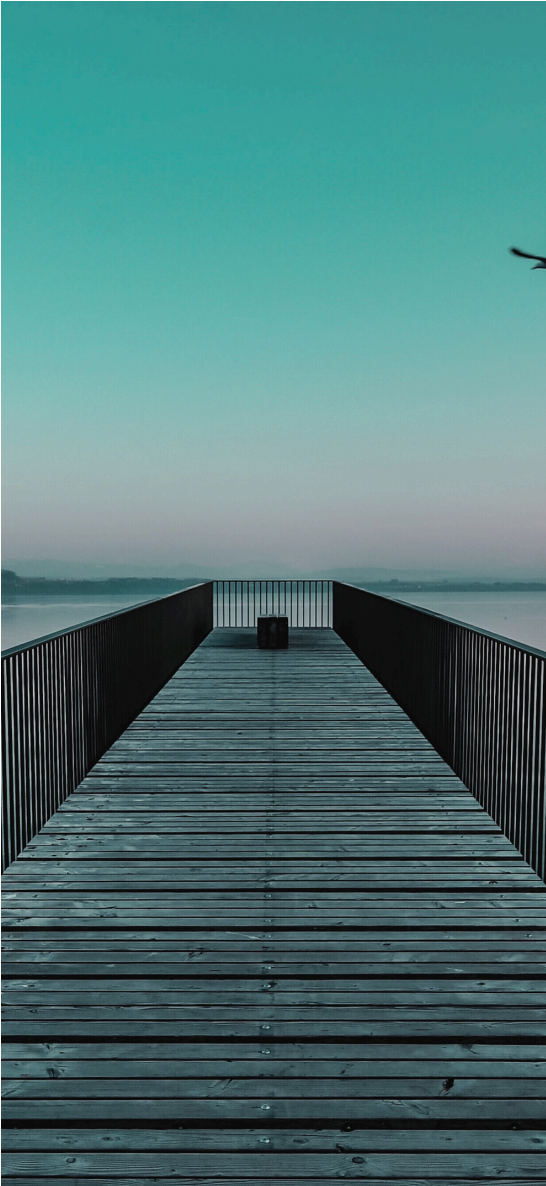


# Self-Doubt Slayer

**Imposter Syndrome  
WORKBOOK**

# Building Bridges to Confidence



As long as humans have been self-aware, we've been self-doubters.

Psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes coined the phrase Imposter Syndrome in the 1970s. They theorised that women in particular were affected by it but later research has revealed that up to 70% of people are in the zone from time to time, worrying about being 'found out' as a fraud.

It's so much a part of the human condition that its roots stretch back to ancient philosophy and classic literature.

Greek philosophers ruminated on the nature of achievement and doubt.

In Measure for Measure (Act 1 Scene 4) - in 1606 - Shakespeare wrote:

"Our doubts are traitors, And make us lose the good we oft might win, By fearing to attempt."

If you're struggling with imposter syndrome, you're not alone. The good news is that recognizing this shared experience can transform that doubt into a level of self-growth you've only imagined.

Feeling like an imposter isn't your identity: just because you feel like an imposter doesn't mean you are one. It's usually a phase of your life, or stronger in one part of your life than another. It is also a sign of your personal commitment to self-awareness.

# The Real-Life Impacts of Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome can lead to stress, burnout, difficult relationships, and patchy career progression. Worse, it can increase vulnerability to anxiety and depression, cause acceptance of abusive behavior, and affect your overall life satisfaction.

So the work you're about to start is not self-indulgent: it's important to your well-being and your quality of life.

The workbook begins with a self-assessment. Be mindful that it's not about judging yourself – it's about understanding your starting point. It's a way to measure your progress, a reflective tool to help you chart your personal growth as you navigate through the content of this guide.

## Building Bridges to Confidence

Each exercise in this workbook can guide you gently toward a more assured and compassionate self.

Work through them at your own pace: in order the first time, then dip into the parts you need to as your awareness shifts and grows.

## The Strength in Persistence

Imposter Syndrome is a part of the human condition, but it's not your entire life story.

You can grow past this pest, learn to recognise and acknowledge your strengths, develop your skills, and become the person you want to be.



# Self assessment

This self-assessment can help you understand where you are starting from right now. It is not a diagnosis, simply way for you to see what you're feeling and where you're starting from. Answer each question honestly so you can easily measure your progress as you work through this book. Read each statement and then write your score in the box.

Score      Never (0)              Often (3)  
             Rarely (1)            Always (4)  
             Sometimes (2)

I believe my success is due to luck or timing.	
I worry others will discover I'm not as capable as they think.	
I attribute my accomplishments to factors other than my own abilities.	
I feel undeserving of my position or achievements.	
I fear failure despite past successes.	
I downplay my expertise or achievements to others.	
I feel I must work harder than others to prove my worth.	
I hesitate to take on new challenges for fear of revealing my inadequacies.	
I find it difficult to accept praise or recognition for my work.	
I often compare myself to others and feel I fall short.	
Total	

## Scoring Guide

10-20: Indicates a low level of imposter feelings. You might occasionally doubt yourself, but it doesn't significantly impact your overall confidence.

21-30: Suggests moderate imposter feelings. Doubts and feelings of being an imposter occur with some regularity and may sometimes affect your self-esteem or decision-making.

31-40: Reflects frequent experiences of imposter syndrome, with these feelings likely influencing daily life and self-perception quite a bit.

41-50: Denotes very frequent to almost constant imposter feelings, indicating a significant impact on your self-esteem, daily functioning, and possibly professional growth.

Using your score, choose the matching Reflection page (following this) and reflect on what it means for you.

# Reflect on Your Score: Low Score

Can you think of a specific instance where you felt out of place, despite no external indication? What triggered this feeling?

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How do you typically react when someone praises your work or achievements?

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In what areas of your life do you feel most confident, and why?

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# Reflect on Your Score: Medium Score

Describe a situation where imposter feelings stopped you from taking an opportunity. How did you feel afterward?

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What specific achievements do you usually or often attribute to luck rather than your efforts?

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How do you usually cope with challenges or setbacks? Do you see them as reflections of your abilities?

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# Reflect on Your Score: High Score

Think about a time when imposter syndrome was particularly overwhelming. What support or resources do you wish you'd had at that moment?

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How often do you compare your behind-the-scenes efforts to others' highlight reels?  
How does this affect your self-view?

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What personal or professional goal has imposter syndrome slowed you down on, or stopped you from pursuing?

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# Reflect on Your Score: Very High Score

How has imposter syndrome affected your overall well-being and relationships?

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Describe the internal dialogue you experience when faced with success. How does it differ from moments of self-doubt?

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What are the most persistent imposter thoughts you struggle with?

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# Understanding the Shadow of Doubt

Imposter Syndrome goes beyond personal feelings  
of inadequacy.

It can affect every aspect of your life, including  
your professional growth, mental health,  
relationships and social interactions.

Understanding these impacts is crucial for  
managing imposter syndrome and developing a  
healthier sense of self.

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# Seeing and Feeling Imposter Syndrome

These are some of the ways that Imposter Syndrome can show up:

- Persistent self-doubt
- A continuous feeling of uncertainty about your abilities, skills, experience or knowledge, despite evidence that you are competent.
- Attributing success to external factors
- Believing that your accomplishments are due to luck, timing, or other people's help rather than your own effort or ability.
- Fear of being exposed
- Worrying that others will eventually discover you're not as intelligent, capable, or creative as you seem.
- Downplaying success
- Difficulty accepting praise
- Consistently undervaluing your personal achievements and dismissing them as trivial or not worthy of recognition.
- Overworking
- Compensating for what you think of as your lack of ability by working much harder than necessary, often to the point of burnout.
- Fear of failure
- Experiencing an intense fear of failure, viewing any mistake or shortcoming as proof of your incompetence.
- Feeling uncomfortable receiving acknowledgment for achievements and may fear that they will not be able to live up to expectations in the future.

Studies have suggested that up to 70% of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives. It affects people across different professions, ages, races and genders.

## How It Can Impact Your Life

### Professional Impacts

- Stress and burnout from constant self-doubt.
- Career stagnation and underemployment, affecting financial stability and growth opportunities.
- Hindered career progression due to fear of seeking promotions or new challenges.
- Perfectionism leading to reduced creativity and productivity.
- Reluctance to negotiate salaries or advocate for raises, potentially leading to financial disparities.

### Personal Impacts

- Increased vulnerability to anxiety and depression, affecting overall life satisfaction.
- Strained relationships and social withdrawal to avoid perceived exposure.
- Decision paralysis in personal and professional choices.
- Tolerating negative personal environments, including staying in unhealthy relationships.

# The Hidden Shadow In Your Life

Imposter Syndrome feels very real, but it's important to remember it's not a fixed label or a mental health diagnosis. It's more like a shadow that appears in certain lights—temporary and not defining who you are. While it might stir up feelings of anxiety or self-doubt, recognizing it as a momentary experience can help you shine a light on it, reducing its power.

This understanding paves the way for self-compassion and opens the way for you to develop strategies to navigate through these feelings, so they don't stop you from living the life you want.

## Perfectionism

Many people with imposter syndrome are also perfectionists. They set extremely high standards for themselves and fear being seen as "less than perfect."

When do you find yourself striving for perfection? How does this affect your feelings of competence?

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## Fear of Failure

This fear is often at the heart of imposter syndrome. Individuals may avoid challenging tasks or opportunities due to the fear of not performing perfectly.

Think of a time when you avoided a challenge due to fear of failure. What were your thoughts and feelings?

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# The Role of Family and Upbringing

Early family dynamics and expectations can contribute to the development of imposter syndrome, especially in families that placed a high value on achievement.

How did your family's attitude towards success and failure impact your self-perception?

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## Social Conditioning

Societal expectations and stereotypes about competence and success can also play a role, particularly in terms of gender, race, and class.

What societal messages about success may have influenced your feelings of being an 'imposter'?

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## Internalized Self-Doubt

Imposter syndrome often involves deeply internalized beliefs about not being good enough, regardless of external evidence of success.

What beliefs about your abilities do you hold, despite evidence that they're not accurate?

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# 8 Imposter Syndrome Myths

1. **It's Only a Problem for Women:** Initially thought to affect mainly women, imposter syndrome is now known to affect people of all genders, cultures and ages.
2. **It Only Affects High Achievers:** While it's common in high achievers, anyone can experience these feelings, regardless of their success level.
3. **It's A Sign of Modesty:** Some believe it's just modesty, but it's more about deep-seated feelings of fraudulence that can hinder personal and professional growth.
4. **It Will Disappear with Success:** Success often doesn't alleviate imposter feelings; in many cases, it can intensify them.
5. **It Cannot Be Overcome:** While challenging, it's possible to manage and overcome the effects of imposter syndrome with the right strategies and support.
6. **It Indicates Lack of Confidence or Low Self-Esteem:** While related, imposter syndrome is more specific, involving a persistent belief in one's lack of competence despite evidence to the contrary.
7. **It's a Rare Condition:** Imposter syndrome is quite common, with many individuals experiencing it at some point in their lives.
8. **Success Eliminates Imposter Feelings:** Achieving success often does not resolve imposter syndrome; in some cases, new achievements can trigger further imposter feelings.

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# A Shared Journey: Navigating Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome is so common that even people who seem wildly successful, happy and popular have experienced it.

In this section, you'll explore what some well-known people have said, what you think it means, and what you think and feel about their experiences.

Then you'll relate it to your own life to gain new perspectives on overcoming self-doubt and recognising your own achievements.

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# Neil Gaiman – 2012

“If Neil Armstrong felt like an imposter, maybe everyone did. Maybe there weren’t any grown-ups, only people who had worked hard and also got lucky and were slightly out of their depth, all of us doing the best job we could, which is all we can really hope for.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Maya Angelou – 1994

“I have written 11 books, but each time I think, 'Uh oh, they're going to find out now. I've run a game on everybody, and they're going to find me out.'”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Michelle Obama – 2018

“I still have a little [bit of] imposter syndrome. It doesn't go away, that feeling that you shouldn't take me that seriously. What do I know? I share that with you because we all have doubts in our abilities, about our power and what that power is.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Albert Einstein – 1955

“The exaggerated esteem in which my lifework is held makes me very ill at ease. I feel compelled to think of myself as an involuntary swindler.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Sheryl Sandberg – 2013

“Every time I didn't embarrass myself — or even excelled — I believed that I had fooled everyone yet again. One day soon, the jig would be up.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Natalie Portman 2015

“I felt like there had been some mistake, that I wasn’t smart enough to be in this company [at Harvard], and that every time I opened my mouth I would have to prove that I wasn’t just a dumb actress.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Tom Hanks 2022

“No matter what we’ve done, there comes a point where you think, 'How did I get here? When are they going to discover that I am, in fact, a fraud and take everything away from me?' It's a high-wire act we all walk.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Emma Watson 2013

"It's almost like the better I do, the more my feeling of inadequacy actually increases, because I'm just going, 'Any moment, someone's going to find out I'm a total fraud.'"

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Serena Williams 2018

“I think it's important to talk about the struggles that women face, whether they're athletes or not, and the fact that we do often feel like we're not enough.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# David Bowie 1997

“I had enormous self-image problems and very low self-esteem, which I hid behind obsessive writing and performing. I really felt so utterly inadequate.”

What emotions or reactions do you feel reading this?

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What aspect of the quote stands out to you the most, and why?

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How do you think the person felt when they expressed this thought?

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In what ways do you think this experience is common among people who achieve success?

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How does this quote change how you feel?

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# Managing Imposter Syndrome

This section can help you navigate the complex feelings of fraudulence that can hold you back from realising your full potential.

Explore practical strategies and exercises to challenge self-doubt and celebrate your achievements.

Whether you're confronting imposter thoughts head-on or seeking to build a more compassionate self-view, working through these exercises, and revisiting them when you need to, can be a powerful step on your journey toward self-acceptance and fulfillment.

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# My Strengths and Achievements

Strengths are your unique qualities and capabilities that you bring to every situation in your life. They are the personal attributes you rely on to overcome challenges, achieve goals, and interact positively with others.

Embracing your strengths can boost your confidence and help reduce feelings of imposter syndrome. This exercise can help you identify, reflect on and learn to value your own strengths.

The My Strengths column lists 50 strengths. Feel free to add your own. When you recognise one of the strengths as yours, use the Reflections column to note how these strengths have manifested in your life or how you plan to use them moving forward.

Review this list often and add to it.

My Strengths and Achievements	Reflection
Empathy	
Resilience	
Creativity	
Patience	
Adaptability	
Optimism	
Mindfulness	
Curiosity	
Determination	
Integrity	

My Strengths and Achievements	Reflection
Compassion	
Reliability	
Courage	
Self-awareness	
Enthusiasm	
Humility	
Gratitude	
Flexibility	
Loyalty	
Generosity	
Perseverance	
Kindness	
Honesty	
Resourcefulness	
Initiative	
Thoughtfulness	
Positivity	
Open-mindedness	
Reflectiveness	
Discipline	

My Strengths and Achievements	Reflection
Organization	
Listening skills	
Communication skills	
Leadership	
Emotional intelligence	
Problem-solving	
Critical thinking	
Teamwork	
Cultural awareness	
Public speaking	
Time management	
Conflict resolution	
Decision making	
Assertiveness	
Self-control	
Willingness to learn	
Passion	
Trustworthiness	
Accountability	
Innovation	

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# My Skill Development Plan

A balanced skill development plan for your personal and professional lives can help to counter feelings of being an imposter. This plan can help you acknowledge how far you've come, how diverse your skills are, and where you're heading next, whether it's a personal interest or a work-related skill. It can make your learning journey well-rounded, intentional and directed.

Start by listing your mastered skills and note how they've contributed to your success. Then, outline the skills you'd like to develop, with specific actions to enhance them.

Revisit this page to remind yourself of what you're already capable of, and to review and update.

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# Beyond Comparisonitis

It's natural to compare ourselves to others, but doing so can often leave us feeling inadequate, feeding Imposter Syndrome. This exercise can help you shift focus from outward comparisons to celebrating your own unique journey and achievements.

You can use the process below to gradually re-train your brain to appreciate your own strengths and successes, for an overall healthier mindset and greater self compassion.

## The Steps

1. Notice and Note: Whenever you catch yourself comparing to someone else, write down the context and what you were comparing (successes, abilities, possessions, etc.).
2. Shift the Focus: Directly beside your note, write down something about yourself related to the context that you're proud of or a recent personal achievement, no matter how small.
3. Reflect: At the end of each week, review your entries. Reflect on how focusing on your achievements and qualities made you feel compared to the initial comparison.

## Simple Shifts for A Happier You

- Closely manage your social media - set specific times to check it and then exit when the time has passed.
- To things that boost your self-esteem, like hobbies or exercise, instead of browsing social media.
- Practice gratitude by noting things you're thankful for in your life every day.
- Spend more time with people who are positive and caring.
- Include inspirational and motivational reading, watching and listening to encourage your own personal growth and self-acceptance.



# Reflection

You may already know how often you compare yourself to others, and you may not be aware of it. This page will help you explore how often and how deeply you do this. Start with thinking of someone or something you compare yourself to. Then, explore that comparison with something that you do, or have. And finally, reflect on what this means for you.

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# Self-Management Strategies

This worksheet can help you recognise the thoughts that whisper 'imposter' and the feeling that generates, so you can respond to yourself with truth and compassion. Repeat this exercise as many times as you need to. The examples below can help you start.

## Work Example

**Recognize Imposter Moments:** During a project meeting, I felt like I didn't deserve to lead the team. I thought I was less qualified than my peers.

**Question the Evidence:** When I examine it, my team has consistently praised my leadership. The feeling of not belonging isn't based on actual performance feedback.

**Manage Emotions:** I felt anxious and tense. Taking deep breaths and focusing on what I was doing in the moment helped me to calm down.

**Craft Responses:** Instead of thinking I don't deserve to lead, I reminded myself, 'I am chosen for this role because of my proven skills and dedication.'

**Reflect With Kindness:** Looking back, I handled the situation by preparing thoroughly and seeking feedback, which showed resilience and commitment.

**Weigh Thoughts:** Believing I'm not enough holds me back. Recognizing my worth could open up more opportunities for growth and confidence.

**Plan Ahead:** Next time I feel like an imposter, I'll review positive feedback I've received and recall past successes to reaffirm my capabilities.

## Personal Example

**Recognizing Imposter Moments:** At the family reunion, I felt out of place, like everyone is doing better than I am in every way.

**Questioning the Evidence:** But, when I think about it, my family has always been supportive and interested in my journey, not just my achievements.

**Managing Emotions:** I felt inferior and nervous. Focusing on moments of genuine connection rather than comparison helped me feel more at ease.

**Crafting Responses:** I reminded myself, 'I am valued for who I am, not just what I achieve.'

**Reflecting With Kindness:** I realized I engaged more by sharing and listening, which made me feel more connected and less like an outsider.

**Weighing Thoughts:** Believing I don't measure up makes me withdraw. Recognizing my unique contributions fosters a stronger sense of belonging.

**Planning Ahead:** In future gatherings, I'll prepare a few personal stories to share, reinforcing my sense of worth and connection.

# Recognize Imposter Moments

Think back to a time when you've doubted your place in a room. What were you thinking and feeling?

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# Question the Evidence

Look at those doubtful thoughts and question them. Ask yourself, what real evidence do you have that supports these beliefs?

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# Manage Emotions

Next to each of your doubts, write the emotions that come up. Then, think about ways to calm those feelings, like using focused breathing or grounding yourself in the present.

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# Craft Responses

For every negative thought, let's come up with a positive counterargument or affirmation that rings true for you.

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# Reflect With Kindness

Take a moment to reflect on how you've dealt with these feelings in the past. Acknowledge the strength it took to navigate through them.

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# Weigh Thoughts

Consider the pros and cons of buying into the imposter syndrome narrative. What do you gain from these beliefs, and what might you gain from letting them go?

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# Plan Ahead

Lastly, outline some strategies you can use when these thoughts and feelings next arise. What steps will help you move past them?

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# Resources

These tools can support your journey through imposter syndrome.

They can provide you with a variety of perspectives and strategies to enhance your toolkit for managing imposter syndrome, ensuring you have access to support whenever you need it.

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# Self Soothing Activities Checklist

These self-soothing activities are ideas for calming your mind and body, whether you're navigating a busy workday or seeking relaxation in your personal time.

Each one is selected to help you find balance and peace when Imposter Syndrome is being loud.

Rate each activity as you try them, to develop a list of go-to activities to help you when you need them.

Activity	Work	Personal	Rating (1-10)
Deep, controlled breathing	✓	✓	
Grounding exercises	✓	✓	
Mindful observation	✓	✓	
Subtle stretching	✓	✓	
Using a stress ball/fidget tool	✓	✓	
Visualizing a peaceful place	✓	✓	
Progressive muscle relaxation	✓	✓	
Listening to calming music	✓	✓	
Taking a warm bath		✓	
Walking in nature		✓	
Journaling	✓	✓	
Practicing yoga/gentle stretching		✓	
Meditating	✓	✓	
Aromatherapy with essential oils	✓	✓	
Spending time with pets		✓	
Gardening/tending to houseplants	✓	✓	
Cooking or baking		✓	

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# Affirmations

Print these out and keep handy in your wallet, as a bookmark, on your fridge or your mirror.

**I am capable and  
deserving of my  
successes.**

**I embrace my journey,  
complete with its ups  
and downs.**

**My value goes beyond  
my achievements and  
accolades.**

**Each step I take is  
progress, no matter  
how small.**

**I grow and learn from  
every challenge I face.**

**I am more than  
enough, just as I am.**

**My efforts and skills  
lead me to where I am  
today.**

**My contributions are  
unique and valuable.**

# Feedback

Seeking and accepting feedback is a powerful step in personal and professional growth, especially when you're navigating imposter syndrome.

Feedback can be a gift, reflecting your strengths and areas for growth. It can help you build genuine confidence.

Use this worksheet to help you approach feedback constructively, so that you can see it as a tool for learning rather than a critique of your worth.

## Questions to Consider When Seeking Feedback

- What specific areas do I want feedback on?
- Who can provide constructive and honest feedback?
- How will I ask for feedback in a way that encourages specific and actionable insights?

## Accepting Feedback Gracefully

- Listen without interrupting.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Reflect on the feedback away from emotional reactions.
- Decide what feedback to act on.

# Reflection

How did receiving and acting on feedback affect my perception of imposter syndrome?

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What changes have I noticed in my self-confidence?

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# Action Plan

Identify three actions based on the feedback.


Set goals for implementing this feedback.

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# Resources List

Record the books, podcasts, books, websites and people that you find helpful.

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