



## IMPOSTER SYNDROME

### Imposter – Imposter syndrome

#### Imposter

1. a person who pretends to be someone else to deceive others, especially for fraudulent gain.

### What is Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome is the internal psychological experience of feeling like a phony in some area of your life, despite any success that you have achieved in that area.

Some say you may have imposter syndrome if you find yourself consistently experiencing self-doubt, even in areas where you typically excel.

It is not a diagnosable mental illness, it is usually narrowly applied to intelligence and achievement, although it also has links to perfectionism and the social context.

### **Imposter syndrome is basically a form of insecurity.**

It's estimated that 70% of people will experience at least one episode of imposter syndrome during their lifetime. One theory is that imposter syndrome is rooted in families that value achievement above all else and where there is low support and high conflict.

Imposter syndrome is the condition of feeling anxious and not experiencing success internally, despite being high performing externally, doubting their abilities.

Each action that chips away your confidence is more likely to create anxiety, self-doubt – self-hatred, and the feeling that you are less than, not good enough, even a fraud. What starts as healthy nervousness — Will I fit in? Will my peers or colleagues like me? Can I do good work? — can see become a self-induced trauma.

## **Who experiences Imposter Syndrome?**

Just about everyone. Originally it was associated with high-achieving women, but men experience it as well, but due to fear of backlash, men are likely to externalize their feelings. Successful businesswomen tend to suffer from impostor syndrome more than businessmen and it shows itself in the constant worry of not being good enough.

## **What does imposter syndrome feel like?**

On their website, the Harvard Business Review describes it as a “collection of feelings of inadequacy” that stay with a person no matter how much success they enjoy. Various levels of

- Anxiety,
- Negative self-talk
- Self-doubt
- Insecurity
- Constant comparison
- Feeling inadequate
- Fear of failure
- Self-sabotage

They'll also dismiss praise or compliments -feeling unworthy or not deserving.

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## **Imposter syndrome can motivate some sufferers to achieve, but at the cost of constant anxiety.**

Unlike those who boast every little achievement, they believe that they are undeserving of their achievements and the high esteem in which they are, in fact, generally held. They feel that they aren't as competent or intelligent as others might think— that someone else deserves the position, the award, the title or raise more than they do.

This may be due to lack of positive reinforcement and praise during their where leads them to develop unhealthy beliefs about achievement.

Those who have experienced trauma in the past, are likely to feel the sting of imposter syndrome.

They set their internal bar impossibly high, just like perfectionists. But natural genius types don't just judge themselves based on ridiculous expectations; they also judge themselves based on getting things right on the first try.

And because they generally don't talk about how they're feeling, their growing anxiety can eventually lead to depression.

### **What causes imposter syndrome?**

Some researchers believe it stems from the labels parents attach to their children, with one child being the "brainy" one and another being the "sensitive" one or they were praised and criticized in equal measure in a willy-nilly sort of way.

The exact cause is not obvious, but there are some situations that can trigger it, such as taking up a new role where you feel incapable, or you feel you don't belong.

Thinking is what I am doing or accomplishing good enough?

Having a parent praise, and another say that it is not enough – try harder.

### **Why is Imposter Syndrome Showing up for them?**

There are four main P indicators of imposter syndrome – perfectionism, paralysis, people-pleasing, and procrastination plus a few that explain it better.

- The Perfectionist. This type of imposter syndrome involves believing that, unless they were perfect, they could have done better. Feels they're not as good as others might think they are. Nothing is ever "good enough." I don't understand why everyone thinks this is okay - don't they see what I see?

I need to check that just one more time... some folks may even call this having OCD.

- The Expert. The expert feels like an imposter because they don't know everything there is to know or they don't feel as if they've reached the rank of "expert." I just need one more degree or one more certification to be good enough. I don't understand why others see me as an expert yet....

- The Prodigy – Natural Genius. ‘I need to go from zero to hero immediately.’ ‘I must become a master at what I do, or I quit.’ ‘I set the bar very high and have trouble finishing things.’
- The Soloist. Asking for help to reach a certain level or status. Questioning their competence or abilities. ‘No one can do as good a job as I do anyway.’
- The Super person or Savior. This is when you must be the hardest worker or reach the highest levels of achievement possible. ‘I need to take care of it all... I will be more valued if I just take this on too. If I step in, I can save this person or I can save the "world" (my team, company, family, friends)...’

**To get past impostor syndrome, it helps to start asking them some hard questions. Here are a few to consider:**

- Do you agonize over even the smallest mistakes or flaws in your work?
- Do you attribute your success to luck or outside factors?
- Are you sensitive to even constructive criticism?

You know there is a difference between criticizing and critiquing.

Criticizing is to find fault – critique is to recognize the flaw or mistake and give solutions to make it better.

- Do you downplay your own expertise, even in areas where you are genuinely more skilled than others?

Have them ask themselves:

- Must I be perfect for others to approve of me?
- What core beliefs do I hold about myself?
- Where is this coming from
- What is the earliest memory I have feeling or thinking this way.
- Do I believe I am worthy of love as I am?

To move past these feelings, you need to help your clients become comfortable confronting some of the deeply ingrained beliefs held about themselves.

This exercise can be hard because they might not even realize that they hold them, but here are some techniques you can have them use:

- Share your feelings. Talk to other people about how you are feeling. Irrational beliefs tend to fester when they are hidden and not talked about. Ask how others view you. You may be quite surprised how others see your value more than you give yourself credit.
- Focus on others. While this might feel counterintuitive, try to help others in the same situation as you. If you see someone who seems awkward or alone, ask them a question to bring them into the group. As you practice your skills, you will build confidence in your own abilities.
- Assess your abilities. If you have long-held beliefs about your incompetence in social and performance situations, make a realistic assessment of your abilities. Write down your accomplishments and what you are good at, then compare these with your self-assessment.
- Take baby steps. Stop focusing on doing things perfectly, but rather, do things reasonably well and reward yourself for acting. For example, in a group conversation, offer an opinion or share a story about yourself.
- Question your thought patterns. As you start to assess your abilities and take baby steps, question whether your thoughts are rational. Does it make sense to believe that you are a fraud given everything that you know?
- Stop comparing. Every time you compare yourself to others in a social situation, you will find some fault with yourself that fuels the feeling of not being good enough or not belonging. Instead, during conversations, focus on listening to what the other person is saying. Be genuinely interested in learning more.

## **Lastly have them...**

### **1. Breathe!**

I can't say this enough. Breathing offers them a physical anchor that brings them into the present moment and away from the land of worry. When they take a few long conscious breaths the immediacy of overwhelming negative thoughts can withdraw. Ask them to relax the muscles of their face while taking those long breaths, unclench the jaw, smooth the brow, relax the eyes.

### **2. Praise yourself!**

Create a strong, life-affirming, positive affirmation that will override the negative noise in their mind. Each time the self-critical damaging and wrong thoughts start, ask them to say their affirmation out loud, like they mean it and believe it. One such phrase could simply be: I deserve to be where I am and have the right to express myself. Repeat and repeat. When they do this, they are consciously deciding to give less space to the negative.

### **3. Gratefulness - Learn to say thank you!**

When someone says that they have done something well, to say thank you and mean it. Stop excusing themselves or downplaying the self! Simply, say Thank You.

Remind them - You are thanking them for their compliment and what they see and appreciate in You!

In closing – have them place their hand on their heart and do a pledge together. “I pledge to accept and appreciate myself for who I am – day in-day out from this day forward. I Matter”

Thank you for the amazing work YOU are doing in this world! You do Matter

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jina Bonbari". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and 'B'.