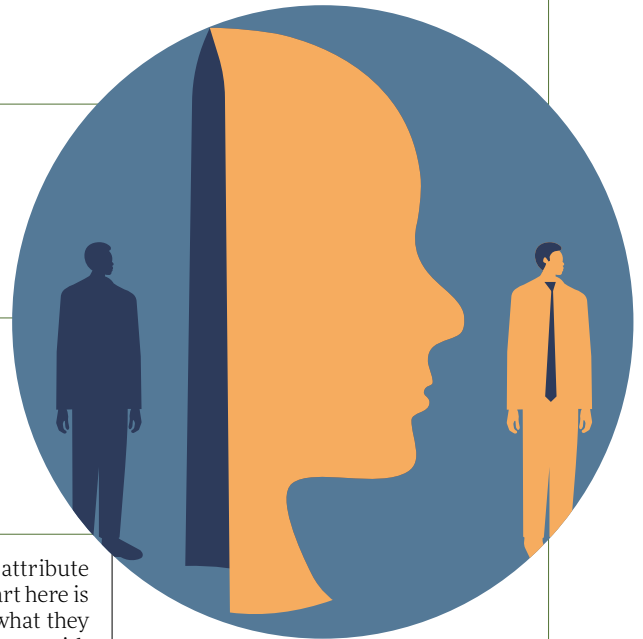


How to overcome the Imposter Syndrome

Ever thought that any minute someone will tap on your shoulder and say, “It’s come to our attention that you have absolutely no clue what you’re doing”? Do you feel you’re a fraud or that it’s just luck that you’ve got where you are? You’re not alone. Here’s ten tips from life coach Jane Galloway to help you beat Imposter Syndrome.



1. Know what Imposter Syndrome is

Imposter Syndrome was first identified in high-achieving women by the psychologists Suzanne Imes and Pauline Rose Clance in 1978 (mip.social/imposter). But research over the years has shown it can affect all genders, all age groups and isn't just associated with work. Imposter Syndrome can be a facet of your inner critic and can prevent you from taking opportunities, limit your growth and sometimes lead to anxiety, depression, reduced performance, lower job satisfaction and even burnout.

2. Learn to recognise it

There is research to suggest that Imposter Syndrome has its roots within the evolutionary pathway of flight, fight or freeze – just like our inner critic. While it helps to understand that Imposter Syndrome is just part of being human, that doesn't mean you should give in to it. When you spot Imposter Syndrome in yourself, take the opportunity to pause and think rationally about how true these thoughts really are.

3. Keep a strengths journal

Every night, write down three things you did brilliantly that day. They don't have to be massive achievements; simply presenting yourself with daily evidence of why you deserve to be where you are can be key to convincing yourself that you belong. It's hard to ignore the evidence! Keeping your CV up to date can have a similar impact – capture all your amazing career achievements and remind yourself about them when you're having a wobble.

4. Ask people about your strengths

Pick ten people from across your network (friends, colleagues or family) and ask

them what three strengths they'd attribute to you and why. The extra-hard part here is then listening to and accepting what they say. Don't brush off their answers with “anyone could do that” or “I'm not really like that”. If they say it, you have to listen.

5. Don't get stalled by perfectionism

Imposter Syndrome can be associated with procrastination due to perfectionism. If you find yourself in this category, remember you can give yourself permission to write a 'shitty first draft'. This is a technique, shared by writer Anne Lamott, for getting started without being frozen by the fear that whatever you're working on won't be 'good enough'. Give yourself permission to fail.

6. Remember why you're there

You got this job for a good reason. If you were no good, under-qualified, or didn't deserve to be there you wouldn't have been appointed. And it helps to remember that if you really were a fraud, you probably wouldn't be having these thoughts!

7. Reconnect with your purpose

When you're feeling stymied by your Imposter Syndrome, remind yourself why you do what you do. If you can understand and connect with your purpose, your Imposter Syndrome will be less likely to derail you, and it can be easier to feel braver and step outside of your comfort zone – and we all know that growth takes place at the edges of our comfort zone, right?

8. Don't compare yourself

People can be very clever at presenting what they want the world to see. I have coached so many women who, on the out-

side, came across as confident, assured and totally nailing their career, only for them to admit to me that they felt they were failing as employees, parents, partners and feminists! Remember that the person you're comparing yourself to has most likely had the same thoughts as you about themselves at some point.

9. Talk to a loved one

Have a conversation with someone who loves you and explain how you feel. The chances are that they will remind you just how brilliant you are. They may even share their own encounters with Imposter Syndrome.

10. Take the chance to learn

It's okay to feel like you don't know what you're doing – none of us know everything (even Einstein sometimes felt he was “an involuntary swindler”). Treat your career as an opportunity to learn. You will take the pressure off yourself to feel like you should know all the answers and getting curious may have the wonderful by-product of allowing others to shine by sharing what they know with you. //

Jane Galloway is coach, facilitator, podcast host, and the founder and director of Quiet the Hive, which helps women identify the life they want and arms them with the toolkit and confidence to go out and get it. For further info, visit: quietthehive.com.