**What Is Imposter Syndrome + 3 Ways to Fight it at Work**

In this presentation we are going to be looking at one of the most common forms of self-doubt: Imposter Syndrome. Modern life has taken humankind so far from our natural habitat that Imposter Syndrome has become commonplace. But what, exactly, *is* Imposter Syndrome?

Psychologists Suzanne Imes and Pauline Clance first described the phenomenon in the 70s. They focused in on Imposter Syndrome as it presented itself in over-achievers. When you are preoccupied with doing or producing great things, it can be hard to recognize those things as your own.

People suffering from Imposter Syndrome will often find themselves questioning their ownership over their own work. They might ask, “How much of that was my doing? Am I really responsible for that?” even when a project could not have existed without them.

This strange psychological phenomenon is a product of our world’s ever-growing self-awareness. We are more cognizant than ever of what humans are capable of. It can feel wrong to relax when our potential is so great.

Yet at the same time, that pressure creates insecurity. No matter what you do, you find yourself asking: “Did I really get here on my own?” But if you spend your free time—or even your work time—hounding yourself over proof of your validity, you will drive yourself crazy.

To that end, here are three ways to handle Imposter Syndrome at work.

## Define Your own Success

A big part of what makes Imposter Syndrome so common is that the very concept of “success” is unnatural. That is not to say that it is inherently right or wrong, only that it’s developed by people, and it has to be learned.

But it is entirely possible that you learn a toxic definition of success. If you think of success as taking ownership of all the money in the world, for instance, then you are setting yourself up to feel like a failure.

To redress this, you need to think critically about your own definition of what it means to be successful. Move the goal posts to something that you can do, and you will feel more ownership over your success.

## Talk to Someone

The thing about Imposter Syndrome is that it is an affliction based in shame. You feel like you have been disproportionally rewarded for your actual efforts. It can be scary to imagine mentioning this to anyone, as to do so would be to reveal your own un-belonging.

What you will probably find however, is that if you talk to someone about your feelings you will discover just how ridiculous your worries are. Talk to someone you trust; someone you look up to. If your mentor, who you view as successful, views you as capable, then who are you to argue with them?

## Examine Your Failures

This will be the most difficult thing on this list, but it is worth it. Examining your failures does not just mean flogging yourself for your shortcomings. It means taking responsibility for what you have done.

The thing is you can’t take responsibility for your failures without taking responsibility for your successes as well. This works the other way around too. No one fails unless they are trying to accomplish something, and no one can say they are trying to accomplish something without there being a risk of failure.

Admit to yourself that you failed and realize that it is okay to fail.

None of these will have you waking up in the morning and feeling like a winner. But that is not the goal here. You are not trying to feel like a born winner. You are just trying to feel like yourself. Because that’s enough.