

IMPOSTER SYNDROME WORKBOOK

Page 1
of 14



By Tammy Camilleri Version 1.

This workbook its, contents and the tools/activities provided below have been useful for my personal experience and/or the personal experience of those who have helped me with this workbook,

I am not psychologist, so I do recommend if you are struggling with Imposter syndrome you should consider working through this book with a trained professional or your mentor as they are likely to cause strong emotions.

This workbook is a supporting document to Imposter Syndrome by Tammy Camilleri.

A virtual presentation on Imposter Syndrome.

WHAT DOES IMPOSTER SYNDROME LOOK LIKE?

A vicious cycle of anxiety and short-term relief.

Feelings of anxiety of your capabilities for achieving your goals; followed by Short term relief when you achieve the goal, but more anxiety that the result was not good enough

Low self-confidence

Fear of failure Self-doubt – AM I GOOD ENOUGH! Fear of lack of achievement – will it be good enough, will I let people down Fear of Success – if I succeed will I be good enough to continue

A strong need to be the best

Perfectionist in all things, setting unrealistic outcomes Setting yourself up to fail and not achieve by creating unrealistic goals, example passing an exam with the pass mark of 70% but being disappointed that you did not achieve 100%

Unwillingness to internalize positive feedback

Unable to take on board constructive criticism to improve, instead viewing it as a negative outcome confirming your thoughts of inadequacy

Self-sabotage

Experience a constant internal struggle between achieving success and avoiding being "found out."
This struggle prevents many from reaching their potential.

FIVE TYPES OF IMPOSTERIST



THE EXPERT

An "impostor" may be a perfectionist or an expert.

The expert will not feel satisfied when finishing a task until they feel that they know everything about the subject. Experts continuously hunt for new information, which prevents them from completing tasks and projects. Those who avoid applying for a job because they do not meet every requirement may fall into the category of the expert.

THE PERFECTIONIST

People who aim for perfection often experience high levels of anxiety, doubt, and worry, especially when they fail to achieve their extreme goals.

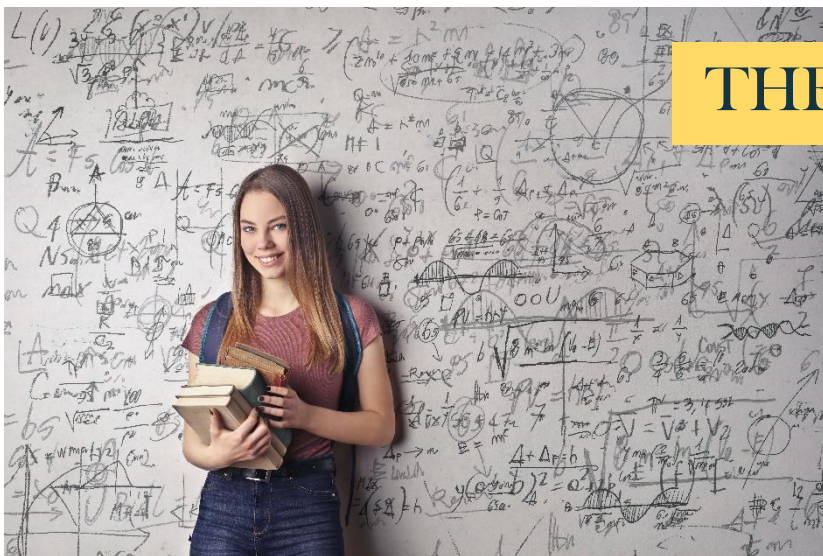
Perfectionists are usually dissatisfied with their work. They tend to focus on areas where they could have done better rather than celebrate the things they did well.



THE NATURAL GENIUS

Natural geniuses are typically able to master a new skill quickly and easily, and they often feel ashamed and weak when they cannot.

People who fall into this category fail to recognize that nearly everyone needs to build upon their skills throughout life to succeed



THE SOLOIST

The soloist may also be known as the rugged individualist. They prefer to work alone and tend to believe that asking for help will reveal their incompetence.

A soloist will typically turn down help so that they can prove their worth as an individual.



THE SUPERHERO

Superheroes often excel in all areas, mainly because they push themselves so hard. Many workaholics can be classed as superheroes.

This overload of work will eventually result in burnout, which can affect physical health, mental well-being, and relationships with others.

Are you an Imposterist?

Do you tend to chalk your accomplishments up to being a "fluke," "no big deal" or the fact that people just "like" you?

Do you hate making a mistake, being less than fully prepared or not doing things perfectly?

Do you worry that others will find out that you're not as capable as they think you are?

When you DO succeed, do you think, "Phew, I fooled 'em this time but I may not be so lucky next time."?

Do you attribute your success to luck or timing, rather than your own skills and talents.

Use the Clance IP Scale on the next pages to determine if you have characteristics of Imposter Syndrome.

Clance IP Scale

For each question, please circle the number that best indicates how true the statement is of you. It is best to give the first response that enters your mind rather than dwelling on each statement and thinking about it over and over.

1. I have often succeeded on a test or task even though I was afraid that I would not do well before I undertook the task.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

2. I can give the impression that I'm more competent than I really am.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

3. I avoid evaluations if possible and have a dread of others evaluating me.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

4. When people praise me for something I've accomplished, I'm afraid I won't be able to live up to their expectations of me in the future.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

5. I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

6. I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

8. I rarely do a project or task as well as I'd like to do it.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

9. Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

10. It's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

11. At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

12. I'm disappointed at times in my present accomplishments and think I should have accomplished much more.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

13. Sometimes I'm afraid others will discover how much knowledge or ability I really lack.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

14. I'm often afraid that I may fail at a new assignment or undertaking even though I generally do well at what I attempt.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

15. When I've succeeded at something and received recognition for my accomplishments, I have doubts that I can keep repeating that success.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

16. If I receive a great deal of praise and recognition for something I've accomplished, I tend to discount the importance of what I've done.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

17. I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

18. I often worry about not succeeding with a project or examination, even though others around me have considerable confidence that I will do well.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

19. If I'm going to receive a promotion or gain recognition of some kind, I hesitate to tell others until it is an accomplished fact.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

20. I feel bad and discouraged if I'm not "the best" or at least "very special" in situations that involve achievement.

1 (not at all true) 2 (rarely) 3 (sometimes) 4 (often) 5 (very true)

Scoring the Impostor Test

The Impostor Test was developed to help individuals determine whether or not they have IP characteristics and, if so, to what extent they are suffering.

After taking the Impostor Test, add together the numbers of the responses to each statement. If the total score is 40 or less, the respondent has few Impostor characteristics; if the score is between 41 and 60, the respondent has moderate IP experiences; a score between 61 and 80 means the respondent frequently has Impostor feelings; and a score higher than 80 means the respondent often has intense IP experiences. The higher the score, the more frequently and seriously the Impostor Phenomenon interferes in a person's life.

OVERCOMING IMPOSTER SYNDROME

There are many tools and techniques which can be used to overcome imposter syndrome – tools which can be used together or individually.

Many of the tools focus on reframing the negative thoughts and feelings and ask you to challenge the evidence which is present for the negative thoughts and feelings.

The tools/activities provided below have been useful for my personal experience and/or the personal experience of those who have helped me with this workbook,

I am not a psychologist, so I do not recommend if you are struggling with Imposter syndrome you should consider doing these activities with a trained professional or your mentor as they are likely to cause strong emotions.

Activity 1. Thought Record

- Choose a specific time that you have experienced Impostor Syndrome - pick a low-stress and low-emotion example for this exercise.
- Use your chosen experience and complete each of the columns in your thought record.
- A thought Record example has been provided to help you understand its use.

You can use this activity, anytime you experience feelings of imposter syndrome. Whether you write it down or simply run it through your thoughts.

Activity 2. Accepting Failure

- Choose a specific time where you truly believe that you 'failed' at something, work or otherwise.
- Write it down, then underneath write My First Attempt In Learning (FAIL). If you have your mentor on hand, share this story with them,
- Now write three positive things that you learnt or that came as a result from this perceived failure. (it's ok if you only have one, and if you have more than write them all) and if your mentor is working with you ask them to write 3 positive things that they noticed from the situation.
- Now, ask yourself whether you think you failed.

Final Take home messages to practice in your everyday life.

EXAMPLE OF USING A THOUGHT RECORD.

Where Were You?	Emotion or Feeling	Negative automatic thought	Evidence that supports that thought	Evidence that does not support that thought	Alternative thought	Emotion or feeling
At work.	Despair and useless, anxious	<p>I am never going to be a good mechanic</p> <p>My LAME can do it, so is should be able to.</p> <p>My LAME will tell the company I am no good if I ask for help.</p> <p>I should give up, I'm useless.</p>	Nothing.	<p>Every day I learn and gain a new skill.</p> <p>My LAME has 20 years more experience than me.</p> <p>My LAME is always supportive and encouraging</p>	<p>I am not useless, I am just having difficulty, but that's ok because I am still learning.</p> <p>My LAME was an apprentice once, and probably struggled with tasks too, so it's ok to ask for help.</p>	Hopeful, calm, content.
<i>Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?</i>	<i>Emotions can be described with one word, eg SAD, ANGRY, SCARED, Rate 0-100%</i>	<i>What thoughts were going through your mind? What memories or insights were in your mind?</i>	<i>What facts support the truthfulness of this thought or image?</i>	<i>What facts or experiences indicate that this thought may not be true? If my best friend had this thought what would I tell them? Could I be jumping to conclusions?</i>	<i>Write a new thought that takes into account evidence for /against the original thought</i>	<i>How do you feel about the situation now out of 0-100%</i>

Activity 1: THOUGHT RECORD

Where Were You?	Emotion or Feeling	Negative automatic thought	Evidence that supports that thought	Evidence that does not support that thought	Alternative thought	Emotion or feeling
<p><i>Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?</i></p>	<p><i>Emotions can be described with one word, eg SAD, ANGRY, SCARED, Rate 0-100%</i></p>	<p><i>What thoughts were going through your mind? What memories or insights were in your mind?</i></p>	<p><i>What facts support the truthfulness of this thought or image?</i></p>	<p><i>What facts or experiences indicate that this thought may not be true? If my best friend had this thought what would I tell them? Could I be jumping to conclusions?</i></p>	<p><i>Write a new thought that takes into account evidence for /against the original thought</i></p>	<p><i>How do you feel about the situation now out of 0-100%</i></p>

Activity 2: Accepting Failure

Thing I Failed at:

Write the phrase: Big and Bold

The three positive things I learnt or that happened as a result of it:

The three positive things from your mentor.

Do you still think that you failed? _____

Things to practice going forward.

Take credit where it is due

This can feel uncomfortable or unnatural to many of us – try starting by simply saying ‘thank you’ when someone pays you a compliment or gives you credit.

Stop minimizing your abilities

Using words such as “just” when we refer to our self or our skills and abilities, can not only give us a negative self-concept, but they can make others see us negatively too.

Try swapping the word “just” with “AM”

Instead of saying - I am JUST a female pilot.....
Start saying - I AM a female pilot.

When sharing knowledge, try changing your statements from, “I don’t know much about this, but....” to “this is what I know about this topic”.

Ask for help and don’t be afraid to be vulnerable

Remember, help doesn’t always need to come from a work colleague, it could come from an external person such as a friend, mentor or professional counsellor or psychologist.

Give yourself compliments and credit

Remember to tell yourself when you believe have done well, when you believe you deserve credit. Maybe even tell others about these things you have done well, achieved or learnt.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF!

Resources

Link's correct at the time this document was created.

- ▶ The Impostor Phenomenon *Overcoming the Fear that Haunts Your Success*, Dr. Pauline Rose Clance
- ▶ Secret Thoughts of Successful Women *Why Capable People Suffer from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It*, Valerie Young
- ▶ The Confidence Code *The Science & Art of Self-Assurance – What Women Should Know*, Katty Kay & Claire Shipman
- ▶ The Empress Has No Clothes *Conquering Self-Doubt to Embrace Success*, Joyce M. Roche
- ▶ Denise Paolucci: “Overcoming Impostor Syndrome” (linux.conf.au 2013)
- ▶ Julie Pagano: “It's Dangerous to Go Alone” (PyCon 2014)
- ▶ Mood Gym: <https://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome>
- ▶ Slides, handout, guide for this workshop: <http://adainitiative.org/continue-our-work/impostor-syndrome-training/>

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