

Confidence

Many of the female engineers that I've worked with suffer periodically from a severe lack of confidence. I guess it happens to us all sometime: that little voice saying "why try, you're not going to make it work", "you really can't do that as well as X", or "who are you to be telling Y what to do". I've always seen it as a bit of a problem, to be countered with careful handling when found in others and with the phrase "do what you can with the resources you've got" for myself. But much as you can have faux amis in language, so maybe you can also have a false enemy in a loss of confidence. Maybe, just maybe it's a useful thing, a check-and-balance that you're going the right way and doing the right thing. It's all too easy to rush headlong into a project, then cling grimly to it as it turns into the mental equivalent of a bucking bronco (or to borrow a military phrase, into the hamsterwheel to hell) - perhaps under these conditions these can be harnessed as useful moments of introspection rather than suffered as destructive losses of confidence.