

In this month's edition:

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

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Overcoming Impostor Syndrome

Facing Fears of Inadequacy and Self-Doubt

"The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts." – *Bertrand Russell, British philosopher.*

When you think of your greatest achievements to date, do you feel proud of what you've accomplished? Or do you feel like a fraud?

Does each raise, promotion or accolade bring joy? Or is it accompanied by the dread that, one day, your cover will be blown, and everyone will find out that you just got lucky, and arrived where you are by mistake?

If you experience feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, you may be surprised to learn that you are in great company. Impostor Syndrome is typically associated with high achievers. The more specialized you become in a particular subject, the more aware you will be of the gaps in your knowledge. Likewise, the more successful you are, the more impressive your peers are likely to be.

So, if you feel like a fraud, the chances are that you're actually very capable. Real frauds don't worry about this!

In this article, we'll examine Impostor Syndrome: what it is, how it can limit your possibilities in life, and what strategies you can use to overcome it.

What Is Impostor Syndrome?

Impostor Syndrome is characterized by the conviction that you don't deserve your success. It is the feeling that you're not as intelligent, creative or talented as other people seem to believe you are. It is the suspicion that your achievements are down to luck, good timing or just being in the right place at the right time. And it is accompanied by the fear that, one day, you'll be exposed as a fraud.

Impostor Syndrome can be linked to other feelings of self-doubt, such as fear of success, fear of failure and self-sabotage. It often strikes at times that others might associate with success: starting a new job, receiving an award or promotion, or taking on extra responsibility such as teaching others, starting your own business, or becoming a first-time parent.

These feelings can inspire you to work harder, so as not to be "found out," leading to further success and recognition (and feeling like an even bigger fraud). But often, they lead to "downshifting," when you revise previously held goals to be less ambitious... meaning that you never fulfil your true potential.

Recognizing Impostor Syndrome

Ironically, Impostor Syndrome can be difficult to recognize in yourself. Most people accept that there may be other people who have the syndrome, but think that, in their case, they genuinely are impostors.

However, if you recognize any of the symptoms described below, there is a good chance that you are also experiencing Impostor Syndrome.

Feelings of inadequacy and frequent self-doubt.

Thoughts of "I'm not worthy," or "I don't deserve this."

Worrying that you can't live up to others' expectations.

Focusing on your mistakes rather than on your achievements.

Exhibiting perfectionist tendencies.

Thinking that your talents and strengths are common or unremarkable.

Thinking that your job is so easy that anyone could do it.

Believing that what you do is never enough.

Believing that if you were to start over, you wouldn't have the luck, talent or skills to replicate your current success.

Recognizing Impostor Syndrome in Your Team

Impostor Syndrome doesn't just hurt the people who experience it. It also hurts the teams and businesses that people belong to. So, if you are in a leadership role, it pays to keep an eye out for team members who are struggling with feelings of inadequacy.

Here are some signs to look out for:

Turning down promotions, switching roles or avoiding certain high-exposure projects.

Being uncomfortable with compliments or praise.

Attributing good work or success to luck, good timing or knowing the right people.

Other symptoms of low self-esteem.

Expressing fears of failure or incompetence.

Comparing themselves unfavourably with others.

Using self-deprecating statements such as "I'm not sure I know what I'm talking about, but..." or "It might just be me, but..."

Overcoming Impostor Syndrome

Recognizing that you have Impostor Syndrome is often the hardest part. Many people believe that the alternative is to become boastful and self-important, but this needn't be the case.

Here are some tips for beating it:

1– Acknowledge your feelings:

The first step in overcoming Impostor Syndrome is to acknowledge what you're feeling, and why.

Start by keeping a journal. Whenever you experience feelings of self-doubt or inadequacy, write them down, and explain why you're feeling this way. Be as specific as possible about each situation. The chances are that when you write it out, you'll see that you shouldn't worry about the situation.

Next, use Cognitive Restructuring to counter negative thoughts with positive statements, and to come up with affirmations that neutralize those thoughts. Also, think about the successes you've had that have led to this moment.

In their article on The Impostor Phenomenon, Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes recommend imagining yourself telling all the people you think you have fooled about how you tricked them. How would they respond? Most likely they would tell you that they didn't give you a good grade/promotion/award because you charmed them. They might even be annoyed that you doubt their professional judgment.

Remember, feelings are not reality. So, just because you feel unqualified doesn't mean you actually are. Be aware of the automatic thoughts and feelings you have, and work on countering those with reality-based statements, such as, "I am qualified for this task because..."

2 - Talk to Others

In her book, *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women*, Valerie Young writes about the astonishment she felt upon discovering that her peers and mentors also had feelings of self-doubt: "To me, they were intelligent, articulate, and supremely competent individuals. To learn that even they felt like they were fooling others rocked my world."

Reach out and talk to people you trust. You might be surprised by how many of your friends and colleagues can relate to how you feel. Listen to the people in your life and let them reassure you that your fears are irrational.

3— Build up your Confidence

Do this by becoming more aware of your strengths and weaknesses. Conduct a Personal SWOT Analysis or use the StrengthsFinder assessment to discover what you're best at, and to think about how you can minimize your weaknesses. Our article on *Your Reflected Best Self* also has strategies that you can use to better understand your strengths.

Once you have a deep understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, you won't have to spend so much time worrying that you're not "qualified" for a particular task, project or role.

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/overcoming-impostor-syndrome.htm>



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Tues 18 Sept	Motivational Interviewing	Full Day
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Katherine *Limited places available — please book early!*

Fri 14 Sept	Appropriate Workplace Behaviours	Half Day
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New Public Workshop Calendar July– December 2018

The new Darwin Public Workshop calendar for July–
December is being released this month, Check out the
CORP website to enrol

CORP/EASA is now located at :

Level 2, 12 Salonika Street, Parap

www.corp.org.au

