

How to beat feeling like a fraud.

Don't let Imposter Syndrome
stand in the way of your success.

The perfect job for you could be your next one.

We've all heard the phrase "the grass is greener on the other side". Yet what if this actually was true, and that there could be better opportunities out there for you?

Here at Office Angels, we believe that everyone should be in a role that they love. We know that there can often be many reasons why people stay in the wrong job, such as lack of self confidence or fear of rejection.

To help you to shine to potential employers, as well as to follow your career goals and ambitions, we've created three helpful guides on **boosting your confidence**, **Imposter Syndrome** and **rebounding from rejection** to give you the best possible chance to find the perfect job for you.

How to beat feeling like a fraud.

- Do you often have feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt?
- Do you often feel uncomfortable being praised, and have a habit of playing down your successes?
- Do you feel like a fraud, and that you don't deserve your job and accomplishments?
- Are these feelings holding you back in your current role and preventing you from the taking the next step in your career?

If the answer is yes to all those questions, you may be suffering from Imposter Syndrome.

We've pulled together everything we know about Imposter Syndrome, and tips and techniques to help you manage any emotions you may experience, so you can feel the most confident you.

What is Imposter Syndrome?

Imposter Syndrome was first identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. It is described as the overwhelming feeling that you don't deserve your success, and you feel that your achievements are down to luck, good timing, or just being in the right place at the right time. The biggest fear is that one day you'll be exposed as a fraud.

Imposter Syndrome often strikes at moments of success, such as starting a new job, receiving a promotion, or taking on extra responsibilities. It can often hold you back from achieving your potential and can lead to you becoming less ambitious or less motivated to take on new projects or responsibilities. Imposter Syndrome can affect anyone no matter their social status, work background, skill level or degree of expertise, and can affect both women and men equally.

No one really knows the exact answer as to why people experience Imposter Syndrome. Some experts attribute it to personality traits, such as anxiety, while other experts attribute it to family or behavioural causes.

The different types of Imposter Syndrome.

According to Dr Valerie Young, an expert on Imposter Syndrome, **there are five different types or "competencies" of Imposter Syndrome.** Below is a summary of the different competencies so you can see if you recognise yourself.

1. *The Perfectionist*

Perfectionists often set excessively high standards for themselves and feel like a failure if they only meet 99% of their goals. They often feel like if they want something done right, they have to do it themselves, which is why they often have difficulty delegating, and can be seen by others as a control freak.

To find out if this applies to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you feel as though your work has to be 100% perfect all of the time?
- Do you find it difficult to delegate to other people?
- Have you ever been accused of being a micromanager?
- When you finish a project or a goal, do you always think that you could have done better?

2. The Expert

Experts measure themselves on knowledge (how much they know) and skills (what they can do), and they often fear being exposed as either being inexperienced or unknowledgeable.

To find out if this applies to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you still feel like you don't know enough, even if you've been in your role for a long time?
- Are you constantly taking courses or seeking out qualifications because you think you need to improve your skills?
- Do you only apply to job opportunities when you meet every single educational requirement?
- Do you dislike it when someone calls you an expert because you think that you're not?

3. The Soloist

Soloists often refuse to ask for help, as it makes them feel like a failure, and often prefer to work alone as a way to prove their worth.

To find out if this applies to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you often feel as though you don't need anyone's help?

- Do you strongly believe that you need to accomplish things on your own?
- When you do ask for help, do you refer to it as the needs of the project rather than what you need?

4. The Natural Genius

People with Natural Genius traits often base their competence on how easy and fast they can accomplish something, rather than the effort it takes them. To put it simply, if they take a long time to do or learn something, they feel ashamed of themselves. They also judge themselves on getting things right first time, and if they're not able to do something quickly or fluently, they feel like a failure.

To find out if this applies to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you often avoid doing or putting yourself forward for certain things because you're afraid of not performing well?
- Are you used to excelling in things without much effort?
- Does your confidence tumble when faced with a setback because you worry about under performing?
- Do you feel that you can handle things on your own, and dislike the idea of having a mentor?

5. The Superwoman/Man

People who experience this type of Imposter Syndrome often push themselves to work harder than everyone else, as they are convinced that they don't measure up to their other colleagues. Their workload is used to cover up their insecurities, however this can have harmful affects effects on their mental health, as well as their relationships with others.

To find out if this applies to you, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you stay late and work later than everyone else in your team, even when you've completed your work for the day?
- Do you get stressed when you're not working?
- Do you feel like you haven't truly earned your job title, and work longer and harder to prove your worth?
- Have you sacrificed all of your hobbies and passions to work?

What types of jobs are prone to Imposter Syndrome?

Those who work remotely are often more at risk of suffering from Imposter Syndrome.

This is due to the lack of face to face interaction, with the possibility of receiving positive feedback being less than those within a workplace, and this can leave them with feelings of self-doubt and wondering if their work is good enough.

According to research by Heriot-Watt University and the School for CEOs, female leaders experience Imposter Syndrome to a higher degree than men, with 54% of the women surveyed saying that they experienced these feelings, compared to 24% of men.



How to overcome Imposter Syndrome.

Good mental health is crucial to a happy and successful life, both professionally and personally, and there are strategies that can help change the way you think and overcome Imposter Syndrome.

Acknowledge your feelings.

If you feel that you are struggling with Imposter Syndrome, admitting these feelings and trying to accept them for what they are may be just what you need to start having some control over them.

When you start to acknowledge these thoughts for what they are, it can help you to put them into perspective. Observing, rather than engaging with them, can help you ask yourself, “does this thought actually help or hinder me?” Knowing this difference can help you understand what is productive reflection, and what are feelings of Imposter Syndrome. **Remember that, while feelings are important, they are just feelings and do not necessarily reflect reality.** Feeling under qualified doesn't mean you actually are.

There are so many other people who have similar thoughts about their abilities, and those with Imposter Syndrome tend not to mention how they feel for fear of being exposed as a fraud. Keep that in mind and **try to remember that you're not alone, even if it feels like you are.**



Know your triggers.

Some people might find it helpful to keep a record of each time they experience feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy or other Imposter Syndrome tendencies. Write down these thoughts whenever they happen, as well as details such as where you were, who else was there, what was said etc. You can also write down how you felt physically, such as butterflies or heart pounding.

Talk to others.

If you have people around you that you trust, reach out to them and talk about how you are feeling. You may be surprised by how many of them can relate to how you feel, and some of them may be able to share their own experiences and offer advice and tips, as well as reassure you and help you realise that your fears are unfounded.

Start owning your successes.

If you have Imposter Syndrome, there's a good chance that you find it difficult to take credit for your successes. In most cases, you may attribute your achievements to other people, or say that it was all down to good luck.

Changing the way you think about your achievements, and owning the good as well as the bad, can help you overcome this.

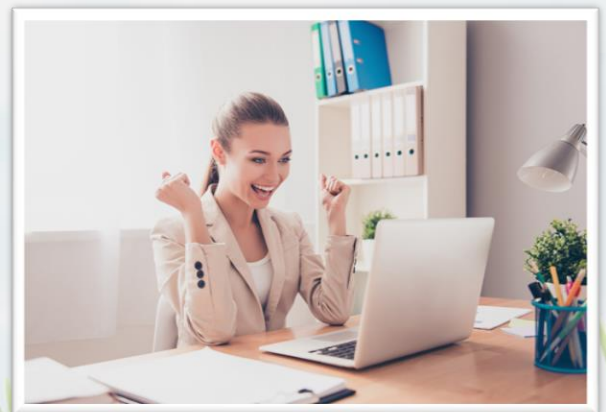
When somebody pays you a compliment or praises you, try to learn to accept and enjoy it. You may find this difficult at first, but the more you try, the easier accepting praise when it's due will become.

You can also write down a list of all your strengths and achievements and keep a record of all the positive feedback and praise that you receive, no matter how small, to read back whenever you hear that negative inner voice. This will help to take the sting out of any criticism you're directing at yourself and provide a much-needed boost of confidence.

It's OK to not be perfect.

A lot of people who are affected by Imposter Syndrome also tend to have perfectionist tendencies as well. Perfectionists often set extremely high standards for themselves, and even if they meet 99% of their goals, they often feel like failures.

If you're a perfectionist, you may experience feelings of self-doubt when things don't work out exactly as planned, and even if you experience success, you may still feel like you could have done better. Rather than give yourself a hard time, remind yourself that it's ok not to be perfect. **Try practicing compassion and kind self-talk and remind yourself that you don't need to be super skilled at everything all of the time.** After all, no one is perfect!



Recognising that you have Impostor Syndrome is often the hardest part, but it's also the first step toward overcoming it. It's also important to remember that if you are ever feeling like an 'imposter', it means you have experienced some degree of success in your life, even if you are currently attributing it to luck.

However, if you recognise these symptoms in yourself, and you feel that they are too overwhelming to deal with, or they are severely getting in the way of your progress, it is worthwhile speaking with your doctor, who can rigorously assess your mental health as well as refer you for counselling or therapy, where you can share your experience in a safe and open environment. There are also a variety of organisations online such as **[Able Futures](#)**, which delivers mental health support on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions.



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