

President's Corner

Imposter Syndrome Strikes Again



In June, the Shooting Stars Executive Success Team discussed challenges we've experienced recently in our professional lives. I shared my struggles with feelings of self-doubt, especially in the EWTG arena. Stepping into the role of EWTG President has made me question myself and feel like an imposter at times. Although these thoughts are common, especially among women and high achievers, they only hold us back. So, what is imposter syndrome, what causes it, and how can we overcome it?

Imposter syndrome is characterized by persistent doubt about one's accomplishments, skills, or talents accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud or imposter, despite evidence of ongoing success. This self-doubt hinders career growth, making us second-guess our abilities and hesitate when new opportunities arise.

Imposter syndrome typically stems from one of these five Ps:

- 1 **Pleasing**: Seeking approval and validation from others to feel competent; over-committing to tasks; feeling anxious and fearful about not meeting others' expectations.
- 2 **Proving**: Working long hours to demonstrate worth and competence; volunteering for projects to prove worth; feeling pressure to achieve perfection in tasks to validate one's abilities.
- 3 **Perfecting**: Obsessing over details for perfection; delaying project completion due to constant revisions and fear of imperfections; feeling anxious over potential mistakes.
- 4 **Performing**: Over preparing to avoid mistakes and scrutiny; feeling the need to outperform peers; fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evident successes.
- 5 **Pretending**: Adopting a persona to meet others' expectations; second-guessing and faking confidence; feeling guilty or undeserving of praise or recognition.

Here are key steps to overcome imposter syndrome:

- 1 **Recognize imposter feelings**. Identify when you are experiencing feelings of self-doubt or inadequacy. Acknowledge these feelings and write them down to understand your triggers.
- 2 **Challenge your inner critic**. Actively confront negative self-talk. Question the validity of these thoughts and replace them with more positive and realistic affirmations about your abilities and accomplishments.
- 3 **Reframe your perspective**. Instead of viewing failures as a reflection of your abilities, see them as opportunities for learning and growth. This shift in mindset can help reduce feelings of inadequacy.

- 4 Accept compliments and positive feedback. When someone praises your work, accept it graciously. Acknowledge your contributions and allow yourself to feel proud of your achievements.
- 5 Celebrate your wins. Take time to celebrate both big and small accomplishments. Keep a record of your successes to serve as a reminder of your capabilities and help combat imposter feelings.
- 6 Seek support. Connect with mentors, peers, or support groups who can provide encouragement and share their own experiences with imposter syndrome. Knowing that others face similar feelings can help normalize your experiences.
- 7 Practice self-compassion. Be kind to yourself. Understand that everyone experiences self-doubt at times, and it's okay to feel this way. Treat yourself with the same compassion you would offer a friend.
- 8 Visualize success. Instead of focusing on potential failures, visualize yourself succeeding in your endeavors. This positive imagery can help build confidence and reduce anxiety about performance.

By recognizing your feelings, challenging negative beliefs, celebrating your achievements, and seeking support from others, you can push past fears, embrace new challenges, and overcome imposter syndrome to reach your full potential.

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