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DEALING
WITH
IMPOSTER
SYNDROME





WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

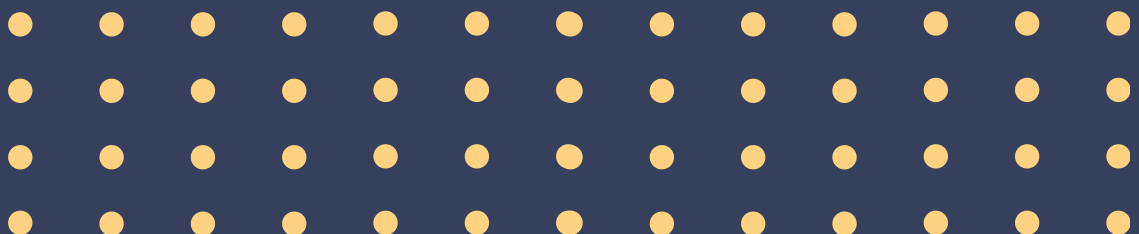
- Have you ever felt that you don't belong in a certain situation?
- Have you ever had a niggle in your head that you don't deserve to be in the position you're in?
- Have you ever sat in an important meeting and been petrified feeling that you don't know enough to be credible and have a voice?
- Have you ever had those niggling inner voices that peck away at you telling you you're not good enough?

Well if you have, then the good news is that you are definitely not alone! An estimated 70% of people experience these feelings. Those are just some of the feelings that can come up within what is often termed imposter syndrome.

But what is imposter syndrome really?

Imposter syndrome can be defined as a collection of **feelings of inadequacy** that **persist despite evident success**. 'Imposters' suffer from chronic **self-doubt** and a sense of intellectual **fraudulence** that **override any feeling of success** or external proof of their competence. It's the idea that you've only succeeded due to luck, and not because of your talents and qualifications.

The idea of imposter syndrome was originally identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. Men and women can suffer from this, but they did identify that women were uniquely affected by imposter syndrome. Since then imposter syndrome is widely recognised as affecting anyone.



WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

There are multiple reasons why imposter syndrome can manifest itself. We are all different, therefore one size does not fit all, but just some of the causes are as follows:

- Personality traits, such as anxiety or neuroticism
- Family or behavioural causes
- Childhood memories
- Internal mindset about being unloved or unlovable
- Environmental causes
- Institutionalised discrimination
- Specific traumatic events that act as triggers

So as you can see there are many causes and as we are all uniquely different, so our own reasons and triggers are likely to be different to those of another person.

It's important to understand the potential causes of imposter syndrome so that we are then able to put into place actions and tactics to minimise the impact of these feelings of imposter syndrome.

It's important that we understand what's happening and take action as if held unchecked imposter syndrome can be massively debilitating. It can really hold you back, stop you from achieving your full potential, undermine your self-belief and self-esteem, destroy your mindset and ultimately hold you back from living your dreams and creating the best life for yourself.



TACTICS AND ACTIONS FOR DEALING WITH IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Whilst imposter syndrome can have many negative implications, the good news is that there are things you can do to minimise the impact and gain greater control. The reality is that feelings of imposter syndrome, may not go away completely but you can certainly take action that will allow you to respond in a more rational, logical and positive way.

Here I share with you my top 12 tips and tactics that you can put into action to deal with these feelings as and when they appear.

1. The first step is to acknowledge the thoughts and feelings are having and put them into perspective. It's useful at this point to ask yourself 'does that thought help or hinder me?' If the answer to that question is it is hindering me and holding me back, then you need to take action that moves you forward in a constructive way.
2. The second step is then to reframe it so that you are able to think more calmly and logically. As part of this it's helpful to scope out the different options and choices/reactions you could follow. Some of this might be in a split second whilst in the moment, or in other circumstances if you're grappling with a more significant even you might want to take time to think this through and maybe even write down you options.
3. You can then choose to react in a different way to how you normally would do once that feeling kicks in. People who don't feel like imposters are no more intelligent or capable than the rest of us, but they just choose to respond to challenges in a different way.





Eg learning to value criticism and feedback and see it as a way that you can improve, is very different to taking things personally and in a negative way that destroys your confidence.

4. Share what you're feeling with people that you trust. It could be a friend or close family member or a mentor. Those people that may have experienced this themselves can reassure you and give you some suggestions as to how you could approach things.
5. Be clear on your purpose and what you want to achieve – this keeps you focused and grounded so when those feelings kick in you can remind yourself why you're doing things and all the great things you have to gain as long as you deal with the imposter syndrome in the right way
6. Give yourself space to work on your mindset – listen to inspiring speeches, quiet time to reflect and be at one with yourself or in nature. Believe in yourself – you all have true greatness within you and you can achieve absolutely anything you want in life.
7. Work on your personal development. The more you grow as a person in knowledge and experience then the more confidence you can build which again helps with dealing with the feelings of imposter syndrome.
8. Surround yourself with the right people – people who will lift you up, support you, give you encouragement and advice but will also call you out if you're kidding yourself or not doing enough. Whatever you do don't let the 'naysayers' put you off.
9. Take action every day that is going to move you one step closer to your dreams and your vision. Work hard, no one gives you anything for nothing you. You have to put the effort in, in particular when the chips are down, it's





by going the extra mile that good things will come out of the other side. There is a massive benefit of momentum. Once you get going and start seeing results then your self-belief increases and feelings of imposter syndrome become less.

10. Make exercise and good sleep patterns part of your daily routine. A healthy body = a healthy mind. It gets the endorphins going, helps you clear your head, think more rationally, gets you thinking creatively and gives you energy. Whatever is right for you, it could be running, going to the gym, or just a simple walk with the dog, but get moving every day. There are so many related benefits of exercise. Getting a full restful nights sleep ensures you can operate at your optimum level and make clear decisions.
11. Don't be afraid to fail – keep your eyes open to opportunities, don't close things down too early. You can't always win but don't be afraid to fail. Don't see failure as failure – see it as learning
12. Practice, practice, practice – the more you put these tools into practice the more they become second nature and eventually the negative feelings of imposter syndrome will become less over time as you learn to recognise and deal with them constructively. They are unlikely to go away completely but that's ok – the aim is to only have the odd imposter moment, but not an imposter life!

I hope that has been helpful and given you some ideas as to how to not only deal with imposter syndrome, but also work on your mindset in general so you can really fulfil your true potential.

Go out there, be yourself, grab opportunities, kick that imposter syndrome into touch and be Brave, Bold & Brilliant!!!



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