

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

The Consulting Clinic  
Private Therapy Clinic Dublin  
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# Imposter Syndrome



## IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Do you:

Are you a high achiever but find it difficult to believe your accomplishments?

- Doubt your abilities?
- Scrutinise yourself?
- Evaluate and compare yourself to others while feeling less competent than those around you?
- Do you often feel like your achievement/success is based on good luck, by chance, by some mysterious fluke or that you often feel like a fraud?
- Do you feel consumed by these thoughts and feel anxious about your abilities?
- Do you worry others will discover how little you know?
- Do you seek external validation, yet do not fully believe it when you receive it?

If so, it could be that you are experiencing Impostor Syndrome, whereby there is an inability to recognise your achievements and have a persistent fear of being exposed.

# Imposter Syndrome

Joyce M. Roche, author of the book, *The Empress Has No Clothes: Conquering Self-Doubt to Embrace Success*, puts it this way:

"Impostor syndrome is the fear and self-doubt that causes people to question their abilities — even in the face of success — and to constantly search for external validation. Simply put, it makes it difficult to recognize and celebrate one's strengths and accomplishments".

Impostor Syndrome was first coined in 1978 by Psychologists Dr Pauline R Clance and Suzanne A. Imes. Through their research they found that impostor syndrome was most prevalent in high achieving women.

Valerie Young, author of *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women*, says countless millions of high-achieving people don't experience an inner sense of competence or success.

Countless research show that women undervalue themselves and struggle with Impostor Syndrome. Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg has said: 'There are still days when I wake up feeling like a fraud, not sure I should be where I am.'" With Impostor Syndrome so prevalent, it is imperative to recognize the signs and to begin to take the steps to shed the mask so many wear and be uncomfortable in order to become comfortable in yourself.

Signs of imposter syndrome

## 1. Perfectionism

Impostor syndrome and perfectionism tend to go hand-in-hand. Notice if you are setting exceptionally high standards and hold strong cognitive rules where there is no room for error and all tasks 'must be flawless otherwise it is a failure'.

## 2. Procrastination

The fear of being 'exposed' as a fraud or as a 'failure' can lead to increased levels of anxiety and procrastination.

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## 3. Discounting Your Success and Dismissing Praise

If you discount an achievement by saying "it is not a big deal" or "I was lucky" or dismiss positive feedback as you don't believe it. This is often followed by self-criticism.

## 4. Workaholic

You find it hard to let go of work and invest a large portion of your time in work projects where you may want to be the best or to avoid the fear of being exposed. Stress and burnout often follow suit.

## 5. Fear of change

People with Imposter Syndrome tend to avoid change. This can prevent people from taking the next step in their career because they often don't feel "good enough" to move to the next level or you may not feel your contributions are worthy of a pay rise.

## Tips on Managing Imposter Syndrome

### 1. Recognise imposter thoughts when they emerge

Awareness is the first step to change. Be mindful when they arise, you don't have to buy into these thoughts or act on them. Move away from autopilot and increase your awareness of how often you are self-critical and begin to make a conscious and healthy choice in how to respond to self-criticism.

### 2. Cease comparisons

Too often we fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others. Comparisons are always subjective, often biased and rarely helpful.

### 3. Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway!

Imposture Syndrome can often sabotage success as it drives people to settle for less ("I don't deserve a promotion" or "I'm not good enough"). However, if you avoid change and listen to these thoughts you will reinforce and maintain Imposter Syndrome. Feel the fear and take a step forward.

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## 4. Change your thinking

Ask yourself if your thoughts are **FACT OR OPTION?** What evidence do you have that your success is based on luck?

## 5. Recognise no one is perfect and let go of perfectionism

Stop focusing on perfectionism. Allow for mistakes to help you grow personally and professionally. Strive for excellence as opposed to perfection.

## 6. Keep a data log

Write down the steps you took to earn the success you achieved. Come up with realistic responses and let go of unhelpful self-talk while completing the data log.

## 7. Unhelpful coping strategies

Be mindful of unhelpful coping strategies that maintain imposter syndrome such as not speaking up in a meeting, not putting yourself forward for a promotion and move towards a positive risk and change.

## 8. Show self-compassion on a daily basis

Begin to take steps in letting go of self-criticism and being to move towards compassion and self-kindness.

## 9. Build positive relationships

Spend time with supportive people and less with destructive.

## 10. Seek support

Everyone needs support. It can help to gain clarity from the unhelpful thoughts that drive imposter syndrome.

**If you are struggling with Imposter Syndrome and would like to talk to someone about therapy, contact the Consulting Clinic for a solution and results focused therapeutic approach.**

**Book Now**



This guide is for the purpose of sharing information and does not replace therapy.

If you would like to book an appointment for therapy or if you would like to cite this ebook, please contact the clinic.

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