Understanding and Overcoming Imposter ~~Syndrome~~ Phenomenon

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1

Whether you *think you can*, or *think you can't*, ~~you're right~~ you may be wrong!

Henry Ford

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Imposter Phenomenon

(Clance & Imes 1978)

An internal feeling of intellectual phoniness *despite successes*

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NOT a real Imposter
NOT a syndrome

Feeling fraudulent or not good enough

Worrying when you will be found out

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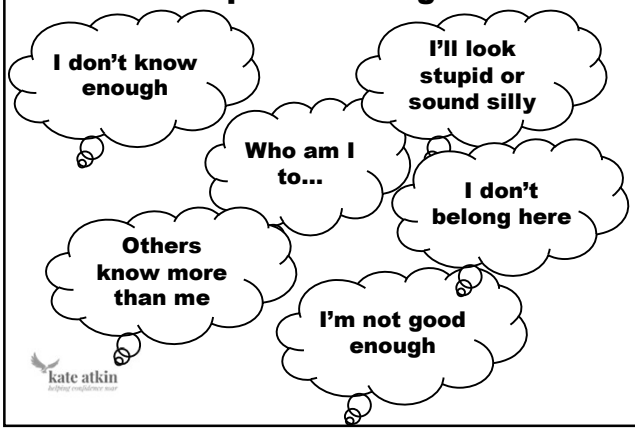
Imposter Thoughts



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Can prevent people recognising their knowledge, skills and capabilities

Can stop people putting themselves forward for promotion or new tasks

Can create high levels of stress and anxiety

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70% - 80%

7

Self Doubt is NORMAL

8

When things go well I am afraid I won't be able to replicate the success

I find it hard to accept compliments or praise when I have done something well

I dread being evaluated

I worry others will discover how much I don't know

9

I don't speak up in meetings unless I am sure of all of the facts

I sometimes feel intimidated by the presence of senior people in meetings

I may avoid challenging other people's points of view

If I don't have authority, I avoid trying to influence the discussion

10

Where does it come from?

11

Childhood Messages and Parenting Styles
Societal & Cultural Messages
Feeling "other"
and
Who you see yourself as being

#ChoosetoChallenge

12

When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well you don't blame the lettuce

You look for reasons it is not doing well

It may need fertiliser, or more water, or less sun

You never blame the lettuce

Thich Nhat Hanh

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13

How to manage/overcome imposter feelings

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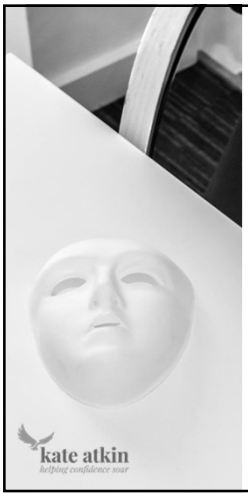
14



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Talk about the imposter feelings

to someone who will listen - not fix!

15

"I got lucky"
"They were just being kind"
"They've made a mistake"

Challenge your self-talk

"It's because I worked really hard"
"I'm just doing my job"
"Anyone could have…"

"I could still have done it better…"

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16

Note positive feedback

Stop "ah, but…"

Start "yes, and…"

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17

Know and use your Strengths

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18

19

Savour Successes

Attending, appreciating, and enhancing positive experiences that occur in one's life

Bryant and Veroff (2007)

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Find a Mentor

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Let go of the P Word

Perfection

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Apply hte 80% Rule

Optimal not Perfect

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Reframe the F Word

Failure

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24

Things that didn't work

I tried - what did I learn?

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If you are managing others…

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STOP telling people they are amazing!

START telling people WHY

- by giving specific strengths-based feedback

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27

Supporting/Coaching

Where do those feelings come from?
What impact are they having?

What evidence do you have to support those feelings?
What evidence do you have that contradicts them?

What makes the feelings worse/better?

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28

Re-write your story

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29

You can choose courage or you can choose comfort, but you can't choose both
- Brené Brown

30

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#ChooseCourage

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31

Further Reading

The Imposter Phenomenon by Kate Atkin
The Pursuit of Perfect by Tal Ben-Shahar
The Gift of Imperfection Brene Brown
Inferior by Angela Saini

www.TED.com
for talks by Susan Cain, Brene Brown & Amy Cuddy

and
The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy as a book and animated film on YouTube

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32