



IMPOSTER SYNDROME CHALLENGE



GROWING YOUR BUSINESS. GROWING YOURSELF



WELCOME TO THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME CHALLENGE!

This workbook is to be used alongside the video on the Make & Mend Festival website.

It's a five step challenge, which ideally would be completed one day after another. Each day in this challenge, I will help you to explore a new way of dealing with Imposter Syndrome and give you a task or perhaps two tasks to complete.

By the end of the challenge hopefully you will be able to see your imposter syndrome for what it is and have some new ways of dealing with it.

But first of all, let's get really clear on what imposter syndrome is and how it might be holding you back. And I'll tell you all about my relationship with it too.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME & ME

I have suffered from imposter syndrome for a long time. Since I was a child I think. The last time I felt it have a really significant effect on me was when I achieved my first managerial position, when I was about 26 years old. I was utterly convinced that they'd got the wrong person right from the off and that I was in no way capable of doing the job. I was in the post for about 7 years and in truth I spent the first 3 of them thinking, on a regular if not daily basis, that I didn't really know what I was doing and that someone was going to pull me aside and point this out to me. That me getting that job was a big mistake.

Not only did this have a huge effect on my happiness and anxiety levels but I am sure it actually made me less effective at times as I felt crippled with feelings of inadequacy whenever I was expected to step up or visibly perform in the job.

Even now, when I start a new coaching relationship, or I do some consultancy with a company, I immediately question their judgement and my first instinct when someone books me for coaching or consultancy is that they've made a mistake and they don't really want to hire me. I walk into meetings with new clients sometimes thinking 'here goes nothing'.

But the difference now is that I can see my Imposter Syndrome for what it is, and whilst I haven't eradicated it from my life, I can in the main negotiate around it and find ways to work around and through it. In short, I don't let it rule me and it doesn't stop me from pressing forwards with my plans.



SO. WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

Imposter Syndrome is a belief that you are inadequate, incompetent and always on the brink of failure, despite there being evidence to the contrary.

It's that feeling that, in whatever you are doing, your business, a job or even a social situation or relationship, that you are a fraud and any minute now, or certainly at some point, people are going to 'find out' that you are not as you seem. That you're incompetent in some way, or a fraud, a fake.

In essence, it's a specific form of self doubt, or lack of confidence in yourself.

If you have imposter syndrome, you never really own your achievements or successes. If you got a new job you were 'lucky', or maybe the other candidates weren't up to much?

If you have been privileged in some way, private education perhaps, or having wealthier than average parents, you might see this as the reason for your academic achievements or for the career you have.

You might just have a feeling that you don't belong, like you're not supposed to be in that job, with those people, on that course.

If someone you admire admires you back, you assume that they've got the wrong idea about you. Or perhaps they have an ulterior motive? Because they couldn't just like and admire you for you, could they?

If any of this resonates with you, and it's likely that it does, then this challenge is for you. Two thirds of women say they have experienced imposter syndrome at work in the last 12 months according to recent research. And the more creative your work is (maybe you work in the arts or in the creative or design industries?) the more likely you are to suffer - as many as 87% of people working in this sector experience imposter syndrome.

HOW CAN IT HOLD YOU BACK?

- At a basic level, having imposter syndrome can create dissatisfaction and feelings of stress and anxiety. It's not a recipe for happiness.
- It can stop you from applying for a job that you are more than qualified to do.
- It can prevent you from expressing your ideas and opinions in the workplace and furthering your career.
- It can stop you from starting a business.
- It can put you off forging useful links and making friendships and relationships with people who would add to and enrich your life or career because you feel you're not worthy of their attention or friendship.
- It can make you suspicious of people or situations.
- It can stop you from giving your best to your work or business because you are not confident in your abilities or sure in your opinions and ideas.
- It can lead to burnout and exhaustion – imposter syndrome can drive perfectionism and a need to try and prove ourselves.



DAY ONE

RECOGNISE IT FOR WHAT IT IS

Hopefully after the introduction to this challenge, you understand imposter syndrome and can recognise it in yourself. What's also important to recognise is that most people feel it. Of course, imposter syndrome shows up more often for some people than others, but generally speaking, we are in this one together. There's a reason why there are so many t-shirts and mugs etc. with the words 'winging it' on them – because so many of us feel that we are on a regular basis.

Even very successful people suffer with imposter syndrome, here's some examples;

Sometimes I wake up before an important shoot and I think, "I can't do this, I'm a fraud. I'm rubbish and everyone is going to be able to see it" **Kate Winslet**

It's almost as if the better I do, the more my feeling of inadequacy increases, like I don't deserve anything that I have achieved. **Emma Watson**

I still feel like the loser in high school and I have to pick myself up from that every morning. **Lady Gaga**

TODAY'S TASK

- Speak to a trusted friend, colleague or family member, someone that you feel safe exploring your feelings with. Start a conversation about imposter syndrome and ask them how they feel about it and if they've ever felt like a fraud– you'll be surprised at what they say. You could also ask them if they have any ways of dealing with it.
- Name it. Get into the habit of saying to yourself 'this is just imposter syndrome' whenever it comes up for you. Make a note of the kinds of situations where it crops up.

NOTES



DAY TWO

COLLECT EVIDENCE

Despite how we feel about ourselves, the evidence is often there that would go against what the imposter syndrome is telling us about our capabilities.

Those who are or have been employed will have had appraisals where our achievements and strengths will have been noted. We will have had verbal or written positive feedback from clients or customers. Friends and family may compliment us from time to time about our achievements or our personal attributes.

TASKS:

- Write down a list of things that you can remember people saying to you, professionally or personally that would contradict your imposter syndrome.
- Start a 'positive feedback' folder – this can be hard copy or on your computer, but store everything that you have that will contradict your imposter syndrome. Emails from satisfied clients and customers, praise from bosses, appraisal documents, professional qualifications, feedback forms, thank you cards and notes – anything that applies to you and would prove that you are qualified, capable, talented and appreciated. Every time you get some positive feedback, pop it in the folder. Read through the folder every time your imposter syndrome is triggered. Often just reading one or two pieces of positive feedback is enough to get us back on track.

NOTES





KEEP IN TOUCH

I have lots of plans for courses, retreats and workshops which you will find out about in my emails – simply subscribe at my website if you haven't already.

You can also join my Facebook group – **just search Gather & Grow**

You can also visit my website at SIMPLEHAPPYLIFE.CO.UK

Follow me on: INSTAGRAM @_sarahraad

Until then and with love,

Sarah

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