



Finding your voice: **A guide for managers who want to feel more confident in their role**



Whether you're new to managing people or you've been in the role a while, it's normal to feel unsure sometimes – especially when confidence doesn't come naturally or your influence doesn't feel recognised.

Whatever your situation, this guide is here to help you feel more grounded, capable and heard in your role.

Because confidence isn't just for the loudest voice in the room – it's for anyone who's ready to grow into their own way of leading.

If you don't always feel like a 'proper' manager – you're not alone

Many managers find themselves stuck in a gap. You've been given responsibility for people, but you don't always feel you have the influence, trust or support that should come with it. That mismatch can leave you feeling stuck – like you're expected to lead, but don't really have the power to make change.

This can sometimes make us feel like we need to put on a front of confidence, even when we feel uncertain. So, we start to fake confidence and act in ways that we think a leader "should" act, to try to live up to the role.

At the heart of this experience is something many of us know well: **impostor syndrome**.



Impostor syndrome is the feeling that you're not as competent or capable as others think you are – and that at some point, you'll be "found out". It's common in leadership roles where people feel they've been promoted before they're ready, or are constantly comparing themselves to others who seem more confident or experienced.

Impostor syndrome often shows up quietly: when you hold back from sharing an idea, hesitate before giving feedback, or tell yourself, "I'm not the kind of person people listen to."

62% of UK adults say they've experienced impostor syndrome at work

72% of those people say impostor syndrome holds them back at work

But confidence isn't something you're born with. It's something you build – through experience, reflection, and showing up even when you feel unsure.

And it's okay to feel like you're still working it out. The truth is, most people are.



Authority isn't about seniority – it's about presence

Unfortunately, just because you have the title, it doesn't mean others automatically see you as a leader – especially in businesses where responsibilities are blurry or senior voices dominate.

But influence doesn't come from shouting the loudest. **It comes from:**

- ✓ Being clear and consistent
- ✓ Owning your decisions – even the small ones
- ✓ Staying calm when things are uncertain
- ✓ Advocating for your team
- ✓ Showing up with empathy and integrity

These are the habits that quietly build trust and credibility – over time, and with practice.

Finding your voice, your way

The truth is, you don't need to act like someone else to be taken seriously.

Some people lead with energy and bold ideas. Others lead with careful listening and thoughtful action. Both are valid. Both are powerful.

If you're still finding your footing:

Speak up in one meeting this week
– even if it's just to ask a question

Follow up on something – people notice consistency

Share a win or learning with your team or manager
– visibility builds credibility

Say when you don't know something
– and then go find out

Not sure what to say? **Try one of these openers:**

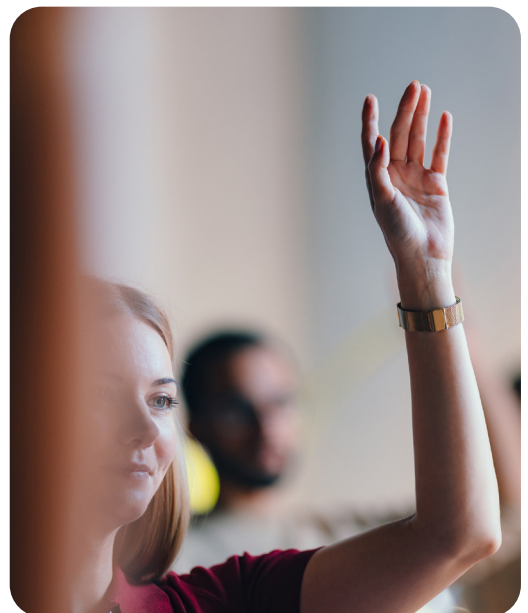
“This might be worth exploring...”

“Here's something I've noticed in my team...”

“Can I ask a quick question before we move on?”

“Would it help if I shared what we've tried so far?”

👉 You don't need to sound impressive. You just need to show that you're thinking – and **care**.



Managing upwards can sometimes feel harder than managing your team

It's one thing to lead a team – another to feel respected and included in wider business decisions.

If you often feel out of the loop, or like your input doesn't carry weight, **try**:

- **Proactively sharing updates** – even a short note shows you're thinking ahead
- **Asking questions in meetings** – it signals engagement, not doubt
- **Advocating for your team's needs** – and explaining the “why”
- **Building relationships outside your immediate team** – influence often starts informally



You can't control how others respond – but you can control how clearly, calmly and consistently you show up.

Sometimes, it's not a confidence issue – it's a clarity issue

If you've been left to figure out your role with little guidance, it's natural to feel uncertain. And the fix isn't always about self-belief – sometimes, it's about asking the right questions.

If things feel fuzzy, it's OK to ask:



What's expected of me as a manager?



What decisions am I responsible for – and which ones need sign-off?



How do I know if I'm doing a good job?



Where can I go for support or direction?



Clear expectations help everyone – and asking for them doesn't make you difficult. It makes you responsible.

You're not expected to do this alone

Confidence grows with support. It's not a solo pursuit.

- Talk to your own manager about where you'd like to grow
- Connect with other managers – shared experiences go a long way
- Ask to shadow someone or be mentored if it's an option
- Use tools that help you feel organised and prepared – like 1-2-1 notes, shared goals or training plans



You're showing up, learning, and leading – even on days it doesn't feel like it. That's what real leadership looks like.

Keep building your skills (and your confidence)

The more you learn, the more natural leading others will feel.

There's more **Line Manager Essentials Training** courses on the Breathe Growth Academy that can help you build the skills you need to feel more at ease in your role.



[Keep learning](#)

