



Imposter Syndrome is a widely used term, but what does it mean? Those who experience it describe it as a hampering self-doubt and often a fear that they will be 'found out' as a fraud, despite evidence of their capability and success.

So, what causes it? Imposter Syndrome is reported across all genders but, in my experience as a business and leadership coach, women in particular share their experiences of it. Family and societal expectations can trigger it, as can: personality traits, organisational culture, work pressures and the leadership style of our boss.

How can you combat it? Here are our top 5 tips for lessening the impact of imposter Syndrome. Don't expect it to disappear forever, just work on keeping it under control.



**A.
Analyse
the
evidence**

Regularly self-reflect, capturing in a journal the reality of what is happening. Evidence successes as well as any areas that may need improvement.

Ask for feedback at regular intervals – clear contract with your manager that you would like a quarterly catch up to focus on your development, capturing strengths and any areas to develop, so that you are working on evidence rather than jaded self-talk.

Update your picture of yourself, instead of looking in the rearview mirror. Update your CV to capture your latest achievements and up to date skills and personal strengths.

**B.
Find a
mentor**

Identify someone who has already followed the path you wish to tread or demonstrates the skills and behaviours you aspire to demonstrate. They can support you in your personal development and reassure you around what it's like to tread this path.

**C.
Develop
your
network**

Assess your current personal network. Who do you have to support you in: achieving your day job, developing your career, updating your subject matter expertise, taking care of your wellbeing? If you are relying on the same people across each of those areas, what action can you take to increase the wealth of people, skills and experience available to support you?

How can your network promote you, championing you before you even enter the room? This can increase your self-belief as well as your credibility with others.

**D.
Act**

When we are experiencing imposter Syndrome our negative self-talk can often take over, so we need to take action - check our journal, talk to our mentor, tap into our network – in short, we need to channel our feelings into some form of positive action! We also need to learn the value of 'failing fast'.

Tech firms understand all about this - they are willing to prototype systems before they are 100% 'perfect' and consult with key stakeholders so they can adjust the design quickly as they go. Don't allow perfectionism to stop you from moving forwards and taking some form of action!

**E.
Be kind
to
yourself**

Set realistic goals and timelines. Accept that if you are feeling low, sad or under huge pressure, imposter Syndrome is likely to reappear. Recognise it for what it is, a psychological phenomenon rather than reality.

Take care of yourself in whatever way works best for you and if you don't know what way that is, work it out, to support yourself when you face the challenges that will inevitably come your way.