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Success without Sacrifice**

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THE INVISIBLE CEILING

**A FREE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE FOR
HIGH-ACHIEVING WOMEN IN TECH &
CORPORATE LEADERSHIP**

By Zaina Warne

Before you begin — read this.

You are not here by accident.

You found this guide because some part of you already knows that something is off. Not with your ability — you have never doubted that. Not with your effort.

You show up. You deliver. You carry more than your share — at work, at home, in your relationships, in your family. And still, the promotion goes to someone else. The recognition arrives for other people. The future you have been working toward keeps feeling just slightly out of reach.

You have probably been told to be more visible. To speak up more. To negotiate harder. And you may have tried all of that — because you are someone who does not give up. But something keeps not shifting. The exhaustion of proving yourself, again and again, to people who should already know your worth is real. And it is telling you something important.

What is it telling you? The ceiling you are pressing against is not a strategy problem or a visibility problem. It is telling you that the next step you are seeking requires a whole new Playbook — not a better version of the one you have been running.

This guide will show you, clearly and precisely, the pattern you have been living — so you can finally decide whether you want to keep living it, or whether it is time to learn the new Playbook.

This guide was written with women in mind — because the pattern it describes is one I have witnessed most often in women. If you are not a woman and this resonates, you are welcome here too.

A note from Zaina

I created this assessment because I have sat across from too many brilliant, capable women who could not understand why their performance was not translating into the life and career they had earned. I built my entire coaching practice around one truth: when you solve the right problem, everything changes. This guide will help you find the right problem.

Does this sound like you?

Before you complete the assessment, read through these statements slowly. Place a checkmark next to any that feel familiar — not the polished version of your life, but the real one.

- You have delivered results at the level above your current title — for years — and the promotion still goes to someone else.
- You are the first person your team, your family, and your friends call when something needs to be handled. You always answer.
- You can negotiate fiercely on behalf of your team or your colleagues. Negotiating for yourself feels different — harder, almost uncomfortable.
- There have been moments where you reached your limit — at work, in a relationship, in your family — and instead of asking for what you needed, you quietly withdrew.
- You have been described as strong, resilient, and capable so many times that you have started to wonder whether anyone ever sees anything else.
- You know that when you assert yourself at work, you risk being perceived differently than those around you. And you carry that awareness into every room.
- When you are alone with your thoughts — truly alone, with no tasks to complete — something uncomfortable surfaces. You do not always know what it is.
- You want more than success. You want freedom. You want to stop needing the title, the salary, the approval to feel like you have earned your place.
- Somewhere along the way, you learned that love, belonging, and recognition were things you had to earn — not things you were simply given.

If you checked three or more of those statements — this guide was written for you.

If you checked six or more — you already know it is time to do something different.

The Self-Assessment

For each statement below, mark how often it reflects your experience. Answer from your gut — not from who you want to be, but from who you actually are right now. There are no wrong answers. There is only your truth.

Rarely = this almost never describes me

Sometimes = this describes me in certain situations

Often = this describes me consistently, across multiple areas of my life

1	I consistently deliver results that match or exceed the expectations of the role above my current title.	Rarely Sometimes Often
2	I wait until I have overwhelming evidence before I advocate for myself at work — because I want to be undeniable.	Rarely Sometimes Often
3	I am more comfortable negotiating on behalf of others than on behalf of myself.	Rarely Sometimes Often
4	I have reached my limit in a situation — at work or in a relationship — and walked away or gone quiet instead of asking for what I needed.	Rarely Sometimes Often
5	I carry the majority of the emotional and practical load in my family and personal relationships.	Rarely Sometimes Often
6	I can trace a pattern in my life where being needed by others has felt connected to my sense of worth.	Rarely Sometimes Often

7	When I express a strong opinion at work, I am aware — consciously or unconsciously — that I may be perceived differently than others around me.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐
8	I find it easier to make time for others than to protect time and energy for myself.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐
9	I have a vision for my future — financially, professionally, personally — but I have been waiting for the right conditions before I fully commit to it.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐
10	I know what I want. Believing I deserve it — without having to earn it first — is harder.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐
11	When I sit alone with my thoughts, the inner voice that surfaces is more critic than ally.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐
12	I am ready for a change that goes deeper than strategy — I want to shift something at the level of who I believe I am.	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
		☐	☐	☐

Count your “Oftens” to find your score:

1–3 Oftens — You are beginning to feel the friction. Pay attention. It will grow.

4–7 Oftens — The pattern is active and it is costing you. The awareness you feel right now is a signal.

8–12 Oftens — You have been living this pattern for a long time. You already know something has to change. You have known for a while.

PART THREE

What your answers are telling you

These are not boxes to put yourself in. They are mirrors. Read the one that resonates most — and notice what you feel when you do.

The High Performer at the Threshold 1–4 Oftens

You are exceptional at what you do and you know it. The friction you are feeling is new enough that you can still explain it (bad cycle, a difficult manager, timing). But you are starting to notice a gap between how hard you work and how slowly the rewards flow. You are beginning to ask questions you did not used to ask. That questioning is the beginning of something important. The people who transform most powerfully are the ones who pay attention to the early signals — before the cost of staying the same becomes impossible to ignore.

What if the ceiling you are approaching is not about performance at all?

The Woman Carrying It All 5–8 Oftens

You have been the most reliable person in every room for so long that it has become your identity. At work, at home, in your relationships — you deliver. You hold things together. You show up. And you are exhausted in a way that a holiday will not fix, because the exhaustion is not about hours. It is about the relentless, low-level work of proving that you belong, that you are worth it, that you have earned your place. You have. You earned it a long time ago. The work now is not to perform harder. The work is to stop performing altogether — and to discover what happens when you simply claim what is already yours.

You are not tired because you are weak. You are tired because you have been playing a game you have already won — at a level you have already outgrown.

The Woman Who Is Ready 9–12 Oftens

You have been here for a while. You know the pattern. You have felt the resentment and swallowed it. You have watched the promotion go to someone else and found a way to keep going. You have held your family together, held your relationships together, held yourself together — and you are still doing it. But something has shifted. You are no longer asking why this keeps happening. You are asking what it is going to take to make it stop. That is a different question entirely. And it is the right one. You do not need more information. You do not need another framework. You need someone who will hold the vision of who you are becoming until you can hold it yourself.

You already know what has to change. The only question left is whether you are ready to let it.

PART FOUR

The one question that changes everything

In over twenty years of coaching high-achieving women in tech and corporate leadership, I have found that most strategies fail not because they are bad strategies — but because they are built on a foundation that has not been examined.

You can learn every negotiation technique. You can master executive presence. You can build a five-year financial plan. And if the belief underneath all of it is still I have to earn my right to want this — then every strategy will eventually hit the same ceiling.

The question I give every person I work with is not a productivity question. It is not a goal-setting question. It is an identity question — and it travels with them into every room they enter, every conversation they have, every decision they make about their career, their relationships, their finances, and their health.

“Am I showing up right now like someone who already deserves this seat?”

Not as a performance. Not as a strategy. As a truth you are learning to live from the inside out.

This question works because it does not ask you to feel differently before you act. It asks you to act from what you already know to be true — that you have delivered, you have earned, you have proven. The only thing left is to stop waiting for someone else to confirm it.

Ask it before a performance conversation. Ask it before you set a boundary. Ask it when you are about to shrink, qualify, or apologize for wanting what you want.

Ask it — and then show up accordingly.

This is the foundation of everything I build with the people I coach. Not a mindset shift that lives in your head — a lived shift that shows up in your body, your voice, your decisions, and eventually in every area of your life.

PART FIVE

What comes next — if you are ready

If this guide gave you the feeling of being seen — not just understood intellectually, but genuinely recognized — then you have just experienced the foundation of how I work.

**I am Zaina Warne.
For over twenty years I have
coached women in tech and
corporate leadership to stop
performing their worth and
start claiming it.**

**The old Playbook asked
you to prove your worth.**

**The new Playbook starts
with you knowing your
worth.**



**My private coaching program — Success Without
Sacrifice — is a twelve-week, one-on-one
experience built around my D4 Formula:
Discover, Decide, Design, Develop.**

**It is not a course. It is not a group program.
It is a deeply personalised journey that goes to the
root of what has been holding you back — and
builds something permanent in its place**

The women I work with walk away with:

- The promotion — asked for clearly, without apology, and received
- Financial clarity — a plan that prioritizes their freedom, not just their obligations
- Boundaries that hold — in their careers, their families, and their relationships
- The ability to express disagreement with authority — without the accumulated weight of everything they have been swallowing
- And most importantly — the ability to sit alone with their thoughts and feel, not just know, that they were always enough

Ready to take the next step?

The first step is a complimentary discovery call. It is not a sales conversation. It is a real conversation — about where you are, what you want, and whether this program is genuinely the right fit for you right now. If it is not the right fit, I will tell you. That honesty is not a disclaimer. It is how I work.

Book your complimentary discovery call here: www.zafeer.ca

Connect with me on LinkedIn Here: [linkedin.com/in/zaina-warne](https://www.linkedin.com/in/zaina-warne)

This program is not about starting over.

***It is for the woman who has played the game brilliantly and is finally ready to
play at the next level.***