ ***Keep a Success Journal:*** Document your personal and professional accomplishments, compliments, and positive feedback to remind yourself of your progress and strengths. Make sure some of these also come from yourself and not just externally.
- ♥ ***Talk to a Mentor or Support Network:*** Share your feelings with trusted mentors, peers, or therapists to gain perspective regarding your thoughts. Sometimes it's easier to reframe negative feelings by first receiving some positive encouragement.

Part 3. Pay It Forward: Becoming a Mentor & Lifting As We Climb

In early 2025, the 100th woman in history traveled to space. I'm very fortunate to be one of the women who have had this incredible experience.

The Overview Effect is a cognitive shift in awareness experienced by astronauts when viewing Earth from space, leading to a profound sense of interconnectedness, awe, and a renewed perspective on humanity and the planet.

We can all think of moments that shifted our perspectives in our own lives - starting a new job, becoming a parent, receiving a piece of meaningful advice from a mentor. I want to encourage you to write one down and think about how these perspective shifts can help us uplift those around us as we become mentors.

I believe that the most important full circle moment is when we begin to realize we can be mentors and mentees throughout all aspects and phases of life.

THAT message, beyond anything else, is the one I'm most excited to leave with you, hopefully for the rest of your life. Life is so much brighter when we lift as we climb.

Works Cited:

[1] Merriam-Webster. "Impostor Syndrome." Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2024, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/impostor%20syndrome.

[2] Hinchliffe, Emma. "High-Functioning Achievers and Impostor Syndrome: Why CEOs Still Struggle with Self-Doubt." *Fortune*, 21 June 2024, fortune.com/2024/06/21/high-functioning-achievers-imposter-syndrome-career-ladder/.

[3] Bravata, Dawn M., et al. "Prevalence, Predictors, and Treatment of Impostor Syndrome: A Systematic Review." *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2020, pp. 1252–1275. PubMed Central (PMC), doi:10.1007/s11606-019-05364-1.