



# GIVE YOURSELF THE CREDIT YOU DESERVE

## WHICH STATEMENTS DESCRIBE YOU?

### CIRCLE TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1 If a coworker praises me on a successful project, I assume she's just trying to kiss up. **TRUE / FALSE**
- 2 When a friend tells me about a romantic evening her guy surprised her with, I wonder whether things like that will ever happen to me. **TRUE / FALSE**
- 3 If the woman next to me at the gym has her elliptical trainer set at a higher level than mine, I think I'm not working hard enough. **TRUE / FALSE**
- 4 I prefer to give compliments than receive them. **TRUE / FALSE**
- 5 If I set a goal and meet 75 percent of it, I've failed. **TRUE / FALSE**
- 6 I feel uncomfortable when people

praise me for something I didn't work too hard to achieve. **TRUE / FALSE**

## WHAT YOUR ANSWERS MEAN FOR YOU:

If you circled "true" for two or more statements, then you're shortchanging yourself. Downplaying accomplishments often harks back to school days, "when it was crucial to fit in," says psychologist Rachna D. Jain. "Why make friends jealous or scare off potential boyfriends by drawing too much attention to your strengths?" Additionally, harsh judgments that you heard growing up, particularly from your parents, can factor in, according to life coach Rebecca Kiki Weingarten. "But the more you *don't* give yourself

the credit you deserve, the more 'I'm not good enough' gets etched into your brain," says psychotherapist Dana Lightman. Here, three quick things that you can do to turn the situation around.

### CREDIT BOOSTER #1:

#### TALLY UP YOUR SUCCESSES.

People who don't give themselves credit believe they shouldn't have *any* credit until they've reached perfection. Recognize that you can't be perfect at everything and that you deserve credit for attempts and improvements. "Every day, write down 15 or 20 actions that made you feel good," says Jain. "Anything from 'I made it to the gym' to 'I didn't call my ex.'" By recording little steps, you'll start giving yourself credit for making progress, and equating progress with success.

### CREDIT BOOSTER #2:

#### COMPARE YOURSELF ONLY TO YOURSELF.

Constantly comparing yourself to others sets you up to feel unsuccessful anytime *you* don't have what *she* has. Instead, spend an hour thinking about what you really value in life. "Concentrate on your real happiness, not what the world tells you will make you happy," says Weingarten. "If contentment *for you* means living a simple life, surrounded by a few loved ones and nature, you're a lot less likely to wince when a former roommate buys a Manhattan penthouse."

### CREDIT BOOSTER #3:

#### LEARN TO LOVE A COMPLIMENT.

Before giving yourself credit, do you wait until someone else—like a boss or a boyfriend—decides to give it to you? Instead, give yourself a tangible seal of approval, even if you just e-mail a smiley face to yourself after nailing a sales call. Reinforce compliments rather than dismissing them. "Validating the truth isn't bragging," says psychologist Maria Grace. "When someone congratulates you, say, 'Thank you, I worked really hard.'" The more you recognize your own efforts, the more successful you feel and act, which affects how others treat you. 