

Becoming Your Greatest Self: Overcoming Imposter Syndrome



Do you feel like a fraud in danger of being exposed when someone praises your work? Do you think your achievements are just a matter of luck? If so, you may be experiencing **Imposter Syndrome**.

Imposter Syndrome is a term that psychologists invented in the 1970s when they studied successful women. Now, they know that men are just as likely to be affected.

In fact, **an estimated 70% of adults experience the symptoms occasionally**. You may be especially vulnerable when you're trying something new or celebrating an important occasion like a job promotion.

Impostor Syndrome can be caused by your personality or the way you grew up. Whatever the reasons, **you can stop undermining yourself**. Learn to experience doubts without letting them interfere with the happiness and success you deserve.

Changing Your Thinking:

1. **Remember your achievements.** Review your track record. Putting your victories in context will show you that they're not flukes.
2. **Give yourself credit.** Change your self-talk. When you catch yourself becoming critical, congratulate yourself, instead. **Reframing your thoughts will help you to view yourself in a more positive light.**
3. **Accept uncertainty.** Impostor syndrome is often associated with perfectionism. Embrace yourself unconditionally, including your strengths and weaknesses. Set realistic goals and expectations.
4. **Validate yourself.** Live up to your own standards rather than relying on approval from others. Be mindful of your thoughts and feelings so you can manage them effectively.
5. **Appreciate effort.** Do you regard struggling as a sign of weakness? In reality, success often requires careful planning and hard work.

Changing Your Behavior:

1. **Talk it over.** Impostor syndrome can be a difficult cycle to break because your first impulse is to cover it up. On the other hand, **revealing your insecurities will help you to put them in perspective.**
2. **Build support.** Ask family and friends for help. Having the courage to be vulnerable will boost your confidence and strengthen your relationships.
3. **Fight stereotypes.** Feeling like an outsider can contribute to impostor syndrome. For example, maybe you're much older or younger than your coworkers. **Look for ways to turn that diversity into an advantage** instead of feeling awkward about being different.
4. **Be spontaneous.** You may be putting unnecessary pressure on yourself if you frequently over-prepare for various events. Throw a party with takeout pizza instead of spending an entire day in the kitchen.
5. **Accept compliments.** Can you receive praise graciously or do you secretly want to run and hide? **Practice saying thank you sincerely.** You'll create a more pleasant experience for yourself and your admirers.
6. **Find a mentor.** Changing long-standing habits can be tough. Working with a mentor will give you the benefit of ongoing feedback from someone you trust. You may also feel more accountable knowing that someone else is monitoring your progress too.
7. **Teach others.** Recognizing your areas of expertise can be tricky when knowledge and skills build up slowly over time. Instructing others is an excellent way to learn more about yourself while providing a valuable service.
8. **Stay relaxed.** Challenging situations are likely to trigger any defense mechanism. **You'll find it easier to be authentic if you manage daily stress.** Block out time for meditation and physical exercise. Slow down and take a deep breath if you find yourself starting to question your worth.
9. **Take risks.** Impostor syndrome can hold you back from trying new things. Make a list of projects that interests you and take pleasure in learning as you go along.

Build your confidence and sense of belonging. **Overcoming Imposter Syndrome will help you to feel more comfortable with yourself** and take more satisfaction in your achievements.