

BEATING SELF-DOUBT*

*Conquer Your
Inner Critic
and THRIVE!*

*aka Imposter Syndrome
Overcome the Imposter
Achieve Your Dreams



Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

**How to Banish Your Inner Critic and Recognize
Your True Worth!**



Course Book

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

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Introduction

All business owners and entrepreneurs have faced challenges, missteps, and the occasional bad decision during their careers. This is a natural part of business life.

Sometimes, these routine setbacks can shake our confidence and create self-doubt. This too, is not uncommon.

But if the sense of unworthiness, self-blame, and negative feelings persist, it's likely you've experienced, or are currently experiencing, imposter syndrome.

Have you ever felt like you're faking your skills, expertise, or talent? Do you worry that customers or associates will 'find you out' and discover you're a fraud? Have you bought into the idea that you haven't earned your success and that it's all just happened by luck, regardless of evidence to the contrary?

Questioning your ability can eat away at your confidence, limit your opportunities, and leave you exhausted. This can have a devastating effect on your business performance and stop you from reaching your potential.

Imposter syndrome does not discriminate. It affects people from all walks of life, at every level of success. And imposter syndrome isn't limited to the workplace. It can stop you from making a major purchase, delivering a speech at your daughter's wedding, running for an elected position, and so on.

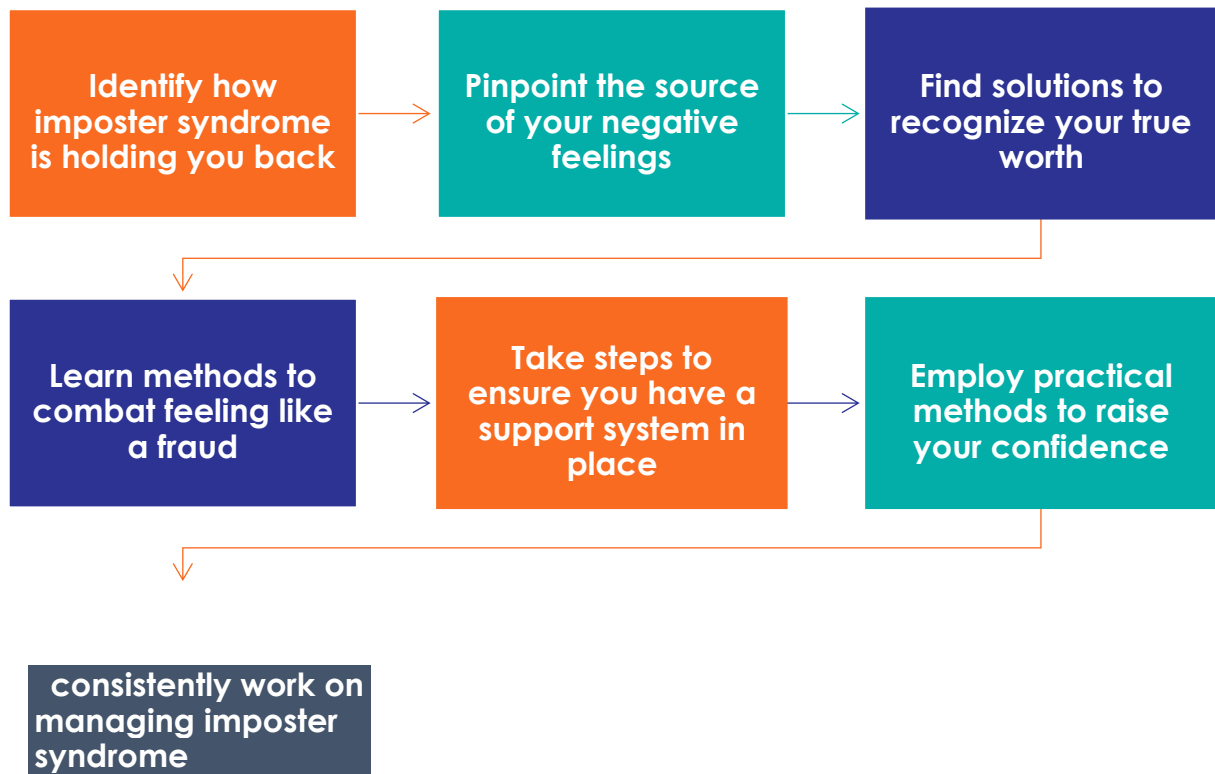
The good news is, there are ways to navigate these feelings and enjoy success. In this course, you'll learn how to manage imposter syndrome so that it no longer impedes your progress. You'll discover practical tools to raise your confidence and combat debilitating feelings of unworthiness.

By the end of the course, you'll have an action plan to free yourself from the influence of imposter syndrome and start exploring what life has to offer.

Here is your roadmap through the course:

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Learning Objectives:

By the time you complete this course, you'll be able to:

- Recognize how imposter syndrome is holding you back from achieving your potential in your personal and professional life.
- Pinpoint the source of your negative feelings so that you can free yourself from the past and fully experience the present moment.
- Select solutions to implement immediately that will allow you to recognize your true worth and acknowledge your achievements.
- Explore methods to combat feeling like a fraud, so that you gain confidence, accept imperfection, and feel comfortable taking up space.
- Develop internal resources and put together an external support system so that you receive help when you need it.

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- Employ practical methods to raise your confidence so you're in the best position to succeed.
- Create a plan for moving forward and consistently working on overcoming your imposter syndrome every day.
- Consolidate and implement your learning and plan future action steps so you can achieve the goals you set for this course.

This course is broken down into 5 major modules and individual lessons to take you step-by-step through the process of reducing the effects of imposter syndrome on your life.

The modules follow a logical order, so while you can skip around if you want, it's best to work through them one at a time.

As you go through each module, use your Action Guide to help you complete the Action Steps at the end of each.

Action Steps:

Before we start the course, take a minute to think about what you want to get out of it.

In the Action Guide, write down three skills you expect to gain.

Now that you're clear about what you want this course to deliver, we can get started.

Module 1 – What is Imposter Syndrome?

Many business owners and entrepreneurs experience feelings of imposter Syndrome.

In this first module, you'll identify where imposter syndrome is showing up in your life. You'll also pinpoint the source of your negative feelings, so that you can free yourself from the past and fully embrace the present.

○ Lesson 1: How Imposter Syndrome Holds You Back

○ Lesson 2: Where Imposter Syndrome Comes From

Lesson 1: How Imposter Syndrome Holds You Back

Learning Objective:

Recognize how imposter syndrome is holding you back from achieving your potential in your personal and professional life.

First described in the 1970s by psychologists Suzanne Imes, PhD and Pauline Rose Clance, PhD, imposter syndrome involves:

A feeling that success and achievements are due to luck rather than ability

A fear that others will eventually unmask you as a fraud

- A feeling that success and achievements are due to luck rather than ability
- A fear that others will eventually unmask you as a fraud

Imes and Clance thought this phenomenon was unique to women, and it's certainly a common experience among high-achieving women including former first lady Michelle Obama, tennis champion Serena Williams, and Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg. But later research has shown that men, too, can experience imposter syndrome.

These feelings can happen to anyone, in business and in the home, although it's especially common in the workplace. Entrepreneurs are one of the largest groups to wrestle with the negative feelings around self-worth, achievement, and self-esteem that are routinely part of imposter syndrome.

Therefore, no matter how successful entrepreneurs look on the outside, it's common for them to feel like they don't fit in, or that they have nothing special to offer. If you resonate with this, you're not alone.

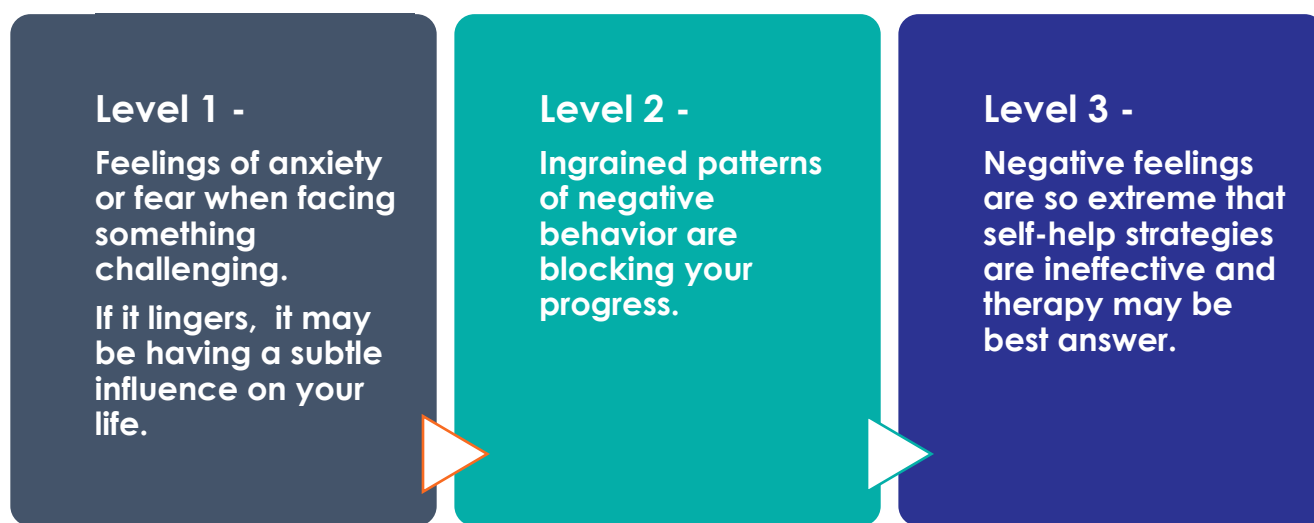
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Different Levels of Severity

We know that imposter syndrome can affect everyone, but it doesn't affect everyone in the same way.

Human beings are too complex to be put in a box labelled 'X' or 'Y'. Imposter syndrome exists on a continuum, from experiencing no issues at all on one end, to an extreme manifestation of negative feelings at the other.

However, to simplify things, experts have identified three levels of severity. These three descriptions should help you determine whether or not imposter syndrome is influencing your life, and if it is, to what extent.



Level 1

You have feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, or fear when facing something new or challenging. If this experience is temporary, you can probably rule out imposter syndrome. If it lingers, imposter syndrome could be having a subtle influence on your life.

It's natural to feel some self-doubt and nerves under these conditions. But with planning, preparation, and practice, everything usually falls into place. You come out of the experience not only relieved and happy that you made it through, but also confident that you can tackle the next challenge.

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Level 2

At this level, ingrained patterns of negative behavior can block your progress. For example, your fear of being found out, your search for perfection, or your recurring self-doubt can prevent you from achieving your full potential.

People at this level commonly experience:

- Lack of confidence
- Fear of failure
- Striving for perfection
- Inability to delegate
- Feeling like a fraud

If you resonate with some of these feelings, once you get a handle on the issue, you can find ways to overcome imposter syndrome.

Level 3

For some people, the negative feelings are so extreme that self-help strategies are ineffective. In this case, therapy could be the answer. The implications of doing nothing are serious and can include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Burnout
- Panic attacks
- Other mental health issues leading to sustained low performance

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Your Experience of Imposter Syndrome

Let's focus on how the negative feelings associated with imposter syndrome can affect you and your business.

The effects can be very subtle, but here are some more obvious examples that might be familiar:



- You're not sure if you're capable of starting or running a business, going for a promotion, or asking for a raise, because you believe that your career success is due to luck instead of skill. This will hinder your growth and prevent advancement.
- You shy away from the limelight and prefer to go under the radar.

This will hamper your ability to gain visibility and recognition through speaking opportunities, interviews, joint ventures etc. You may even restrict your marketing efforts because you'd rather not be seen on video or livestreams.

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- You overwork to meet the unrealistically high standards you've set for yourself, and you're unable to delegate to others or ask for help. This will create a vicious circle of overwork and stress which can affect your personal and professional life.
- You don't want to speak up or ask questions in a meeting or in an educational setting for fear that others will think you're foolish. This will stop you from expressing feelings, offering helpful ideas, and finding the information you need.

You may resonate with some, or all, of these situations. Or, your experience of holding yourself back may manifest in different ways.

As you start this course, take time to explore how imposter syndrome is affecting your life. You may not be completely aware of the ways you're restricting your potential, but you probably have a sense that something's off. If you feel comfortable doing so, ask someone close to you for their input, as loved ones and friends can often see things that we are unable to.

Action Steps:

1. Answer the following questions about your current state:
 - a. Where would you put yourself on the imposter syndrome continuum? Level 1, 2, or 3?
 - b. Why did you choose this category?
 - c. What feelings do you associate with your experience of imposter syndrome at this level?
 - d. Describe how you hold yourself back, either in business or in other areas of your life, because of the influence of these feelings.

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2. Now ask someone who knows you well to answer the same questions about you. You can make copies of the relevant pages in your Action Guide to give them to several people.
3. Compare the different viewpoints and note any insights.

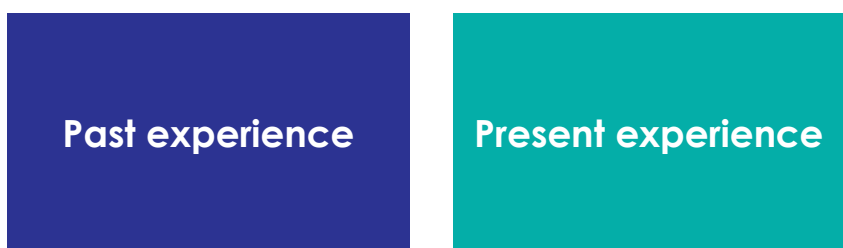
Lesson 2: Where Imposter Syndrome Comes From

Learning Objective:

Pinpoint the source of your negative feelings so that you can free yourself from the past and fully experience the present moment.

As with all human behavior, the sources of imposter syndrome are complicated and varied.

However, there are two key places it stems from:



Past Experience

The way you were brought up has a considerable impact on the person you are today. Influences come from your immediate family, friends, teachers, and the society in which you were raised, for example, within a particular religion, school, college, or community.

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You'll have received positive and negative messages. The positives boosted your self-esteem. However, the negatives chipped away at your confidence, eventually contributing to imposter syndrome.

For example, if you received severe criticism growing up, this can turn into pressure to succeed as an adult, leading to a struggle for perfection. As perfection is impossible to obtain, if this is you, you'll constantly experience disappointment and frustration if you continue along this path.

Many adults who feel like imposters grew up in circles that placed a huge emphasis on achievement. The family transmitted certain beliefs and attitudes towards success and how a person's self-worth is measured. They may have sent mixed messages, alternating between exaggerated praise and extreme criticism. These swings can result in feeling like a fraud in later life.

Present Experience

What you encounter in your adult life can reinforce or bring back experiences from childhood. Add societal pressures to the mix, and imposter syndrome and feelings of self-doubt can become magnified.

For example, if you've decided to start your own business, you'll likely have experienced internal pressure to succeed – launch a flawless website, generate massive sales, gain thousands of followers. If you then spend time comparing yourself to competitors on social media or within your friend group, this drive for success becomes an obsession and a burden.

Past Triggers

It's useful to start separating out the strands of your past from your present experience to tease out their influence on your life today. Once you can examine this objectively, you can begin to manage the situation more effectively.

A lot of how we feel about someone or something now is influenced by how we've experienced that type of person, or situation, in the past. If the

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experiences were negative, they can leave a strong emotional imprint that affects us to this day.

For example, you may get angry when a certain colleague criticizes your ideas. You're convinced he's the source of your outrage, but in fact, he unconsciously reminds you of that English teacher who used to humiliate you every time you raised your hand.

Sounds, smells, and looks can all trigger these negative reactions.

It's important to identify those triggers and trace them back to their source. Then, if you can't change how you feel, you can be aware of what belongs in the past. This can be liberating, as you are now free to choose the way you react to current situations.

For those with imposter syndrome, this can be life-changing.

There's an **Identifying Triggers Exercise** in this lesson which will help you start the process. It requires time and thoughtful reflection to complete, so give yourself some space and take it slowly.

Is it Imposter Syndrome – or Something Else?

As you learned in Lesson 1, the term "imposter syndrome" was coined by two psychologists who were researching women in positions of power.

Although things have changed considerably since this research was conducted in the 1970s, in the highest positions of power, men still outnumber women.

This can lead to a feeling of not belonging and having unreasonable expectations thrust on them. Women, and other minority groups, are often expected to work harder than the majority group.

This is still the reality for many people even though there have been positive advancements over the years. This might resonate with you.

But if it doesn't, don't dismiss it. Take a moment to think about a situation when you've been in a minority, for example, the only smoker in the room, the only person with a plaster cast, the only person not drinking at a party,

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the only tall 6.5-footer or short 4.9-footer, the only red head. Chances are, you'll have felt uncomfortable, overly visible, and probably vulnerable.

Multiply that exponentially, and you'll have an inkling as to how people who experience institutionalized discrimination feel. When a person differs in any way from the majority of their peers — whether by race, gender, sexual orientation, or some other characteristic — this can fuel imposter syndrome.

Reality Check

It's important to acknowledge the reality of the situation before you continue.

Can you answer 'yes' to the following?



Do you work in a setting where you have to constantly prove you're 'good enough' even though you're well-qualified for your role?

Are you expected to get better results than the majority of your colleagues?

Are your chances of promotion less than your majority peers?

If this, or something similar, is your experience, then this isn't imposter syndrome, it's an accurate read of the situation. However, this doesn't mean you won't *also* have feelings of imposter syndrome coming from your past.

Acknowledging your experience will allow you to separate out the issues that stem from imposter syndrome from those that don't. In this way, you'll be

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clearer about the actions you need to take so you don't hold yourself back in your business, career, and other areas of your life that you can control.

Action Steps:

1. **Identifying Triggers Exercise.** Make a list of the people and situations in your life right now which trigger negative feelings and annoy you.
 - a. Review the list to see if there are any patterns emerging e.g., are all the people who annoy you challenging you? Do all the situations involve control? Or something else?
 - b. Look back into your past and identify the people and situations who provoked the same reactions.
 - c. What were your feelings at the time?
 - d. What physical reactions accompanied these circumstances?
 - e. What triggers have you identified?
 - f. Go back to the list of people and situations that annoy you. How could you choose to react to each based purely on the here and now?
2. **Reality check.** Are you aware of negative feelings that stem from being in a minority? What do you plan to do about it?

Module 2 – Ways to Manage Imposter Syndrome

As you learned in the last module, imposter syndrome can be experienced at different levels of severity. Most people can find ways to manage the symptoms, or at least alleviate the effects on their life.

In this module, you'll explore methods which will help you manage the negative internal dialogue that's common to imposter syndrome.

O Lesson 1: "It's no big deal"

O Lesson 2: "I'm a fraud"

O Lesson 3: "I'm the only one"

Lesson 1: "It's no big deal"

Learning Objective:

Select solutions to implement immediately that will allow you to recognize your true worth and acknowledge your achievements.

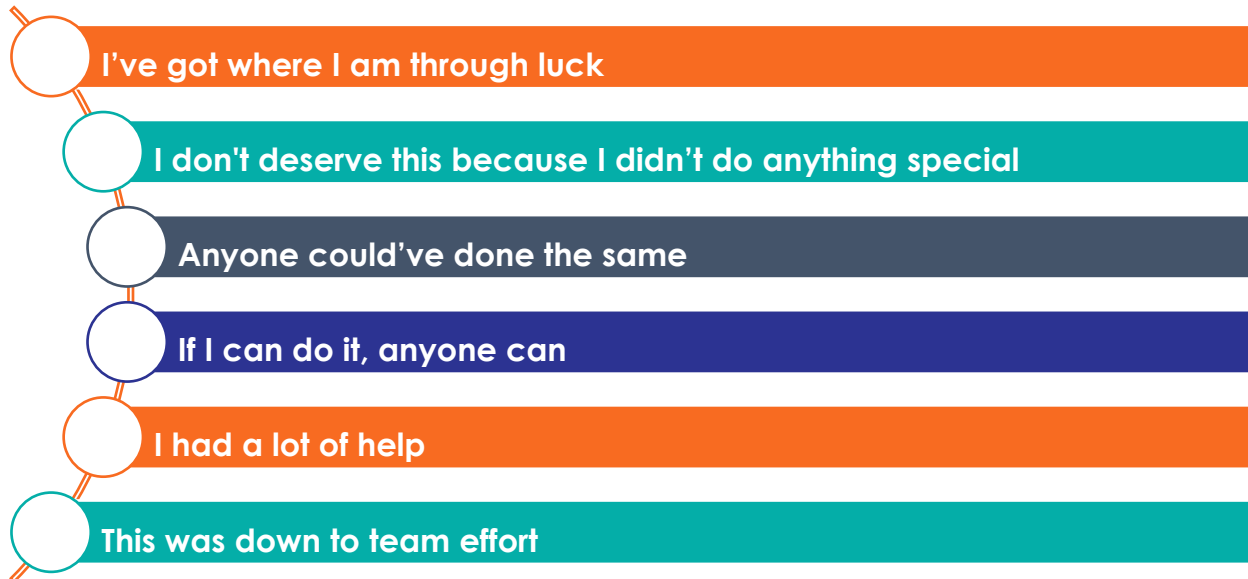
People with imposter syndrome often attribute their achievements to luck. Even if they accomplish something huge, they'll write it off as 'no big deal'.

These feelings come from a deep-seated belief that their success has nothing to do with their actual ability. They feel they're nothing special and whatever they've achieved, others can too.

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The irony is, studies have shown that people who feel the effects of imposter syndrome most acutely have multiple advanced degrees and a demonstrated track record of success.

However, their internal dialogue sounds something like this:



- I've got where I am through luck
- I don't deserve this because I didn't do anything special
- Anyone could've done the same
- If I can do it, anyone can
- I had a lot of help
- This was down to team effort

And because they feel like they've lucked out, these same people negate their expertise. These phrases may sound familiar:

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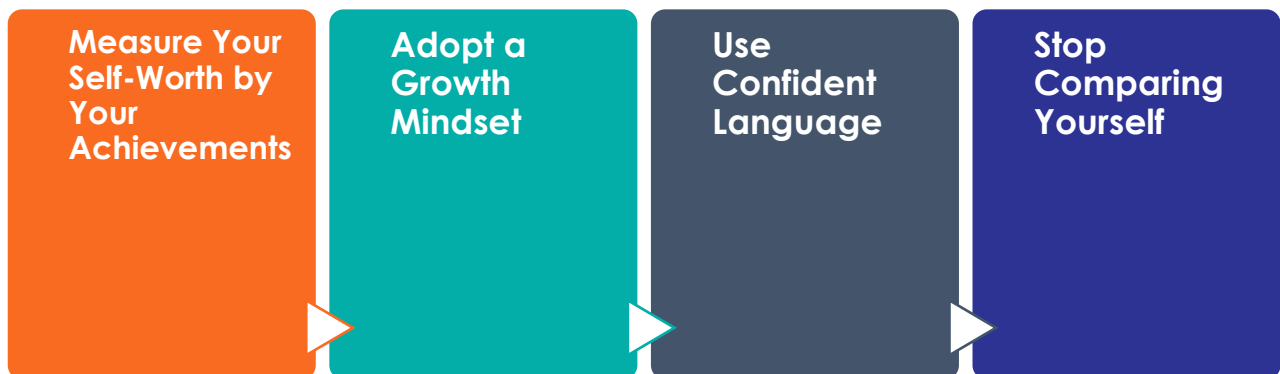


- I'm no expert
- I'm not good enough
- I don't know enough
- Why should people listen to me?
- What do I have to say that's so interesting?

These beliefs have huge implications for entrepreneurs and business owners, as a key part of their role is to develop their own products and services and promote them.

That's tough for every business, but worse for those with a service-based business because they're selling their expertise. If you truly believe you have nothing worth sharing, then you'll really struggle with some essential business tasks, including writing convincing marketing copy or pitching new clients.

Let's explore some ways to work with these issues and alleviate the effects of imposter syndrome:



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Measure Your Self-Worth by Your Achievements

As we've seen, people with imposter syndrome deny the reality of the evidence in front of them. When you do this, you deny your true value.

Gather reminders of your past successes. For example, collect:

Positive comments from social media

Testimonials from customers saying how much you've helped

Emails from colleagues thanking you

Letters from family or friends praising what you've achieved

Pictures from a time you felt proud of yourself

Your own list of accomplishments you're proud of

- Positive comments from social media
- Testimonials from customers saying how much you've helped
- Emails from colleagues thanking you
- Letters from family or friends praising what you've achieved
- Pictures from a time you felt proud of yourself.
- Your own list of accomplishments you're proud of

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These items will help you recognize your expertise and remember what you do well. Look at them any time you question yourself and need a boost in confidence.

Adopt a Growth Mindset

People who have a growth mindset see obstacles as a temporary challenge. They're creative about ways to overcome difficulties and are open to learning and developing their skills and abilities. They believe success is related to hard work and persistence.

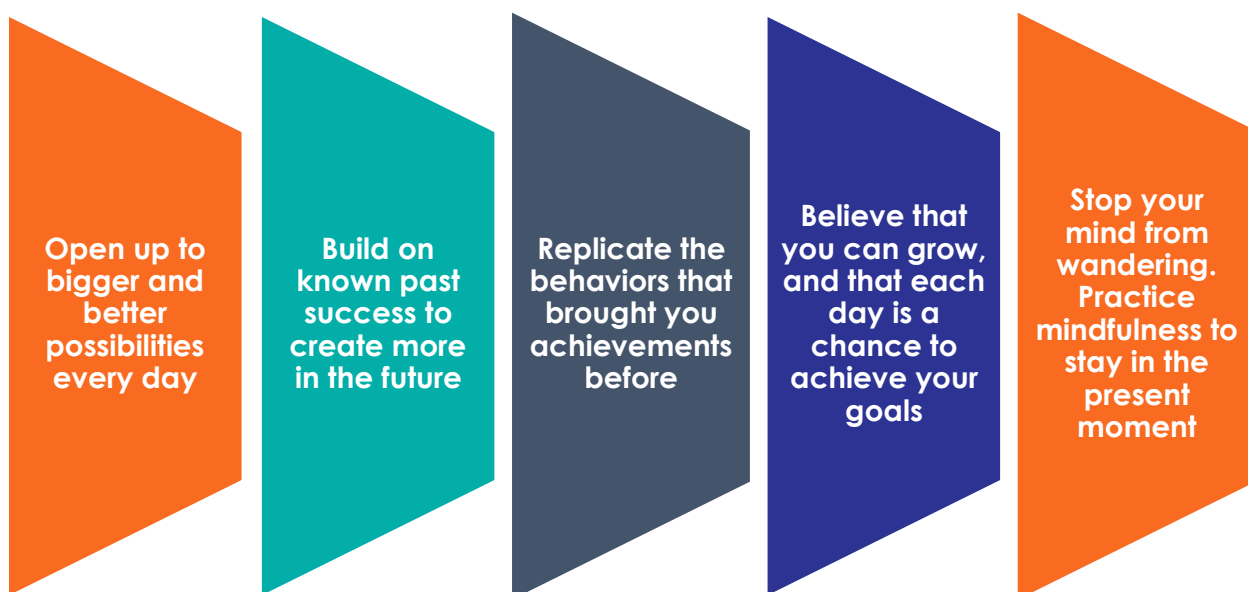
People with imposter syndrome have fixed mindsets. They believe that failure is the result of their limitations.

When you confront your imposter syndrome with facts, it can help you shift your mindset. That's where the success reminders you looked at earlier come into play. They're key to reinforcing your worth.

However, for some people the positive effect will be temporary. You might say to yourself "Yes, OK but that was then. Now it's different...".

Learn to adopt a growth mindset and you can reverse this effect. You won't feel like an imposter for long.

For example:



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- Open up to bigger and better possibilities every day
- Build on known past success to create more in the future
- Replicate the behaviors that brought you achievements before
- Believe that you can grow, and that each day is a chance to work hard, gain new knowledge, and achieve your goals
- Stop your mind from wandering, either reviewing the past or planning the future. Practice mindfulness to help you stay in the present moment and suspend self-judgment

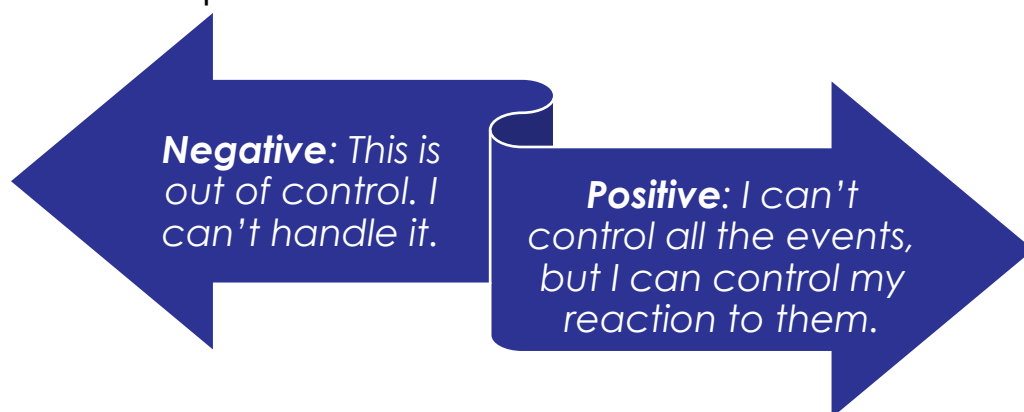
Use Confident Language

The words we use, both to ourselves and to others, are powerful. They can bring up past images of success or failure, and significantly influence how we approach tasks and address challenges.

People with imposter syndrome tend to have a negative narrative running in their heads based on past interactions.

It's important to identify what you say to yourself and then turn it round.

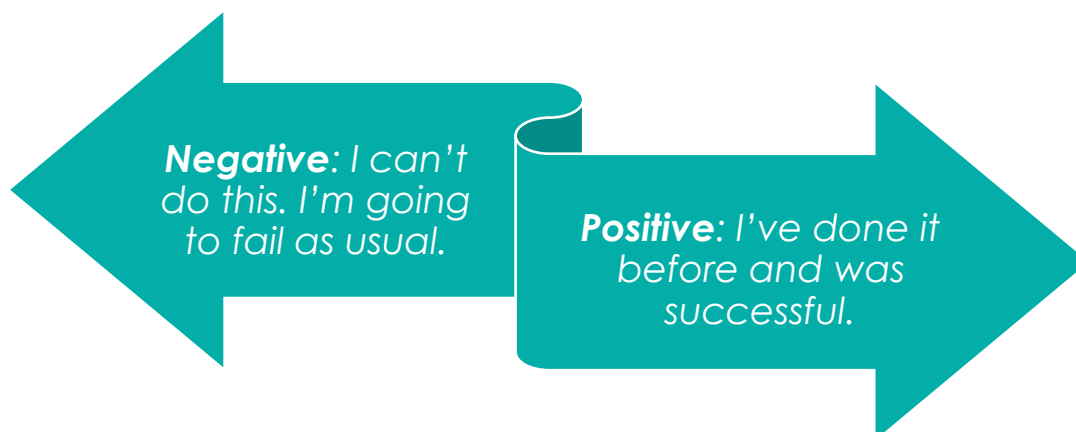
Here are two examples:



1. **Negative:** This is out of control. I can't handle it.

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Positive: I can't control all the events, but I can control my reaction to them.



2. **Negative:** I can't do this. I'm going to fail as usual.

Positive: I've done it before and was successful.

Once you've identified the positive phrase, you can repeat it to change how you feel when you're faced with difficult situations.

"Imposters" also use a lot of minimizing language because they don't feel confident or they don't want to stand out. They'll say, "I'm not sure if this will work" or "I'll try it, but it probably won't work."

They'll also add in belittling words and phrases such as "might", "just," and "kind of" as in "I'm pretty sure..." or "I kind of think..."

This type of speech also needs to change to something more positive.

For example, if you're a coach talking to a prospective client, avoid:

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"I might be able to help you with that. I'm fairly sure I've done something like it before."

Instead, say: "Yes, I'm confident I can help you. I've had success with other clients with the same issue."

"I might be able to help you with that. I'm fairly sure I've done something like it before."

Instead, say: "Yes, I'm confident I can help you. I've had success with other clients with the same issue."

Stop Comparing Yourself

When you believe you aren't good at what you do, then it's easy to compare yourself to others and find yourself wanting. This does nothing for your selfesteem.

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- Quit the comparisons. It's your uniqueness that creates your value, as you fill a space no one else can
- Stay focused on measuring your own achievements instead of comparing yourself to others
- Stop looking at the highlight reels of someone else's life on social media – it's not reality
- Focus on being a better version of yourself each day
- Tell yourself "I'm great as I am!"

Action Steps:

1. Collect 'success reminders' e.g., comments, letters, pictures etc.

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- a. Store them somewhere you can easily access when you need to remind yourself of your achievements.
2. Practice the separate **Mindfulness Exercise**.
3. Identify examples of negative self-talk you've been using:
 - a. Write them down in one column.
 - b. Rewrite them with their positive equivalent in the next column.

Lesson 2: "I'm a fraud"

Learning Objective:

Explore methods to combat feeling like a fraud, so that you gain confidence, accept imperfection, and feel comfortable taking up space.

People with imposter syndrome often feel like a fraud because they can't acknowledge their achievements. Use the techniques from the previous lesson to help you recognize your self-worth and differentiate between what you're good at, and what you aren't.

In this lesson, we'll explore the fear of being unmasked and having your self-perceived 'phoniness' revealed.

This can give rise to this sort of internal dialogue:

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Let's explore some ways to work with these issues and alleviate these effects:

Understand What's Happening

Think about the true frauds in society. They don't have imposter syndrome. They're not afraid of being caught out and often end up believing their own hype. That's how they're able to get away defrauding people and organizations of millions.

If you're worried that you're a fraud, then you aren't!

Try these ideas:

Stay aware of what's going on with your feelings

Recognize the familiar thoughts or feelings as they come up

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Mentally prepare for imposter feelings to crop up

Separate out the emotions from the reality

Practice mindfulness

- Stay aware of what's going on with your feelings, then you'll be in a better place to handle situations that arise.
- Recognize the familiar thoughts or feelings as they come up. This can help you stop them. For example, if you hear yourself say, "This is all a facade," or "I'll get found out any minute", pause and take note that you are having imposter syndrome thoughts.
- Mentally prepare for imposter feelings to crop up. Be ready to observe and respond to them. Realize that they're just emotions and are not necessarily a reflection of reality.
- Separate out the emotions from the reality, and you can start to rise above them.
- Practice mindfulness to help you with this (revisit the exercise in the last lesson).

Handle Criticism

One area that's significant for many people with imposter syndrome is their response to criticism.

We've all received criticism in our lives but for "imposters" this can easily fuel their current search for perfection.

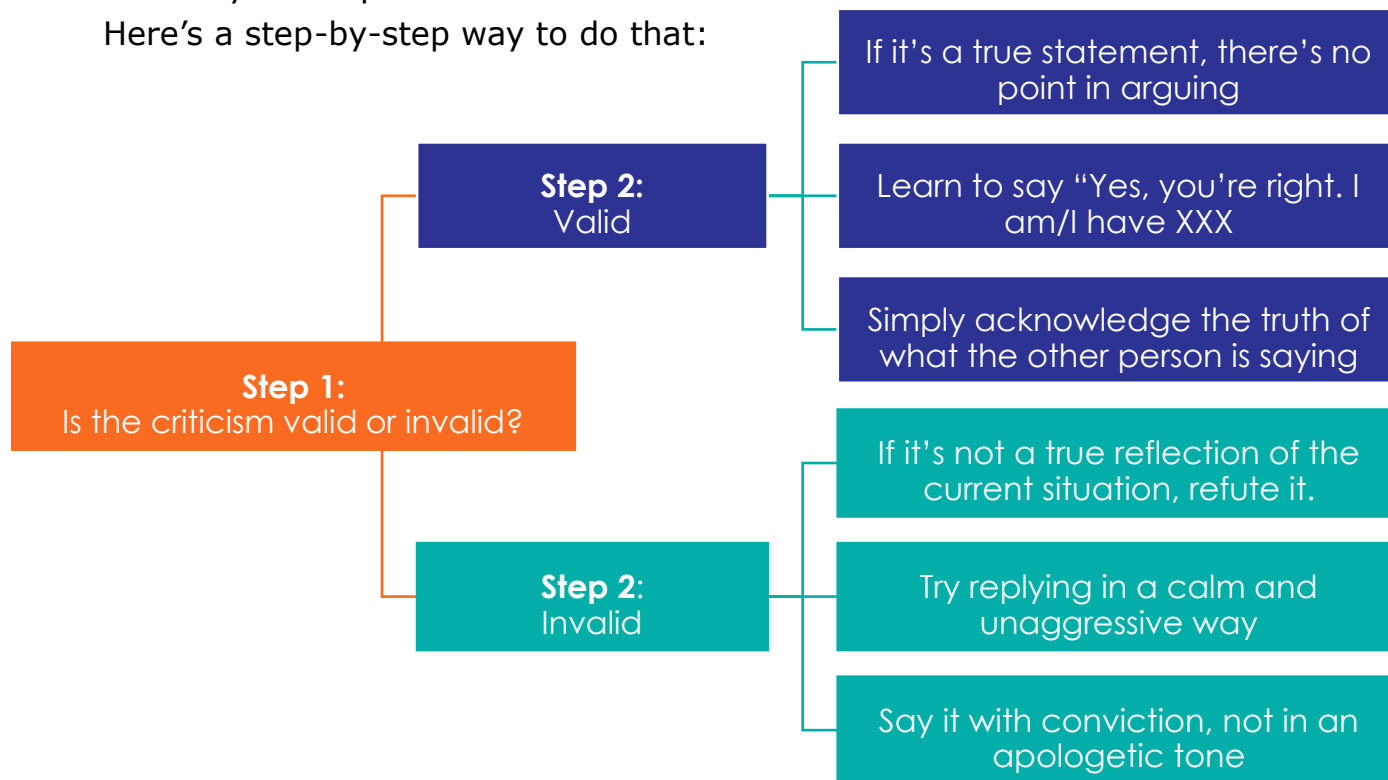
When you look back to the past, you'll see that what you experienced as criticism as a child was, in fact, labeling. You were labeled 'lazy' because you didn't tidy up your room or 'stupid' because you only got 8 out of 10 for a test. Criticism was handed out as disapproval, punishment, or withdrawal of

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affection. It wasn't meant to be something intended to help you learn, or at least you didn't experience it as such.

This is why criticism is such a minefield. But the good news is, you can relearn your response to it.

Here's a step-by-step way to do that:



1. **Step 1** - Decide whether the criticism is valid or invalid based on present circumstances.

2. **Step 2** - Use the following techniques to answer the criticisms:

○ Valid

- If it's a true statement, there's no point in arguing. E.g., You *have* been late too often, you *did* forget to send an important letter, you *didn't* do as much as you could to market that product.
- Learn to say "Yes, you're right. I am/I have XXX." E.g., "Yes, you're right I have been doing XXX a lot lately. I'm thinking of changing that."

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- Simply acknowledge the truth of what the other person is saying. This often stops them in their tracks. You don't have to explain or get defensive. You might decide you want to do something about it at some stage. E.g., "Yes, you're right. I didn't do as much as I could to market that product. I plan to get someone to help me with that next time."
- Invalid
 - If it's not a true reflection of the current situation, refute it.
 - Try replying in a calm and unaggressive way.
 - Say it with conviction, not in an apologetic tone.
 - Add in the word they used to lessen its impact on you.
 - E.g., 'No, I don't agree with you. I'm not XXX'
 - 'That's completely untrue. I don't agree that I'm XXX'
 - "No, I don't agree that I'm always late. But it's true that on this occasion I was."

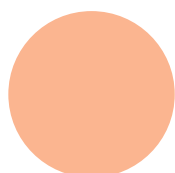
Use the exercise in the Action Guide to practice handling valid and invalid criticism. The purpose of this exercise isn't to descend into negative thought, it's to show you a positive way to handle these complaints. It will also give you the opportunity to practice separating feelings from fact.

Stop Focusing on Perfection

The imposter phenomenon and perfectionism often go hand in hand. So-called imposters think that every task they tackle has to be done perfectly, and they rarely ask for help. They hide away so their 'flaws', 'faults', and 'shortcomings' can't be seen.

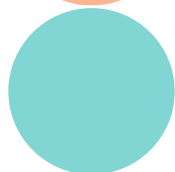
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Perfectionism can control you and hinder your progress. You may put off a project because you're afraid you won't meet your own high standards. Or, you spend so much time preparing for a task, you fall behind on other projects. Or, you aim low and take jobs beneath your skill level in an attempt to avoid failure.

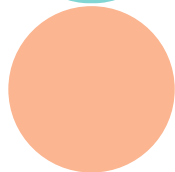


Here are some tips to help you:

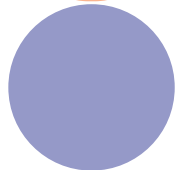
Accept that nobody is perfect. We can only do our personal best.



Avoid giving yourself the label of "perfectionist." View it as a behavior, not part of your identity.



Challenge yourself to develop new habits that will help you achieve success *without* obsessing over perfection.



Understand that if you're constantly striving for perfection, you'll end up disappointed.

The more you try to get something 100% right, the more stress you place on yourself and the less capable you are of taking action. Often in business, you can make more progress by aiming for 90% 'perfect' rather than waiting for the 100% that never comes.

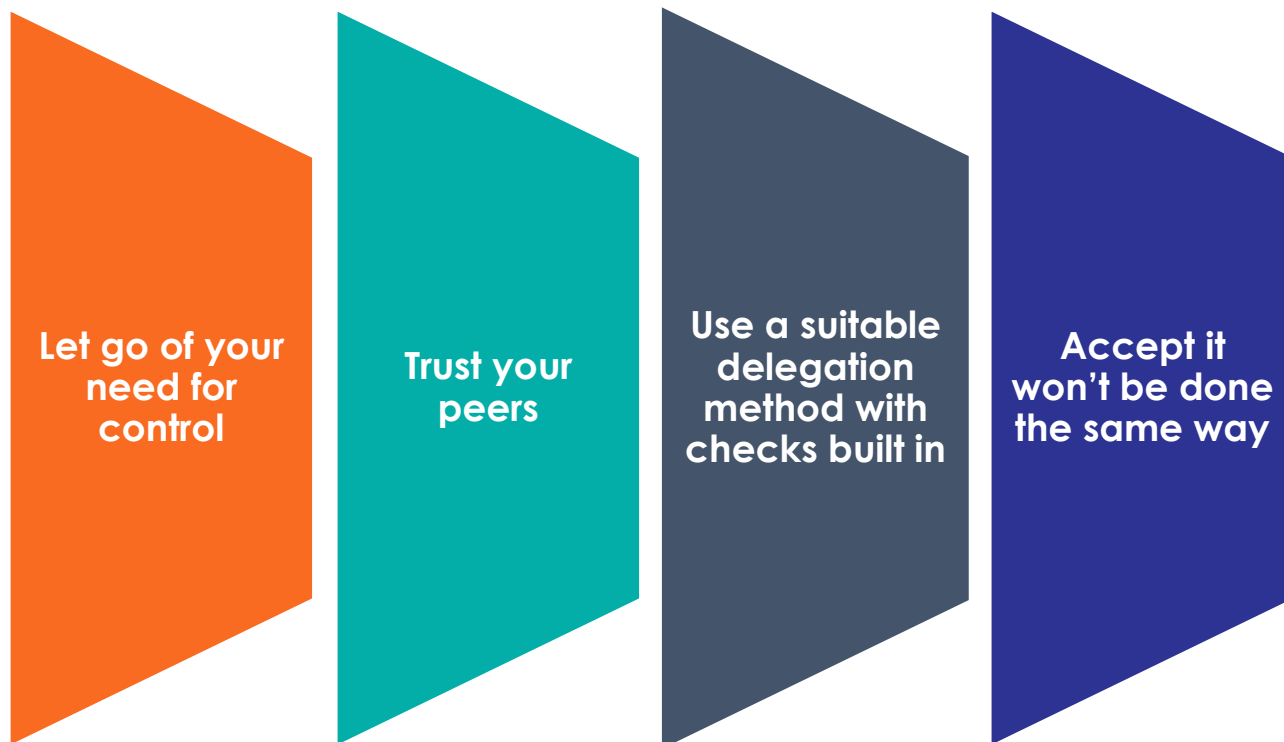
For example, when writing your own marketing copy for a launch, it's better to get the copy 90% 'right' and get the product out, versus waiting until it's 100% 'right', delaying the launch, and missing out on potential sales. When you think of it, something that's 100% 'perfect' in business today may not be considered 100% 'perfect' tomorrow, so don't waste time and energy struggling for the impossible.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Delegate More

Wanting to maintain control over a situation or task can feed perfectionism. It can be hard for those with imposter syndrome to delegate and ask for help. This just adds to the pressure.

Therefore:



- Let go of your need to keep control of everything
- Trust your peers and their ability to deliver excellent work and free yourself up to focus on the tasks you care about most
- Use a suitable delegation method with checks built in to ensure an outcome that you can live with
- Accept it won't be done the same way as you'd do it. But it might be better!

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Surrender Your Expectations of Others

As someone with imposter syndrome, you have unrealistic expectations of yourself. Don't transfer these to other people or you'll be setting them up to fail.

Scale down your expectations of others

Stay positive and realistic

Be open to outcomes you haven't anticipated, especially when you start delegating

Don't pre-judge situations before they happen simply because of a negative past experience

You looked earlier at the effects of past experience on your present life and how emotions can be triggered in the here and now. Expectations that someone will act or speak in a certain way are almost always based on the past (either with this person or someone like them). As one of your action steps, you'll conduct a thorough analysis of a situation that will increase your self-awareness. As you become more aware of how you respond in different situations and how much of that is based on past (similar) experiences, you'll be able to control your reactions and dial down your expectations.

Action Steps:

1. Make a list of the negative labels you received as a child and perhaps still hear from some people today. For example, "You're too sensitive" or "You'll never make it to the top".

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- a. Review the list and decide if the comments are valid or invalid.
- b. Practice countering these statements. Say them out loud, or have a friend say them to you, and test out some responses.
2. Think about an upcoming situation where you expect your performance to be 100% perfect and write down the details.
 - a. What aspects could you change so that this 'perfection percentage' drops to 80 or 90%?
 - b. How does the idea of this feel to you?
 - c. What advantages could you gain from this? E.g., saving money, saving time, less stress.
 - d. When are you prepared to make this change?
3. Complete the separate **Expectations Exercise**.

Lesson 3: "I'm the only one"

Learning Objective:

Develop internal resources and put together an external support system so that you receive help when you need it.

Self-Care is Crucial

One of the hardest things about imposter syndrome is the accompanying feeling that you're the only one who feels like this. It can alienate you and keep you apart from others.

Before you start looking for help outside yourself, build your inner reserves first and practice self-care.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Learn to Manage Your Stress

Once you're aware that imposter syndrome can sometimes cause you to feel anxious, nervous, and fearful, you can use stress-busting techniques to regain your calm center.

Only you will know what works for you. It could be sport, hobbies, music, dance, meditation, gardening, or a deep breathing exercise. Here are some tips:

Identify the activities that help keep you calm

Schedule stress-busters into your regular routine

Keep a journal

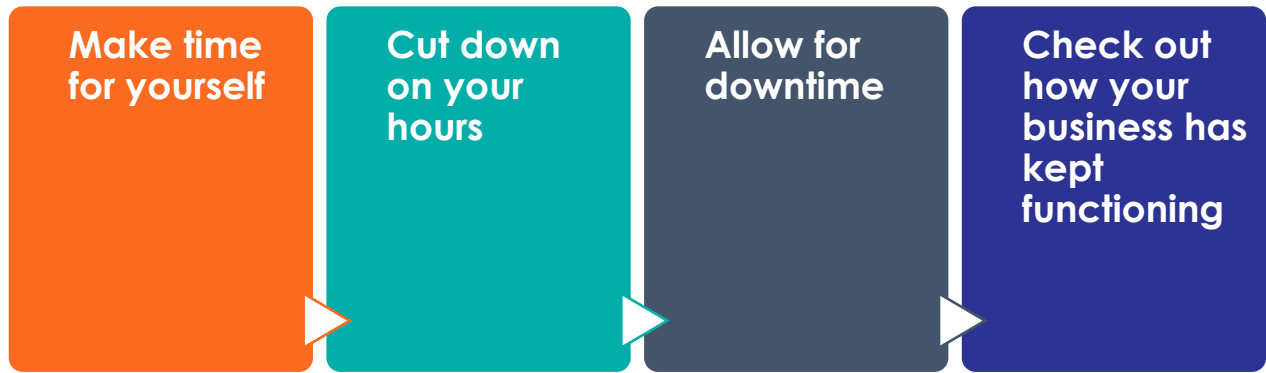
- Identify the activities that help keep you calm.
- Don't wait for imposter syndrome to strike. Schedule stress-busters into your regular routine.
- Keep a journal. Journaling has been proven to be a great treatment for imposter syndrome. The very act of writing can be calming, and by focusing on positive aspects of life, it can raise your energy and your spirits. For example, you could try a gratitude journal and whenever you feel self-doubt, write down five things you are grateful for.

Recognize the Value of Time Off

Perfectionism may lead you to work well beyond 40 hours every week and prioritize your professional life over your personal life. This can be acceptable over a short period of time, but not as a regular practice. You'll end up exhausted and isolated.

Here are some self-care essentials:

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- Make time for yourself by planning breaks and vacations
- Cut down on your hours so you have some time out of the office.
- Allow for downtime, or time to focus on your own passions and hobbies, to refresh and revive yourself
- After a break, when you return to work, check out how your business has kept functioning even when you weren't there.

Focusing on your personal well-being from time to time benefits your business and your whole life.

You're Not Alone

By finding others who feel like you, the world will feel less lonely. It will make feeling like an imposter far more manageable, as you realize how common and typical your feelings are.

The first positive step forward is to recognize that you *don't* have to do this on your own. The next step is to give yourself a break and get help when you can.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Create a Support System

You'll need help to thrive at your optimum level, so allow others to help you.

Don't hide away when your imposter syndrome comes to the fore. Talking to people you trust can help you get things into perspective.

Follow these ideas to set up support:

Build a personal and professional support system

Ask in advance if they'll support you

Explain the type of support you need

Find out if the group will support you when you need it

Tap into this support network as soon as you need it

- Build a personal and professional support system which can be a source of guidance and help during times of stress e.g., a family member, trusted colleague or peer, mentor, coach, or supervisor
- Ask in advance if they'll support you so they aren't surprised when you come knocking on their door
- Explain the type of support you need
- If you belong to a peer group or training group, then find out if the group will support you when you need it
- Don't hesitate to tap into this support network as soon as you need it. These trusted supporters can help normalize your feelings and remind you that your fears aren't real

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And once you start talking about imposter syndrome, you'll find that many people around you identify with it!

Get Further Help if Needed

Psychologists acknowledge that imposter syndrome is very real. If your feelings of imposter syndrome are intense, then the effects are more likely to interfere with your life.



Try self-help tools

Seek help for more long-term support

Don't be embarrassed to seek professional help

Help from a therapist could be the answer

- Try self-help tools that appeal to you to help relieve symptoms
- Seek help for more long-term support
- Don't be embarrassed to seek professional help. You owe it to your mental health
- Help from a therapist or counselor could be the answer

In this module you've learned a variety of ways to lessen the effects of imposter syndrome. A common thread that moves through them all is the

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need to build and retain your self-confidence. We will cover this important topic in the next module.

Action Steps:

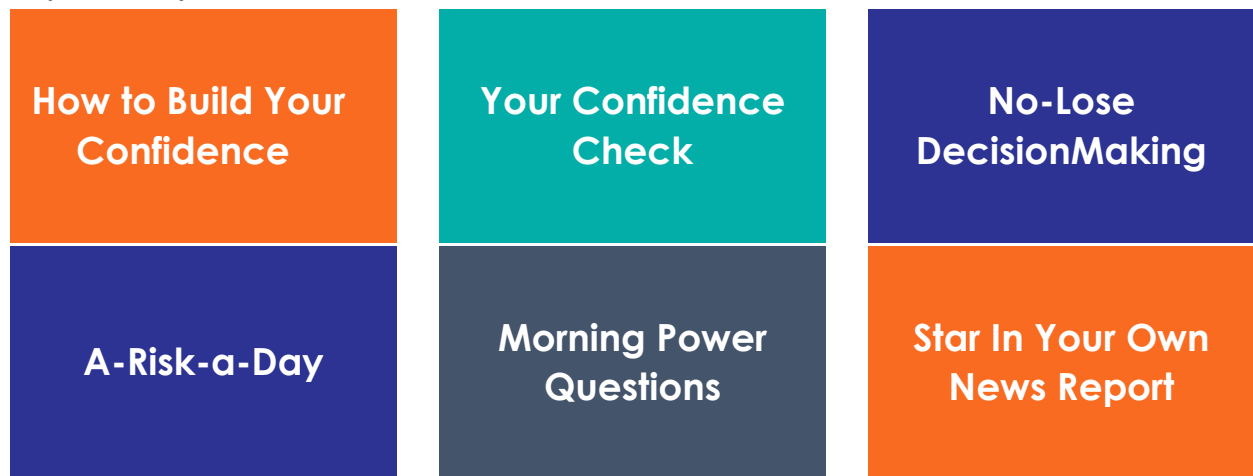
1. List the strategies that help you manage your stress.
 - a. How can you add them to your schedule?
2. Decide what type of support you need from another person or group:
 - a. Make a list of trusted people who can help you.
 - b. Contact them to ask if they're willing to support you and explain exactly what you might need.

Module 3 – Build Your Confidence

Learning Objective:

Employ practical methods to raise your confidence so you're in the best position to succeed.

Let's focus on building your confidence. In this module you'll find a number of simple self-help practices that can help lift you out of the trap imposed by imposter syndrome.



How to Build Your Confidence

This is one of the biggest steps you can take for yourself to combat feelings of imposter syndrome. It's so important that we're dedicating a entire module to it.

When you're self-confident, you're not trying to be someone else. You know exactly what you have to offer and can bring your best to any situation. Developing your confidence will help you keep your imposter syndrome in proportion to reality.

Combating imposter syndrome for some people isn't simply a case of developing more self-confidence. But it can play a part, and the exercises in this module can help whatever severity of imposter syndrome you experience. Some will work better than others and you'll be drawn to some

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rather than others. It's a personal thing, definitely not a one-size-fits-all scenario.

Try them out and see for yourself. You may develop variations over time that suit you better or find other ways entirely. What's important is that you build in mechanisms to raise your self-confidence.

Your Confidence Check

We are all confident in certain situations or certain roles in our lives. However, there are probably areas where we don't feel so sure of ourselves.

For example, you may feel particularly confident managing arguments with your kids, but shy away from confrontation in the workplace. You may feel totally sure of yourself when negotiating deals with suppliers, but get uncomfortable when you have to do a deal with your builder.

Your comfort zone is where *you* feel most confident. It's where many of us live most of the time, doing the things that are easy and familiar to us. The comfort zone will be different for everyone, but whatever that zone is, it limits everyone's growth.

The more you can move out of that zone, the more you can expand your boundaries. You'll find out exactly what you *can* do to build your confidence.

Once you know your own process, you can replicate it in other situations and expand your comfort zone. Complete the **Confidence Check Exercise** in the module to help you.

No-Lose Decision-Making

One of the greatest areas of difficulty for many people is making decisions. If you're a manager, entrepreneur, or small business owner, it will often fall to you to make the major judgement calls.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

If you experience imposter syndrome with perfectionism, you'll continually search for a way to 'get it right' every time. This will put considerable pressure on you when it comes to making decisions.

For example, if you were repeatedly told "Be careful, you might make the wrong decision!", you'll end up fearing making *any* decision. You'll freeze, feel powerless, and do nothing. This will lead to a lack of progress and settling for the safe and comfortable, because no matter what you do in the end, your internal dialogue will tell you that you're making the wrong decision and that you'll only get criticized for it.

If this is a familiar narrative going on in your head, it's time to put another strategy into action.

This means shifting your mindset to accept that for each negative outcome, there's a positive one that's just as likely. It might take a while for this to sink in! You'll get some practice in the **No-Lose Decision-Making Exercise** in this module.

Once you know this shift is possible, it will change how you view decision making. You'll choose a no-lose model rather than the no-win model. In other words, whatever decision you make, you know that the outcome will be positive. In this way, you'll release the pressure on yourself, and you'll learn valuable lessons in the process. You may even discover constructive results that you hadn't even considered, which will lead you to even greater success.

A Risk-a-Day

Most of us are still learning and growing and have the capacity to develop more. As we said earlier, everyone has a 'comfort zone', living in the situations where we feel confident that we can handle whatever comes along. Self-confidence develops when we widen this comfort zone by taking on and meeting challenges.

Every challenge is an opportunity for personal growth. Appropriate challenges should stretch our comfort zones, without being overwhelmingly daunting. We start from a lack of confidence, we practice, gain experience

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and, step by step, achieve a level of confidence. Becoming an inspiring public speaker or a confident user of smart technology are examples of this process in action.

Your challenges will be personal to you. For example, you might be willing to invite colleagues out for an after-work drink, but not feel comfortable inviting your senior managers. You might feel fine spending \$75 for a pair of shoes, but draw the line at \$100. You might be happy to sell a product or service for \$299, but can't imagine offering something at \$2999.

As you expand your comfort zone, you bring more power and greater selfconfidence into your life. And you can do this quite consciously by taking something on each day that makes you a bit nervous.

Challenge yourself to go as far as you can, without stepping too far ahead, too fast. You'll end up disappointed and feeling like a "failure" if you set unrealistic expectations for yourself.

Taking even a small a risk a day will make you feel great once you've acted, as you'll find out when you complete the separate **Risk-a-Day Exercise**.

Morning Power Questions

How you set yourself up for the day will have an impact on the hours that follow. If you have a tendency towards anxiety and pessimistic thinking, your first thoughts on waking may be programming your brain for negative outcomes.

You can take control of this by making sure that your first thoughts are energizing, motivating, and focused on the positive. Make a habit of this and see how things change for the better.

You'll increase your confidence and set yourself up for a really great day.

Here's an example of a question that's focused on the positive:

- What am I happy about in my life now?

Search around and you'll soon find something to be happy about!

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You'll find a list of powerful questions in the **Morning Power Questions Exercise**. Once you get the hang of it, add your own.

Star In Your Own News Report

Sometimes it helps to imagine you're someone else. The distance this gives you can free you from your habitual feelings and behaviors and open up possibilities to experience life in a different way.

One way to do this is to imagine you're reporting on your own success. You could write about successes you've already had, or are having now, or set the article in the future. It's more impactful if you project to the near future, as that will get your brain working along those lines and bringing about the outcome you want.

Once you've worked out your text, you could video it as if it's a TV report. Be creative and have some fun!

You'll find the brief for this in the **Star in Your Own News Report Exercise**.

Action Steps:

Complete the following separate exercises:

1. Confidence Check
2. No-Lose Decision-Making
3. Risk-A-Day
4. Morning Power Questions
5. Star in Your Own News Report

Module 4 – Plan for Your Success

Learning Objective:

Create a plan for moving forward and consistently working on managing your imposter syndrome every day.

Now that you've learned methods to help you manage your imposter syndrome, you need to plan ways to integrate them into your daily routine. There's no magic bullet for this one. However, with regular practice, you'll see results.

In this module, you'll work out a realistic action plan that suits your lifestyle.

Implement Your Management Techniques

The more you practice any technique, the better it'll work. The aim is that your management methods become automatic and part of your life.

It takes around 90 days for a new practice to become a habit. However, you'll see results within 30 days of regular practice, and maybe even sooner.

Develop a Daily Practice

Let's start with defining your daily practice.

The most successful business people have a regular daily practice that allows them to still the mind and strengthen their intentions for the coming day.

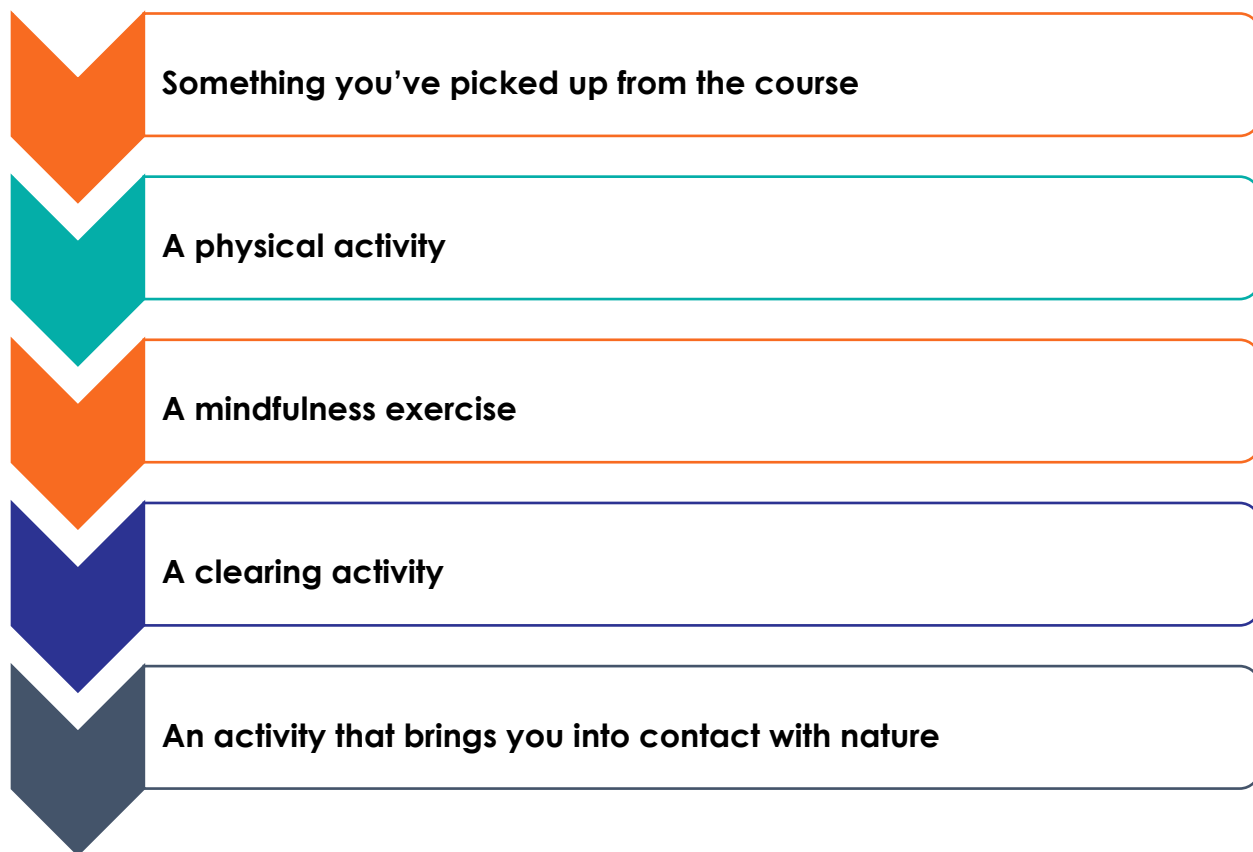
Your daily practice should include whatever makes sense to you and what you're willing to stick to. This is every day for the rest of your life, so it has to be doable and fit your lifestyle. But before you say you can't do it, you're too busy, you have kids to get up and off to school etc. etc., take a deep breath and find a way to do it. The results will be worth it.

It means having a time set aside at least once a day when you're alone to follow a regular routine. For most people, this will be scheduled at the beginning of the day. If that's totally impossible for you, then choose a later time. It's better than not doing it at all.

You need to allow a minimum of 20 minutes a day, but if you work up to doing more, that's even better.

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What you decide to put into your 20-30 minutes is up to you. It could include:



- Something you've picked up from the course, such as the Morning Power Questions and/or the Risk-a-Day exercise
- A physical activity, like yoga, running, or a deep breathing exercise
- A mindfulness exercise like the one in the course or some form of meditation or guided visualization. It really helps to include a period of silence like this in your daily practice
- A clearing activity like journaling or writing a daily gratitude list
- An activity that brings you into contact with nature that you find relaxing and contemplative. This could be looking at flowers, walking in the woods, bird watching, or whatever is available to you.

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You don't have to choose all of these!

When you know what you want in your daily practice, plan out the session and set a date and time to start (that means TOMORROW). Follow the practice for 30 days and then evaluate its effect. You can make changes if something really isn't working, but don't keep changing the contents every day. That won't be effective.

Set Goals

The tactics you'll practice every day are an important part of your imposter syndrome management. Don't hesitate to start using them.

But to take you further, you need an action plan for consistently working towards your goals. Use this plan for at least 6 months. At that point, you can reevaluate the situation.

Take a step by-step approach to this so it isn't overwhelming:



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- **Step 1** - Pick your main goal for an upcoming situation. Think of any challenging situation you face in your professional life that's affected by your feelings of imposter syndrome
- **Step 2** - State why this is a challenge for you
- **Step 3** - Identify why this goal is important to you
- **Step 4** - Write down the benefits you want to experience. Remember, stay open to options you can't logically imagine right now and refrain from focusing on a specific expectation
- **Step 5** - Define how you intend to work towards your desired outcome

Here's an example:

You have a presentation coming up on a topic you're not overly familiar with. This makes you nervous, as you're doubtful you can deliver it to the standard you expect of yourself.

Goal	I want to run a valuable, informative webinar on X topic that attracts and sells
Challenge	I always over-prepare and never ask for help. I believe I have to be perfect!
Importance	My striving for perfection holds myself and my team up and we get frustrated
Benefits	Save time and less stress all round. I don't have to get it 100% perfect for it to be a success
How	Identify exactly what I need to do to feel more confident delivering a webinar on the new topic

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

1. **Goal:** I want to run a valuable, informative webinar on X topic that attracts attendees and entices people into buying my new program.
2. **Challenge:** I always over-prepare and never ask for help. I believe I have to be perfect!
3. **Importance:** My striving for perfection holds myself and my team up and we don't have time to waste. I get frustrated with myself, and my virtual assistant gets frustrated too.
4. **Benefits of achieving the goal:** Save time and less stress all round. I'd also see that I don't have to get it 100% perfect for it to be a success.
5. **How to achieve the outcome:** Identify exactly what I need to do to feel more confident delivering a webinar on the new topic e.g. research/preparation, relaxation exercises. Delegate some specified tasks to my VA and don't micromanage.

Set weekly goals that challenge your imposter syndrome.

Action Steps:

1. Collect your ideas for a daily practice e.g., meditation, walking etc.
 - a. Plan a 20- or 30-minute session e.g., 10 minutes meditating, 5 minutes walking, 5 minutes journaling etc.
 - b. Schedule time in your diary for this TO START TOMORROW.
2. Plan your next week's action using the step-by-step approach from the module.

Module 5 – Next Steps

Learning Objective:

Consolidate and implement your learning and plan future action steps so you can achieve the goals you set for this course.

You've made it to the end of the course, so now it's time to reflect on what you've learned and plan what's next.

Track and Measure Success

If you're like most people, it's easier to remember what went wrong and how you failed rather than your successes.

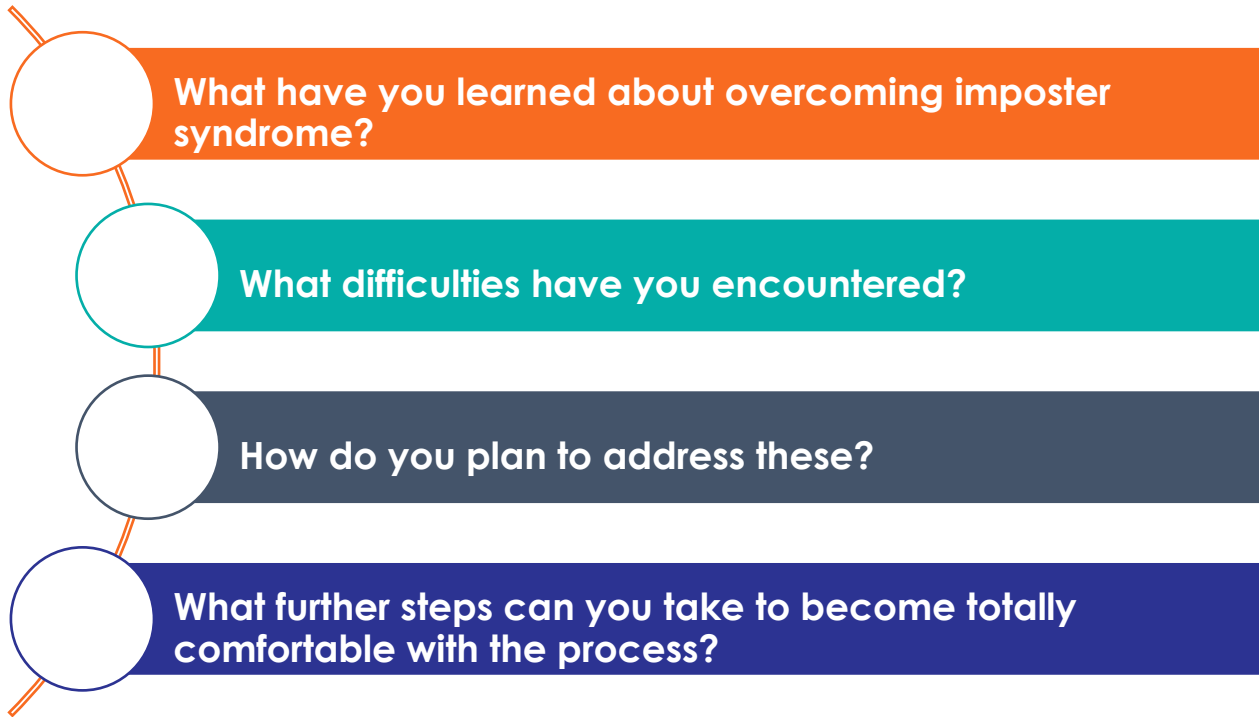
When you experience imposter syndrome, one of the most difficult things to appreciate is the role you have had in your own or others' successes. For that reason, it's useful to keep track of your wins and your personal triumphs.

Keep a digital or handwritten report of your progress. Record all that has gone well from your daily practice and from your weekly plans – and anything that has challenged you. Make sure you review your progress regularly.

What You Learned

This is a course you can refer back to time and time again, helping you to manage the debilitating effects of imposter syndrome and achieve your potential. It's important to reflect on what you've learned, so answer these questions and complete the action plan in your Action Guide:

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- What have you learned about overcoming imposter syndrome?
- What difficulties have you encountered?
- How do you plan to address these?
- What further steps can you take to become totally comfortable with the process?

Action Steps:

1. Keep track of your progress. Describe the situation e.g., daily practice review after 21 days, weekly challenge etc., and then answer the following questions:
 - a. What challenges did you face?
 - b. What did you achieve?
 - c. How did you feel?
 - d. What has changed in your life as a result of this activity?

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2. Review the course thoroughly and answer the questions in your Action Guide.
3. Use the action plan in the Action Guide to record your goals and what needs to happen next.