

FINDING A CURE FOR THAT SUNDAY FEELING
NEW EPISODES EVERY SUNDAY

The
WISDOM *podcast*

truth serum, a-ha moments AND
practical wisdom for life, love and self-realization

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SEASON 1 EPISODE 4



DO YOU HAVE
IMPOSTER
SYNDROME?

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"Our beliefs about our self and our abilities are established very early in life. The words and messages that we repeatedly hear in childhood become what we believe as "truth." This includes any or all of the *less than kind* ways in which have learned to think about our self."

Our caregivers have but one sacred opportunity to help us nurture and develop healthy self esteem; and this occurs during the earliest part of our life – fundamentally in the first five years as we are learning and taking in so much information about how to navigate successfully in our environment and within the social mores and customs of our culture and the world at large. We need unconditional love and nurturing to develop trust in our self and our abilities and to thrive in the world. Feeling secure and safe helps build our confidence to be self-reliant and successful, and to know that we are lovable and 'good enough'.

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ANATOMY of AN EPISODE

Truth Serum

A-ha Moments

Practical Wisdom

EPISODE TIMESTAMPS:

Podcast Intro: 0-2:10 | What Causes the Imposter Syndrome and What Is It? 2:11 | Are You Living Inauthentic? 6:58 | The Two Most Compelling Questions To Ask If You Have Feelings of Being An Imposter: 13:11 | The Four Most Common Negative Core Beliefs: 15:07 | How To Establish A New, Healthy Core Belief: 16:19 | The Five Best Strategies for Overcoming the Feeling of Being An Imposter: 19:11 | Take the Naming Your Imposter Quiz Now! 31:02



Self-critical thoughts may cause us to doubt our abilities, to experience anxiety, and to self-sabotage our inherent potential.

These thoughts and beliefs originate as the well rehearsed messages from childhood that continue to haunt us and overtake our rational mind. It takes so little to convince an innocent child that they are undeserving or *not good enough*.

Critical and berating words spoken by others become the repetitive and discouraging 'negative' inner dialogue that causes self-doubt and a lack of belief (usually experienced as anxiety, fear, and a lack of confidence).

If this happens, we may grow up not fully believing in our potential and our ability to thrive and be successful in the world; even when there is much evidence to the contrary. Our inner dialogue, even in the midst of many outward successes and accomplishments, may continue to be: "I am not worthy of...", "I'm not good enough", "I don't deserve.....", and "What if others will find out that I am not what they think I am?"

There is a term that has been given to this phenomenon, quite prevalent in many accomplished, talented, and brilliant people - people like *you*. I see the score card of many who have grown up having their talents and abilities thwarted by repeated discouraging and damaging comments; who have been taught to question their ability, their beliefs and worth; and to judge their success by standards of monetary worth, status, and privilege; while dismissing the values that characterize what truly defines a human being as 'incredible' and 'successful'.

Those who report experiencing this syndrome are typically all successful, valuable individuals by both external measures, valued by society; as well as the qualitative values of kindness, honesty, generosity and trustworthiness that makes someone a truly incredible being.


This phenomenon is called **the imposter syndrome***. First named by psychologists Suzanne Imes, PhD, and Pauline Rose Clance, PhD, in the 1970s, it is a concept describing the self-doubt of high-achieving individuals who are marked by an inability to internalize their accomplishments and a persistent fear of being exposed as a "fraud". *Source: Wikipedia

Something important to clarify and that you may want to distinguish if you already identify with having some (or many) of the symptoms of imposter syndrome: You may first wish to consider if your feelings of being an imposter are in part driven by your conscience gnawing at you to make positive (and needed) changes; to eliminate unhealthy and destructive habits and to be a better version of yourself because the epitome of feeling like a fraud or an imposter can also be the inner knowing that you *can do better*; that you are not living up to your own standards of what is acceptable and achievable.



Though the imposter phenomenon isn't an official diagnosis listed in the DSM, psychologists and others acknowledge that it is a very real and specific form of *intellectual self-doubt*. By definition, most people with imposter feelings suffer in silence, says Imes, a clinical psychologist in private practice in Georgia. "Most people don't talk about it. Part of the experience is that they're afraid they're going to be found out."

- Source: [American Psychological Association](#)



I see this often in my work with clients; and it is through self-honesty and the willingness to hold up a metaphorical mirror to one's self; to decide and commit to the changes that are needed that one no longer feels like an imposter. On a spiritual level, we feel like a fraud or imposter because we know that we are not living our life in a way that is congruent to our highest self; and the most honourable way that we could be in the world.

It isn't entirely about believing in one's successes and ability but in stepping up and into one's truth; that is living as the highest and best version of yourself as much as possible, that allows you to feel confident, worthy, and to own your successes completely. If you find this notion insightful, and it is something that holds true for you, consider the moments in which you live authentic and of your highest self; when you are living your truth, and when you are being your beautiful, loving, generous self. Notice if in these same moments you feel certain, confident, and powerful and in which you own your abilities and successes in the world. Your feelings of being an imposter may also be the precipice for seeking to *live your truth* and for igniting your spiritual path in the direction of your highest self.

In my work, I am privy to the intimate details of a client's life; including their honest portrayal of how they were raised and the treatment they received. I see the unfortunate and yet distinct outcome of clients who were reared with an over-emphasis on high achievement, praise that was infrequent and largely conditional; based on unreasonably high standards which often include societal and cultural definitions of success. I am also aware of client's stories of emotional abuse, neglect, and the absence of unconditional love, together with unrealistic demands placed on them, and learned fear of failure if one does not somehow measure up.



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Many of these individuals hold impeccable ethics; a mesmerizing level of professionalism and who remain deliberately careful to not become arrogant nor inflated in ego. They present with a conscientious nature of kindness, generosity and caring of humanity; often acutely sensitive to others because of the suffering that they have endured.

Many of these individuals also carry a fragile *sense of self*; of feeling and believing that they are 'not deserving' (of many of their successes), since they grew up experiencing much confusion and mixed messaging because approval, acceptance and love was based on performance, achievement and a societal definition of success rather than the teachings of success based on one's individual standards and desires; supported with unconditional love and endless encouragement.



The compelling questions
for so many people who
identify with this
phenomena is:

"HOW DO I FIX THIS?"

And

How can I begin to
believe that the good
things that happen to me;
including my successes
and accomplishments,
are because I am
deserving, capable, and
worthy of success?



If you were taught that your efforts were *not enough*; if praise was contingent on achieving, or surpassing others; if you experienced mixed messages from caregivers, demands placed upon you for achieving and doing *more*, together with criticism for not doing *enough* or doing *good enough*, then it is likely that you grew up doubting some (or many of) your abilities, questioning your competency and high level of achievement and not fully owning your successes. You also may continue to criticize and devalue yourself, even though who you are is *more than enough*.

These scars of childhood left unhealed, become for so many people the outward (and visible) signs that one is suffering the enduring of what has been a consistent theme of messaging that "you are not good enough" or "you will never be good enough".

This leads to a lifetime of questioning one's competency, of downplaying one's strengths and abilities, and never fully allowing one's self to *feel* the pure joy that comes out of experiencing one's gifts and talents; and of knowing that one is *beyond 'good enough'*.

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There are a myriad of circumstances which serve to cause us to doubt our ability, to think (and believe) that we will at any moment – “be found out” – and to question our right to have success (whether because we believe we are not *good enough* or *deserving*, or that we are flawed in some way). We also compare ourselves to others (which is another learned behaviour) who we believe to be more capable and successful than we are, which only serves to reaffirm in our mind that we are somehow lacking, not good enough, or as a failure in some way.

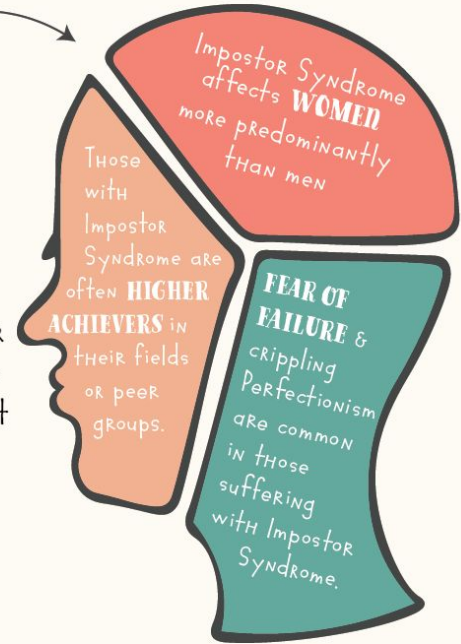
There is much research to indicate that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can teach clients effective skills and strategies to help them successfully challenge their thoughts and beliefs and to find factual evidence that proves their worthiness and ability. Many of the treatment approaches highlight the need for us to first be aware – *mindful*– of what we say to ourselves that cause us to question or doubt our potential, and our belief in our worthiness and success. Out of awareness of our current thinking and beliefs, we can use helpful strategies and techniques to instill confidence and reaffirm our abilities and competencies.

IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

Also known as impostor phenomenon or fraud syndrome.

Impostor Syndrome:

High-achieving individuals are marked by an inability to internalize their accomplishments and a persistent fear of being exposed as a “fraud”...sound familiar?



In therapy, I help clients identify the incorrect **core beliefs** that they have been taught to believe from a much earlier age. This is a powerful means of eradicating the underlying and often indiscernible root cause of self-doubt and the belief that one is a fraud (aka: an imposter). This process is intimate and personal, since each individual has their own set of both positive and problematic *core beliefs*. Identifying your problematic core beliefs is the first step in changing, and forming what are called *new* and *accurate* beliefs.

The four most common problematic core beliefs are:

"I'm not good enough"

"I'm unlovable"

"I'm stupid"

"I'm undeserving".

You may be able to reflect on any of your critical self-talk to reveal what core beliefs may have been holding you back, and limiting your potential.

I then help clients to challenge and rewrite their problematic core beliefs with *new* statements that they *know to be true*. For some, this is relatively easy since when they discover the core belief that underlies their daily thought patterns, they realize instantly how incorrect it is.

For others who believe their damaging *core belief* to be true – it is because they have *lived it* for some time; having found (whether real or imagined) what they believe is proof for their damaging *core belief*.

In either instance, there is a process for challenging problematic and untrue core beliefs that works extremely well in helping to eradicate an individual's untrue belief and thus changing their perspective and their thoughts of themselves forever.



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The Practice is this:



- 1. Look for the *factual truth in what you tell yourself*;** so you may correct and rewrite any negative and biased thoughts and beliefs. It's often this shift in your thought paradigm that helps you to acknowledge *what is true* rather than what you have been taught to believe.
- 2. The next step is to look for evidence of this true statement that you have chosen to replace your old core belief.** As you continue the process of looking for and finding factual proof to support your new belief, it reaffirms this truth in your mind; and allows you to have evidence for what is accurate rather than what you were previously telling yourself and believing. This requires some effort on your part as it can be a challenge to see things from a different perspective since we are often lodged in our beliefs only because we have spent much of our lifetime looking for and finding what we believe is proof of our self-critical thinking.
- 3. Try this collection of evidence for as long as possible.** I would recommend several months on a daily basis as you are changing old beliefs that have been well established and rehearsed for likely years. And if you would like my help with the practice of this, please reach out to me. It's often helpful to have guidance and input as you formulate new beliefs and weaken your existing thoughts and beliefs with consistent evidence over time.

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I also want to share with you: **5 practical strategies for overcoming the feeling of being an imposter.** These are easy to implement into your life - And are helpful life skills that are important to know.

1) Build a list of *your* personal accomplishments. Add to this list each week. These may be successes and triumphs that you worked hard for over a lengthy time, as well as personal daily achievements. We tend to create 'to do lists' that keep us busy without acknowledging our successes when we accomplish a task or goal. Nothing is too small or insignificant – especially since your achievements (whether completing a College Degree or completing the first course towards that degree) is something that is important and meaningful for you. **Maintaining a dedicated list of accomplishments helps you to realize what you are already successful at; and to have concrete examples and proof of this.**



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5 practical strategies

for overcoming the feeling of being an imposter

2) Refrain from Comparisons. You are no longer going to compare yourself to others - only to yourself. It's great to congratulate someone on their own success, but it's not helpful to look at others in comparison to your own life if you are going to be self-critical and defeating. The successes of others *can* be motivating and helpful in showing us what is possible. Seeing yourself as 'less than' causes disappointment and thwarts your willingness to continue towards your goals. Compare yourself to no one and you won't disrupt your positive momentum. Walk your own path. Be happy for others since they light the path for you. Remember that *your path* is unique and sacred. All that you need to be responsible for, is ensuring that your path is right for you.

Strive to live as the best version of yourself each day.

5 practical strategies

for overcoming
the feeling of
being an imposter



3) Positive and Kind Self-Talk - This also means consciously eradicating negative, critical self-talk.

To do this, you must first be consciously aware - *mindful* - that you are being unkind and critical of yourself. So many of us become accustomed to the damaging and self-loathing statements that we repeatedly say; internalizing these and accepting them as truth. Because our self-effacing words fall under our radar, we keep up the unhealthy practice of diminishing our abilities even as we are successful. Unfortunately the effects of our unkind self-talk manifests in feelings of unworthiness, disappointment, depression and a lack of motivation.

Practice positive self-talk as a new habit that you use often. This new habit of kind and reassuring words is meant to override the old habit of self-criticism and self-doubt. Even if you are not completely comfortable with the positive words that you are speaking *just yet*, the practice of telling yourself that you are successful, that you are *more than* capable, that you are loved by many, and that you add value to the lives of others; are new ways of seeing and being in the world that allow you to 'grow your beliefs' by rehearsing these statements both aloud and in silence. **Your positive statements can become the mantras that you may repeat often.** Your positive self-talk is to be used in place of your previous critical words the moment you recognize that you are doubting, or disavowing your abilities and potential.



5 practical strategies

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4) Goal Setting and Achieving. This strategy is helpful to illustrate how your successes in life are the outcome of making good choices based on knowing yourself best and of choosing what is most important to you. When you set and accomplish goals that are chosen exclusively by you, you build self-worth, autonomy, and confidence. **It's also important to revel in the satisfaction of what you have completed in order to 'own' and internalize your abilities.** There is always going to be more that we will want to experience in life and to strive for. As you set a goal and see it through; not only will you benefit from the experience of attaining this, but you will grow your confidence and the certainty you have in yourself for other goals and life experiences that you wish to have.



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5 practical strategies for overcoming the feeling of being an imposter

5) Visualize Your Greatness. One of the most powerful tools for overcoming the imposter syndrome is *visualization*. Use the power of your mind to visualize what you want; for visualizing yourself as a success in the ways that you define success to be; including the confidence you wish to exude and feel and see this as if it is already here; in the present. *Seeing yourself as your ideal will inspire you.* Visualizing your ideal self will increase your confidence, and help you value yourself for the qualities, skills, and abilities that you possess and are proud of. When you consistently visualize how you ideally want to be it (seeing your future ideal in your mind, bringing this ideal to life in the present), it will help you become a better version of yourself now.

SEASON 1 EPISODE 4

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NAMING YOUR IMPOSTER
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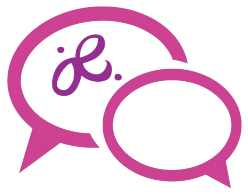
Take a 5 Minute Quiz

To Name Your

Imposter

Archetype

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