



Schachter Monthly

By Ephraim Schachter • Apr 09, 2024

Smart Brevity® count: 5 mins...1338 words

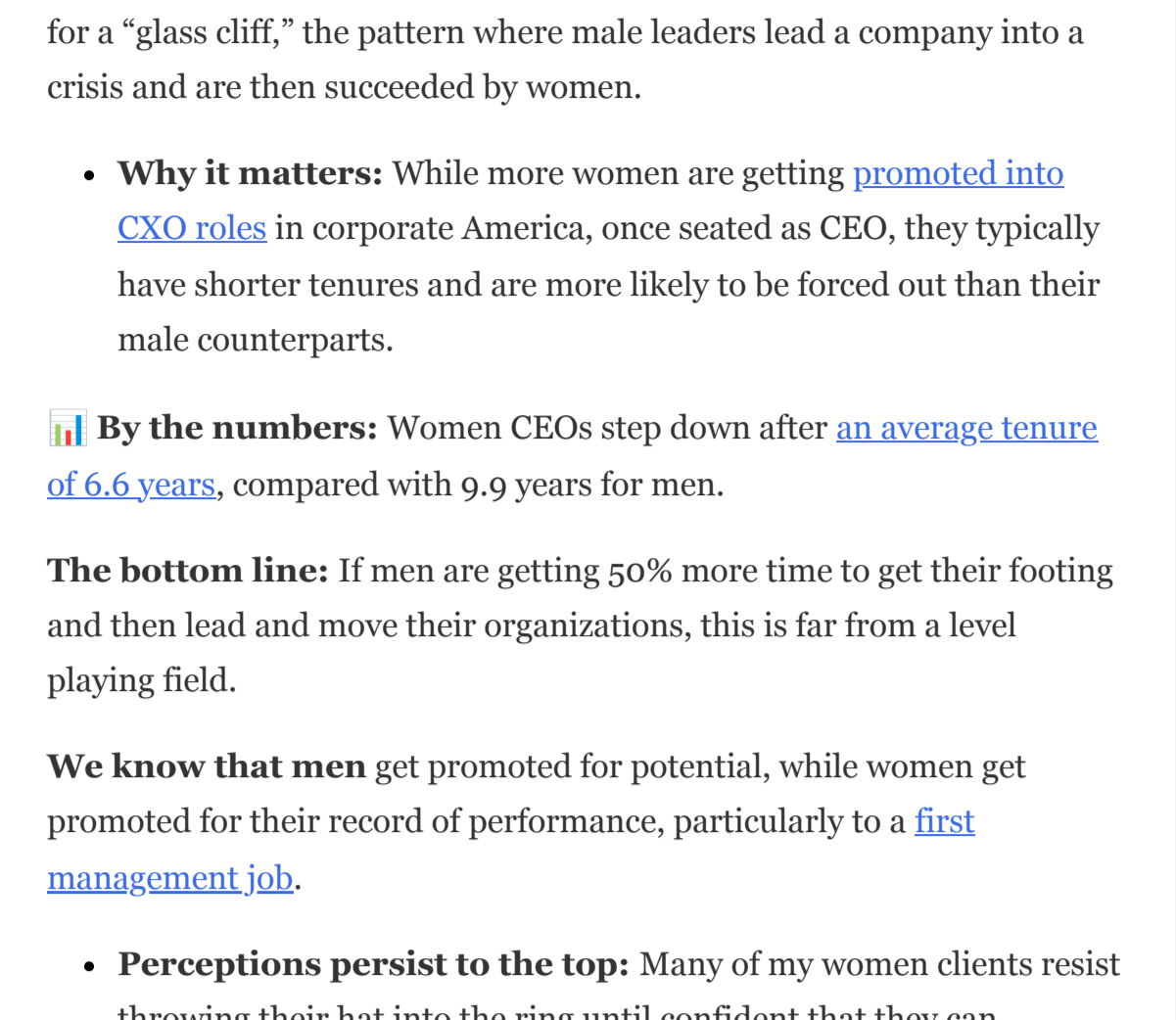
🌱 **April is here, Happy Spring!**

🏆 **Let's be great leaders!** Here are some straightforward insights and actionable tools & tips.

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In Memoriam: [Daniel Kahneman](#), Nobel Prize winner; author of "Thinking, Fast and Slow."

1 big thing: The 'glass cliff' for women



What's new: With speculation that Boeing COO Stephanie Pope may [succeed](#) retiring CEO David Calhoun, some warn that she is being set up for a "glass cliff," the pattern where male leaders lead a company into a crisis and are then succeeded by women.

- **Why it matters:** While more women are getting [promoted into CXO roles](#) in corporate America, once seated as CEO, they typically have shorter tenures and are more likely to be forced out than their male counterparts.

📊 **By the numbers:** Women CEOs step down after [an average tenure of 6.6 years](#), compared with 9.9 years for men.

The bottom line: If men are getting 50% more time to get their footing and then lead and move their organizations, this is far from a level playing field.

We know that men get promoted for potential, while women get promoted for their record of performance, particularly to a [first management job](#).

- **Perceptions persist to the top:** Many of my women clients resist throwing their hat into the ring until confident that they can unequivocally demonstrate job readiness.
- **The result:** A larger pool of male candidates means more male promotions.

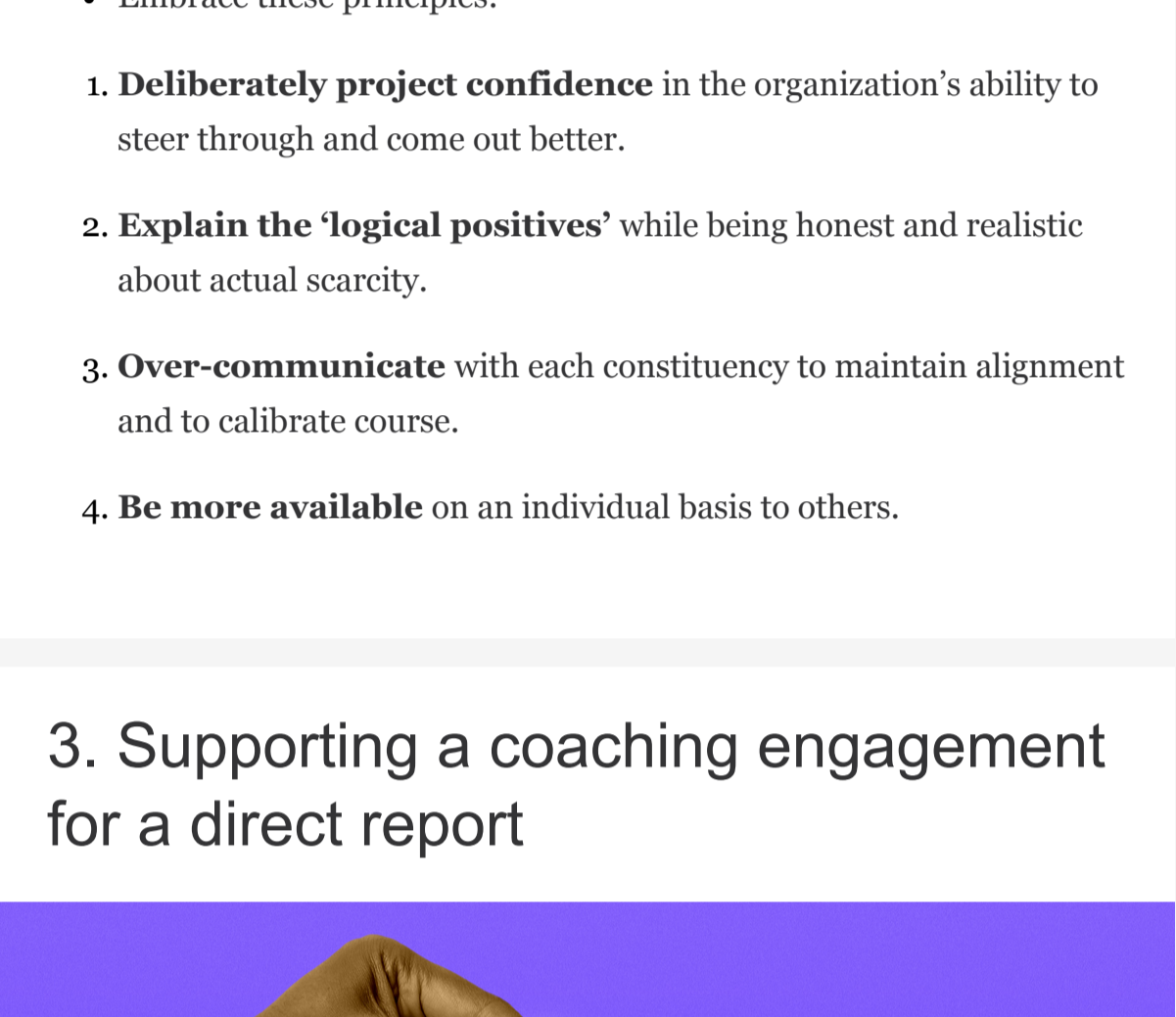
Boards of directors that are quicker to force out women CEOs are applying a double-standard, consciously or not.

- **My observation:** Often inexpert at the substance of their companies' business, directors are more susceptible to stylistic demonstrations of competence, like the masculine projection of strength.

⚡ **What's next:** If we're serious about representation, we need to support conditions for women to succeed at the top.

👉 **Go deeper:** More [here](#) on "The Glass Cliff: Exploring the Dynamics Surrounding the Appointment of Women to Precarious Leadership Positions"

2. Leading others to overcome pessimism



📈 **Expressions of pessimism** for the near future are increasing. A [rising number](#) of US adults feel we have gotten off track and are headed in the wrong direction.

- **Consumer confidence**, despite slowing inflation, is still [well below](#) the pre-pandemic high.

Why it matters: Pessimism is a depleting emotional state that penetrates your organization and hurts performance.

It's our perception of 'Scarcity vs. Abundance.' With an abundance mentality, people feel unthreatened and make better-conceived decisions that serve the long term and growth.

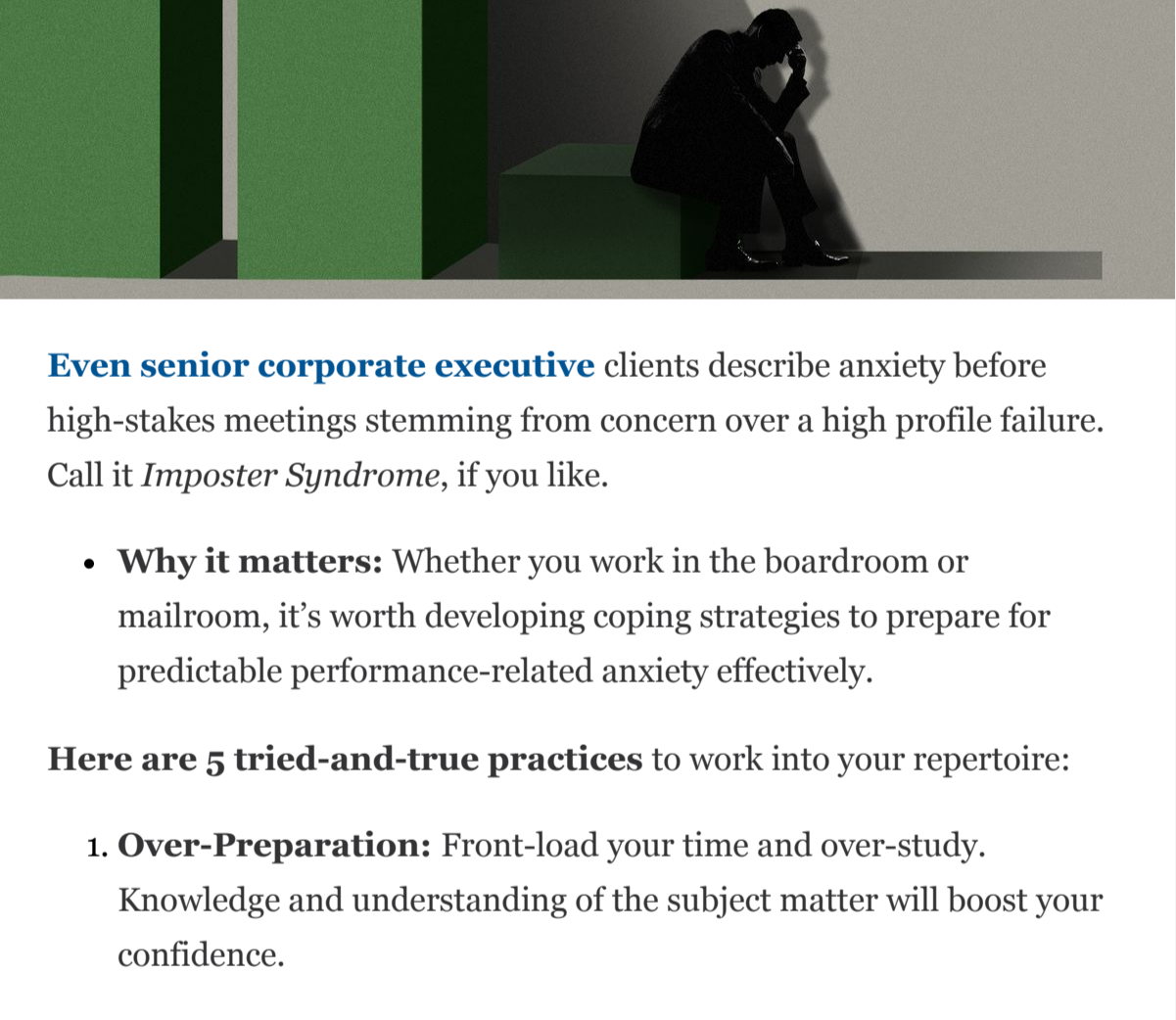
- With a scarcity mentality, people assume a defensive crouch that restrains their openness, creativity and calculated risk-taking.

The bottom line: while scarcity is a cyclical fact of life, a scarcity mentality is bad for business.

🎯 **My POV:** The role of leadership is to build faith and positive expectancy. Chiefs, EVPs and SVPs must rescue the tone to lead the enterprise and its stakeholders through this.

- Embrace these principles:
 1. **Deliberately project confidence** in the organization's ability to steer through and come out better.
 2. **Explain the 'logical positives'** while being honest and realistic about actual scarcity.
 3. **Over-communicate** with each constituency to maintain alignment and to calibrate course.
 4. **Be more available** on an individual basis to others.

3. Supporting a coaching engagement for a direct report



👂 **What I'm hearing:** Many execs who sponsor executive coaching engagements for their direct reports signal their uncertainty about how they can best support the engagement's success.

- **Why it matters:** Out of a show of respect for confidentiality, many are too hands-off and inadvertently sub-optimize the coaching.

The bottom line: In my experience, when execs play the proper role, coachees make more progress and enjoy enduring forward change.

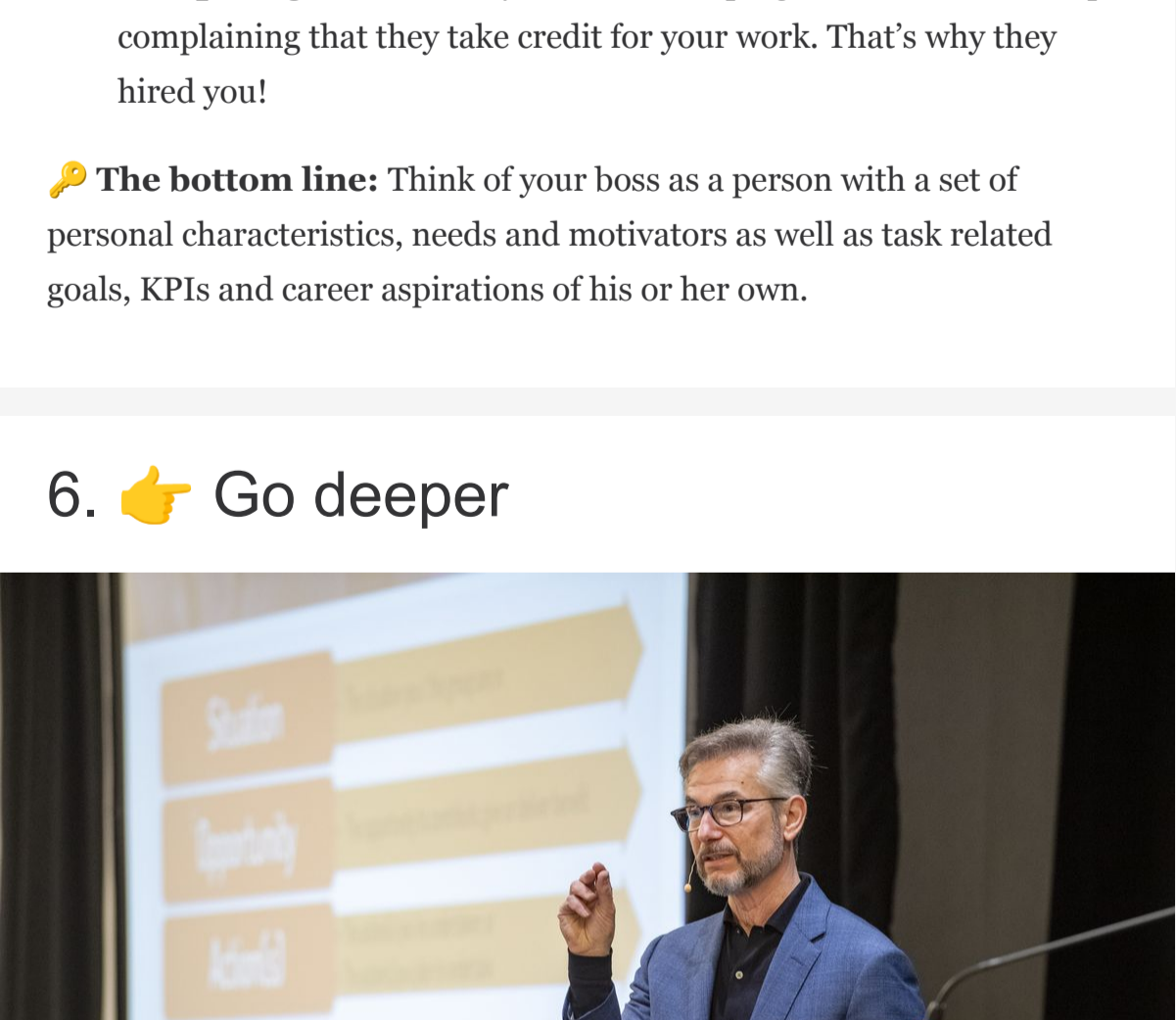
👉 **My POV:** A skilled executive coach and an engaged sponsor have complimentary roles:

- **The Coach** creates the conditions for the coachee to acquire self-awareness and loosen up to embrace the self-consciousness that accompanies trying out new behaviors.
- **The Sponsor** demonstrates a shared commitment to the coachee's development by reinforcing them when they demonstrate those nascent behaviors.

📌 **My 5 recommendations** for supporting a coaching engagement for a direct report:

1. Set clear expectations with the executive coach and the coachee. Get aligned on the development objectives.
2. Provide the coach with updates of behaviors you are observing (good and not-so-good). Every 6 to 8 weeks is a good cadence.
3. Provide timely, positive reinforcement feedback to the direct report when you observe the behavior or hear it's been demonstrated.
4. Be open to the possibility that you might learn something useful about your own leadership and management by way of this process.
5. Don't triangulate the relationship so you and the coach are sending inconsistent messaging.

4. Pro-tip: Prepping for a high stakes interaction



Even senior corporate executive clients describe anxiety before high-stakes meetings stemming from concern over a high profile failure. Call it *Imposter Syndrome*, if you like.

- **Why it matters:** Whether you work in the boardroom or mailroom, it's worth developing coping strategies to prepare for predictable performance-related anxiety effectively.

Here are 5 tried-and-true practices to work into your repertoire:

1. **Over-Preparation:** Front-load your time and over-study. Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter will boost your confidence.
2. **Rehearsal:** Practice your presentation or key points multiple times to become more comfortable with the material and delivery.
3. **Visualize success:** Spend some time visualizing a positive outcome. Imagine yourself handling the situation with confidence and success.
4. **Get a good night's sleep:** Trite as it sounds, make sure you are well-rested the night before the high-stakes event. Lack of sleep can [increase anxiety](#), per Columbia University's Psych department.
5. **Accept imperfection:** Understand that it's okay to make mistakes or encounter challenges.

🔍 **Zoom out for perspective:** Remember that anxiety is normal and can even be a motivating factor. *Shark Tank* investor Barbara Corcoran [agrees](#) with a point I frequently make with clients:

"If you're struggling with imposter syndrome, good for you. Thank the Lord in heaven ... because what that guarantees is: You're going to try harder than the next guy, and it's in the trying that you find your confidence."

5. Career corner: Mistakes that lose your boss

👂 **What I'm hearing:** Clients describe their CXO boss as uninterested in their work or career and disinclined to get involved or spend political capital for them.

- **Why it matters:** Getting them to take an active role advocating is essential to drive results and be seen as ready for an executive role

⚠️ **Exercise caution:** There are predictable mistakes. Look out for these four and the ways to avoid them.

- **Letting your authority bias** inform your behavior. It can hurt if you are either too compliant or too independent.
- **Not putting yourself** in your boss' shoes. Instead, ask yourself, "what is she seeing, thinking and feeling as she carries out *her* day?" What's her map of the world?
- **Insisting on your own** work preferences instead of adjusting to his. How does he like to receive information and make decisions?
- **Competing for visibility** instead of helping them achieve it. Stop complaining that they take credit for your work. That's why they hired you!

👉 **The bottom line:** Think of your boss as a person with a set of personal characteristics, needs and motivators as well as task related goals, KPIs and career aspirations of his or her own.

6. 🙌 Go deeper

Photo by: Randy Belice

Ephraim Schachter is an award-winning C-Suite Coach and Leadership Strategist. He helps organizations thrive through disruption by developing their leaders' capabilities to accelerate trust, navigate obstacles and communicate influentially. These skills have never been more in demand than in the evolving workplace with its growing disaffection with traditional management practices. Ephraim is a trusted expert and thought partner known for strategic, insightful and practical problem-solving.

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- **Bring in** Ephraim to [work with](#) your organization's key leaders.
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💡 **Parting wisdom:** "The effort invested in 'getting it right' should be commensurate with the importance of the decision." Daniel Kahneman

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