

# Imposter Syndrome

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What would your grandmother tell me about you when she starts bragging?

How about your partner, spouse or best friend?

What do they see that leaves them in awe, wowed by you?

Because I promise you, they get it.

They **believe in you** SO much. **They see your potential.**

They don't doubt your ability to do anything you damn well choose.

And yes, grandmas are prone to rose-colored glasses. But, frankly, that's my fucking point.

What would you be capable of, if you, too, disconnected from your insecurities and negative beliefs?

What would happen if you dismissed the inner bitch and cheered yourself on instead?

I guarantee you that voice in your head is not speaking based on fact.

It is actually created based on **how you choose to see yourself.**

**ERGO, you get to choose your perception.**

So do you want **limits and blocks?**

Do you prefer **self-doubt and self-flagellation?**

Some people do. No judgement.

But I'm guessing if you're here, you want more.

And here's the great news: **You are what you think.**

You can decide you don't treat yourself or speak to yourself like shit anymore.

You can choose to be intentional, loving, nurturing and supportive to YOU.

If you were to ask your biggest fan what he or she thinks about you, what you can accomplish, what would they say?

Some of you may be thinking...

"Of course he (or she) believes in me. But they think I'm better than I *actually* am."

OR

"I can't do the things they think I can. It's not possible."

And that, my love, is a case of imposter syndrome.

## **Without further ado, here are the 9 Signs You are dealing with Impostor Syndrome - and what to do about it**

### **1. "I'm a fake and I'm going to be found out."**

People with Impostor Syndrome believe they don't deserve success.

They may think "I can pretend I'm a pro and I can give that impression" or "If they really knew the REAL me, they wouldn't pay any attention to what I say" or "I'm afraid I'll be found out."

They fear having their perceived phoniness revealed.

The feeling as of narrowly escaping professional catastrophe over and over, and it creates major and consistent stress and anxiety. And that starts to seep into all of your work and relationships.

### **2. They believe they are successful b/c they were lucky**

They may think, "I was in the right place at the right time" or "That was a fluke I'll never be able to repeat."

These thoughts point to a deep-seated belief that their achievement has nothing to do with their actual ability.

### **3. "If I can do it, anyone can." ← I used to say this all the time.**

People with Impostor Syndrome think they're nothing special. Whatever they've achieved, others can too.

They think, "Oh, that was nothing. I'm sure my teammate could have done the same thing" or "I don't offer anything unique, anyone can do this."

The irony is that studies have shown time and again that people who feel the effects of Impostor Syndrome most acutely have multiple advanced degrees, high achievements and accolades.

#### **4. "I had a lot of help."**

If you suffer from imposter syndrome, you aren't able to internalize your wins and probably find yourself deeply uncomfortable with praise.

So you often credit others for helping you.

May think back to when you had a hand in editing something or coordinating a launch.

Think: "This was really a team project. It wasn't all me" or "Since I didn't do this completely by myself, it doesn't really count as a success."

They grasp on to any evidence that will confirm their unworthiness.

#### **5. "I had connections."**

Networking is the best way to land new opportunities, no matter what your industry or goal.

But the with imposter syndrome believe whenever they've gotten help through a professional connection, that discounts their achievement.

They'll think, "This was entirely thanks to my mentor's hook-up" or "I wouldn't have gotten my foot in the door without my friend's connection, so it doesn't really count as success."

## **6. "They're just being nice."**

Many people with impostor syndrome can't accept praise at face value. They assume that the flatterer is just being nice.

They might believe, "They have to say that. It would be impolite not to" or "The only reason he's congratulating me is because he's a nice guy -- not because I deserve it."

## **7. "Failure is not an option." - BIGGIE**

There can be a huge amount of internal, self-created pressure on people with impostor syndrome - designed to avoid failure at all costs, so they won't be exposed as a fake.

Paradoxically, the more success these people experience, the more pressure they feel because of the increased responsibility and visibility.

They think, "I have to give 300% to live up to this" or "I've got to work even harder than everyone else to prevent them from discovering who I really am."

This becomes an escalating cycle in which they feel more frantic about proving themselves — to no one.

## **8. "I'm pretty sure" or "I kind of think"**

Those with imposter syndrome use a lot of minimizing language because they don't feel fully confident.

They might say out loud or think to themselves, "I'm not sure if this will work" or "I'm just checking in." Instead of nixing belittling words like "might", "just," and "kind of."

### **9. “I made it up as I went” - similar to the “I was lucky” belief**

People with Impostor Syndrome often discredit their achievements by thinking or saying things like, “I totally BS-ed my way through that” because they feel their expertise isn't justified.

Even if they accomplish something huge, they'll write it off as not a big deal.

## **Do any of these apply to you?**

Some of these thoughts may play on a loop in your head and contribute to the self-doubt that fuels Impostor Syndrome. They may be subconscious or you may be aware of them.

You may identify with some of the above thoughts and feelings, but not others.

Either way, a great first step in overcoming Impostor Syndrome is to acknowledge the thoughts to yourself and even to other people.

Now that you understand how to spot the signs we're going to dive into the shit that contributes to creating Impostor Syndrome, and how you can get to the bottom of the self doubt holding you back.

## **Where Does Impostor Syndrome Come From?**

Psychologists believe that, like many other habitual thought patterns, Impostor Syndrome could be rooted in family background and the parenting style.

Let's drill down to some specific facets of upbringing that could influence the likelihood of developing Impostor Syndrome.

## **Undeserved Praise**

If your parents or other significant adults in your life (a grandparent, a family friend, a much older sibling) gave you acknowledgement for things you didn't think you deserved praise for, you might have become instilled with the sense that you were a phony.

Were you told you were a "good girl" or "good boy" frequently? Were you applauded for your skills as an athlete, your artistic aptitude, or your math smarts when you knew based on comparison to your peers that you weren't particularly distinguished in that arena?

In some cases, you may have started to think of your output and ability as a sham.

## **No Praise at All**

On the flip side, if you never received praise at all — even for something impressive (such as a batting a home run, earning straight A's, nabbing the lead role in the school play) — you probably learned to think of yourself as inadequate and rarely up to snuff.

Everyone, from the youngest child to the most mature adult, relishes and requires praise in order to nurture their self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Receiving intermittent, conditional praise or receiving none at all can breed deep insecurity.

For children, that need for positive attention is greatest. If you didn't have that need met, it could continue to skew your self-regard even as an adult.

## **Lack of Entitlement**

If you were disciplined as a child using language like "Your brother deserves to sit up front because he ate his spinach and you didn't," or "You don't deserve to have dessert because you didn't clean your room," you might have drawn the natural conclusion that you just generally weren't a deserving person.

If the idea of deserving was directly tied to punishment, it might have curdled your understanding of what it means to truly deserve something.

### **Family Labels**

If you grew up with siblings, you may have identified with a certain role in the family, like the "smart one," the "sensitive one," the "competitive one" and so on. The danger of those family labels is that they can be hard to shed even if a child's behavior and disposition adapt away from that defining perception.

This can lead to deep self-doubt when an individual's personal view of themselves doesn't match up with what they've always been defined as and recognized for.

For example, if you were always known as the competitive one compared to your siblings, but also excelled in the classroom, you may not have been congratulated that much on your academic achievements. That could lead you to doubt how smart you actually are.

### **Action Steps**

As you strive to become comfortable with internalizing your achievements, assess how your upbringing influenced your self-worth.

Take a look at how your childhood may be contributing to your tendency to doubt or criticize yourself.

The better you understand it, the more power you'll have to take action and change.

**Next: we're looking at the counter-intuitive reason why feeling like a fraud can be a good thing, and a simple 2 step strategy to use it for motivation.**

Okay, so we started by identifying the signs and symptoms of chronic self-doubt. Next, we explored where the pressure to achieve may come from.



BTW, just listening to this call helps you more aware of your thought patterns, which is step ONE is healing them.

It's important to remember that building self-esteem is like a muscle. No one becomes more confident overnight.

Yet for a lot of us, whenever we feel bad, we think that we are bad. As if having negative feelings somehow makes us weak or a failure.

Those feelings are life. You numb one, you numb them all. We don't ever get rid of them. But how we interpret them changes us.

Just because your mind says you suck, for example, does not mean you have to believe it.

We are the only species on the planet with metacognition — the ability to have a thought and simultaneously observe the thought.

Use that power.

Observe, pretend a kid or a friend tells you they are thinking that about themselves. What would you say in response? You'd probably be full of compassion and love.

Do that for yourself. And repeat. Over and over and over and over and over. As long as it takes, until it takes.

## 3 Ways to Keep Impostor Syndrome in Check

### 1. Go on the offense

Those with Impostor Syndrome are hyper-sensitive to criticism and are often crushed when they get feedback because they view it as evidence of their inadequacy.

Yet, one of the best skills you can develop is learning how to elicit and receive constructive feedback.

While getting unsolicited advice from out of the blue can hit us like a ton of bricks, research shows when we proactively solicit feedback, we perceive it as being more helpful.

Look for opportunities to show your work to other people -- LIKE THIS GROUP.

Get feedback in low-stakes environments first, incrementally working up to more challenging situations.

For instance, give a presentation to a small group before you have to step into the boardroom.

Communicate the areas or skills you're hoping to improve on and be both clear and honest that you'd appreciate constructive criticism.

When you get feedback and feel self-doubt creeping in, short-circuit the habit of taking it to too personally by asking yourself how you'd respond to a friend or a child with the same feelings and thoughts.

### 2. Watch your words

Those with Impostor Syndrome commonly undermine themselves by using minimizing language like:

- "Oh, it's no big deal"
- "That was nothing"
- "I'm not a writer"

By demeaning your accomplishments, you're diminishing yourself. Stop it.

### **3. Welcome praise**

Stop pushing compliments away. Accepting compliments or accolades for your work is not egotistical, despite what your inner critic might be telling you.

The next time you're given a compliment, internalize it as fact. Don't judge yourself against what was said, or analyze it for deeper meaning.

For example if someone congratulates you on landing a major client, accept it gracefully saying, "Thanks! I'm glad all the hard work paid off" or "Thank you! I'm really happy."


Leave it at that. There's no reason to launch into an elaborate explanation of about how you barely made the deadline, or it was just luck.

Quit volunteering more information than necessary simply to point out your flaws before someone else does (because that won't happen!).

Try one of these techniques the next time you sense Impostor Syndrome creeping up.

Because ultimately, holding yourself back and letting yourself be a victim to the impostor syndrome is the greatest risk of all.

Remember, listening to advice is one thing, but taking action and following through to create major change in your life is rare.



*This is just  
the beginning...*

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