

IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

The persistent self-doubt that plagues smart and successful people, causing them to discount their smarts, and dismiss their success...



WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

- Up to 70% of the population experiences it.
- It's especially prevalent in technical, scientific, creative and academic fields, as well as among entrepreneurs, CEOs, consultants and professionals like lawyers and CPA's.

(...pretty much, everyone.)

WHAT IS THE EFFECT?

- It prevents successful people from enjoying their achievements.
- It creates anxiety and pressure to maintain or repeat success.
- It keeps bright and capable people afraid from taking risks or new challenges.
- It suppresses creativity and innovation.
- It causes isolation, exhaustion and burnout.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM OVERCOMING IT?

- You will *feel* as confident and capable as everyone *thinks* you are.
- You will feel free from feeling like a fraud.
- You will be able to acknowledge your skills and abilities without feeling guilty.
- You can *mentor and coach* others who have the same experience.
- You will be more fully engaged in *creating and enjoying* your exciting future.

THE MOST OBVIOUS SYMPTOM IS THE IMPOSTOR CYCLE



I feel like a fake!



OTHER COMMON SYMPTOMS

WHAT MANY EXPERIENCE IN THE IMPOSTOR CYCLE

1

"I MUST BE SPECIAL OR UNIQUE."

Most often manifested as the *drive to be perfect or the best*. But it could also be the need to be associated with celebrities or people of influence as a way to validate one's own significance.

2

SUPERMAN/SUPERWOMAN COMPLEX

Related to the perfectionist, this person must not only do everything perfectly, *but must do everything, and do it alone*. They don't delegate, because that is seen as a limit to their intelligence or ability. They think, "If I'm really smart, I shouldn't need help."

3

USE OF CHARM, HUMOR OR INSIGHT

They feel compelled to add *something* to a conversation, even if it's about a topic outside their expertise. They think "Silence equals stupid, so I must say something." They often use charm and humor to deflect from the fact they don't know enough of the topic. "If I keep them laughing, they won't notice I'm stupid."

4

FEAR OF FAILURE

Nobody wants to fail. But the person experiencing Impostor Syndrome goes to extraordinary lengths to avoid failure. *They will turn down a new opportunity, or over-analyze a situation before making a decision*. They may intentionally set low goals/standards or choose projects they are certain they can complete well.

5

FEAR/DISTAIN OF SUCCESS

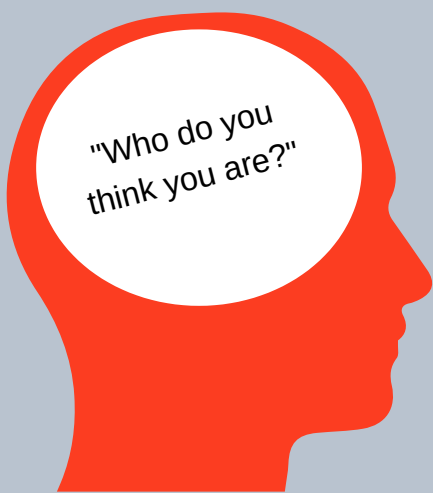
The internal script sounds like this: "If I succeed, I'll need to repeat or maintain it! I'm not sure I can!" or "If I succeed, people will think I'm better than they are." or "I don't know if I deserve or can handle the financial reward that comes with success." or "If I succeed, it must mean that someone else must fail." These thoughts cause them to *shrink back, hold back, and stay small*.

FRAUD-FREE FRAMEWORK

Five Strategies to Overcome Impostor Syndrome

1. RECOGNIZE IT

Understand Impostor Syndrome: the source, the symptoms and the science. You cannot battle an enemy unless you understand the enemy.



2. REVERSE IT

FEELING like an impostor comes from THINKING like an impostor. To overcome the feeling, you must reverse your thinking. This starts with intentionally and consistently challenging the internal dialog that accuses you of being inadequate or unprepared for what's ahead.

3. RE-PEOPLE IT

Getting into community can diffuse the power of the Impostor Syndrome, especially when you embrace the value of what you bring to the world. Your skills are different, but no less valuable than anyone else's. Understanding how to eliminate the "compare and despair" temptation is essential.



4. REPEL IT

Find every piece of "good press" about you. Awards, certificates, performance appraisals, recommendations etc. are all objective evidence of your competence. Review them. Believe them. Remember them. They are powerful. And True.

5. REINFORCE IT.

Know your "why" for what you do. Connect it to a bigger purpose, a grand world-view, a passionate cause, a spiritual experience or a transcendent belief. This will strengthen your resistance to the critical and shame-inducing voice of the impostor within.



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