

Imposter Syndrome

Sources and Solutions

Module 4 workbook

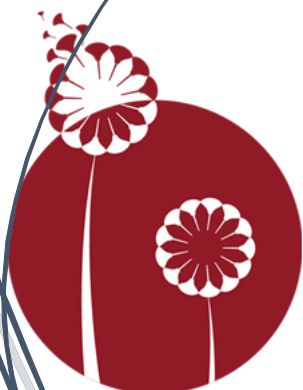
© All Rights Reserved

info@MargaretCollins.com

Also visit <https://MargaretCollins.com/ISSS>

Do follow me: [Facebook.com/MargaretCollinsPhD](https://www.facebook.com/MargaretCollinsPhD)

[LinkedIn.com/in/Dr MargaretCollins](https://www.linkedin.com/in/DrMargaretCollins)



**MARGARET
COLLINS**

CONFIDENCE | CLARITY | COURAGE
VISIT [MARGARETCOLLINS.COM](https://MargaretCollins.com)

Do you feel as good as they think you are?

This secret fear that we're not really good enough is surprisingly widespread.

In the face of tangible evidence of their success, many women, some men, people who are genuine high-achievers, are often wracked by self-doubt and the fear of being found out.

You might recognise this Imposter Syndrome when you realise you're thinking or feeling:

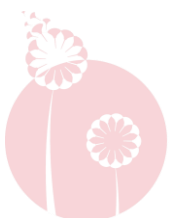
- that you don't put yourself forward because you fear you'll fail
- you don't contribute in meetings because you don't want to look a fool
- you've done pretty well so far but it feels you were really lucky
- other people doing similar jobs seem to be more "grown up" than you feel
- your "good enough" for yourself is "achieving perfection without breaking sweat"!

If not addressed Imposter Syndrome feelings can cause individuals to experience significant stress, anxiety and fear. It can drive them to burn-out or inhibit them from achieving their full potential, prevent them from making valuable contributions to projects or meetings and deprive an organisation or a business from seeing the very best that their people can give.

But the secret is now out. The Imposter Syndrome can be sorted!!

During this programme "Imposters" will explore:

- What Imposter Syndrome is...
- The consequences of Imposter Syndrome and why it matters
- How our thinking makes it worse
- Tools for long term change



Today I give myself permission to....

What permission do you need right now?

- Be brave, be honest
- Take a stretch if I'm feeling tired
- Share my opinions out loud
- Enjoy being fully present here and not multitasking!

Take a minute to write down what you need to allow yourself to experience the full benefits of participation in this programme.



Module 4:

Tools for long term change

We can't change who we are, but we can change how we think!

What we know about brains and neuroplasticity shows us we can change.

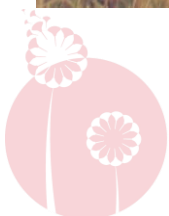
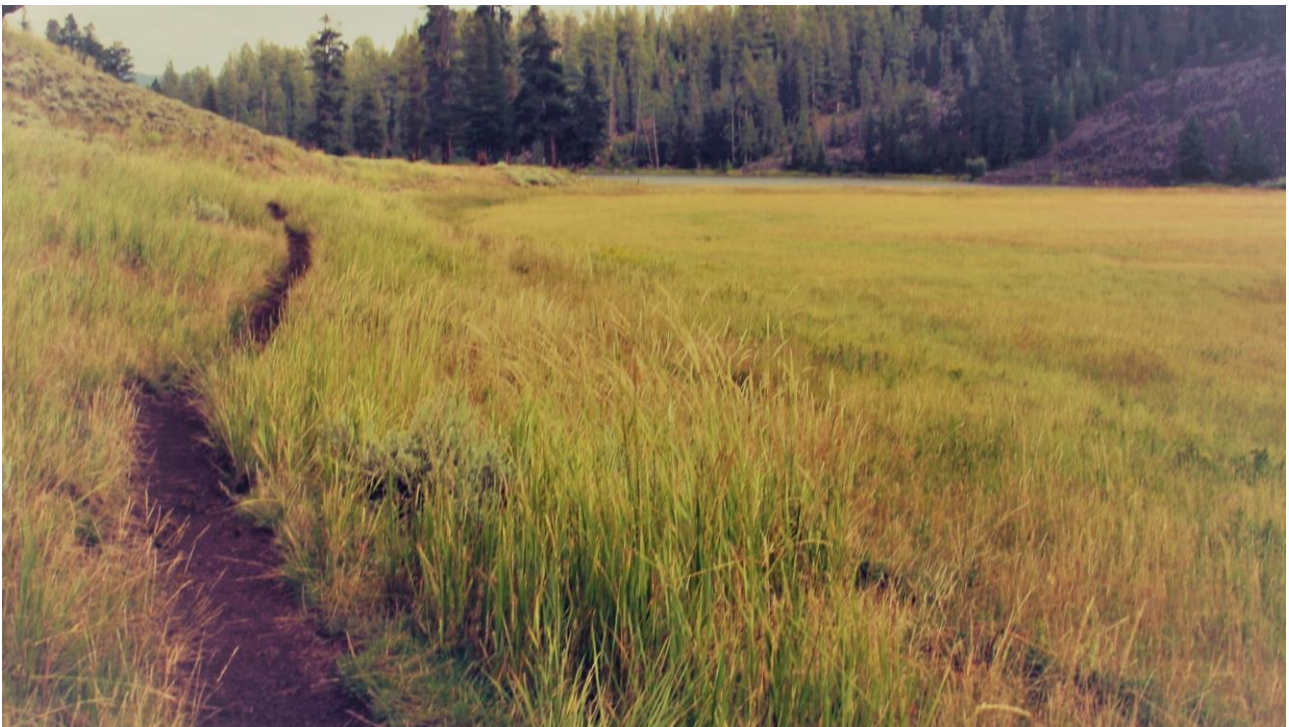
Cells (neurons) that fire together, wire together.
(Donald Hebb/ Hebb's law)

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit.
(Aristotle)

Fortunately, we are able to think new thoughts, to choose to change, to learn new habits...

Do you remember:

- a hobby that you loved and have now outgrown?
- music you used to love and now rarely choose to play?
- a friend you were very close to and now never meet...?
- becoming passionate about a thing you never previously cared for?



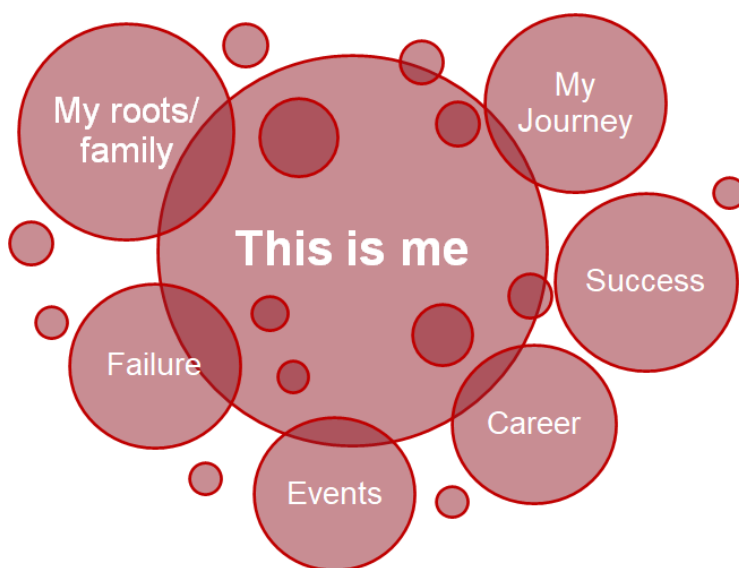
Imposter Syndrome Solutions

There are many tools we can use to overcome Imposter Syndrome feelings.

Depending on the 'blend' of Imposter influences we experienced, the best tools may be different for different people. Change begins with a decision to change – remember module 2 – and often change requires we learn new habits. Change may happen overnight - or not.

Transformation can start today though it might take time and practice.

1) Re-write your story:



Often we have parts of ourselves, parts of our past that we don't want to share, we prefer to hide.

These hidden parts, these unwanted identities take a huge amount of energy to manage. This is energy we could be using to create more good stuff in our lives. How creative might you be if you didn't have to spend time worrying or making sure that people didn't find out you went to the "wrong school" or didn't pass those exams? How much more could you contribute to leadership of yourself, in your organisation or business if you weren't constantly worried that people would think you are a fraud?

The parts you might be tempted to leave out of your story create the richness and complexity of you and your unique perspective! They give you the insights you have, make you who you are.

This isn't about inappropriate oversharing. You don't need to bare your soul to everyone. It's about knowing it's OK to own your truth, to share your truth, there's nothing wrong with you.

Remember, the Wholehearted simply believe they're worthy of love and belonging (Brené Brown)

How can you own your story more completely and who needs to hear this?

You can start by sharing your new version with us in the Facebook group!



2) Own your achievements

Knowing that people with Imposter feelings often attribute their success to external factors, are you willing to:

- Acknowledge your role in your success?
- Accept compliments graciously?
- Remember “Luck = preparation + opportunity”

Can you keep a good stuff file of testimonials, feedback and heartfelt “thank you’s” to remind you when you forget?



3) Recognise your Imposter

Frequently there are particular situations or scenarios which will trigger our experiences of the Impostor Syndrome. It is important to recognise and begin to anticipate these signs....

Situations or triggers may include:

- interviews when I'm being tested
- when I'm asked a question in front of a crowd
- delivering a presentation
- when challenged, for example "What you mean by.....?"
- when you have to argue your case
- if negotiation is needed
- when more senior managers are asking...
- when I feel I'm not prepared...

What other situations are relevant for you??

Can you begin to recognise your personal triggers and your responses?

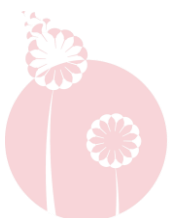
If we can recognise our triggers and the physical or emotional early signs we can learn to interrupt our old bad habits and put into action a new more helpful set of behaviours.

In situations where...

I usually feel...

I say to myself....

Then I usually...



What are your implementation intentions?

One of the most successful ways to prepare for a predictable situation is to create an implementation intention, make the decision not to give in to the old behaviour before it happens.

Implementation intentions often take the form of "If then" statements, where the "If" is the triggering behaviour you will recognise and the "then" is the desired good behaviour you would like to do.

For example:

"If I find myself thinking 'I'll just keep quiet',
then I'll remind myself that, deep down I know I want to be brave so I'll just take a deep breath,
muster all my courage, and say something/ask a question"

"If I'm tempted to play it small,
then I'll remind myself that I do have the experience and knowledge to lead and, even if it feels scary, I'm going to volunteer to take the lead".

"If I'm tempted to doubt my own worth,
then I'll remind myself that I have a unique perspective and the only way to find out if others like it is to share it!".

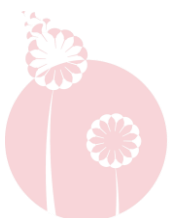
Consider the situations where your Imposter feelings often show up.

What would your best self want you to do?

What implementation intentions could get you back on track? There's no single right answer. You might need different versions for different situations. Refine them as you use them to make them more effective.

My implementation intentions include:

Please do share, ask for support and let us celebrate together in the Facebook group!



4) Redefine success and failure

What does success mean for you?

How do you measure it?

How do you know when you have it – or not?

Often we define success so that it aligns closely with perfection... or pleasing...

Sometimes, we realise that our definition of success is (unconsciously) designed to keep us striving, something unattainable, always in the future.

Many people live by definitions of success that were set (consciously or unconsciously) by other people - for some, the career ladder to success was always leaning against the wrong wall

Whose idea of success are you pursuing? Is it bringing you joy?

Write two lists:

What things bring you joy?	What things do you do every day?



Compare the two lists – and adjust as needed.

If success meant “living in alignment with my values”,
how would that change things for you?



5) Learn to master your focus

We often feel that the results we experience are the consequence of the situation we find ourselves in. Reality is slightly different.

What we believe directly affects the thoughts we have, the words we use to ourselves, the self talk that goes on in our head and that drives our feelings and behaviour. We can act at any stage in this process to make change but the most powerful shifts occur when we choose more helpful beliefs.

What do you need to believe to get the results that you want?

The results creation cycle



The simplest thing to change is often our behaviour and, yes, it also works.

We talk about embodiment, moving things from the head to the heart. So, stand to your full height, shake, wriggle out the tension and then hold your head up and smile! Now put your shoulders back, focus on your breathing, take a couple of really deep breaths and relax. Keep your posture, keep your smile...

How do you feel? It's tough to feel down when your body is telling you that it feels good!

One of the most powerful ways of improving your performance at a task is to combine changes in body and behaviour with changing the things you believe or say to yourself.

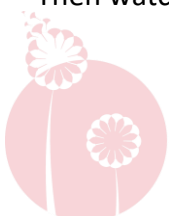
Knowing you are unique, resilient, flexible.... (Remember that Marianne Williamson quote)

Who are you when you are your best self?

Consciously look for evidence to support a positive belief about the behaviour you want, keep reminding yourself of your successes, choose to believe that you can.

Actively use your words to support your chosen outcome... Replace that negative "You'll never do it" script with a positive affirmation "I'm getting better at this every time!"

Then watch out for the improvement!



6) Treat yourself more kindly...

Often we are very harsh with ourselves, judge everything, expect perfection every time...

Can we remind ourselves that we are only human and that being human means we have both the capacity to make mistakes and the potential to be even better – and that's OK.

What would it be like/what would it mean if you were kind to yourself?

How might things change for you if you treated yourself with the same degree of empathy as you give to your colleagues or friends?

As you consider that possibility, notice what thoughts or feelings arise... and then take those back to the results creation cycle above.

What do you need to change to create different results?

7) New ways of thinking

It's possible that you've acted out your Imposter scripts for many years but if you're ready to begin to change let's make a start by writing a new script. When we find ourselves in specific situations – like those which trigger our Imposter feelings – we feel as if these situations trigger particular emotions, feelings or behaviours. While this isn't surprising, it's not necessarily fully accurate.

If you consider a more extreme situation where, for example, if someone has an intense fear of heights or snakes, they will often tell you that even thinking about the situation is sufficient to bring on those feelings of fear.

What causes the emotion then, isn't just the object we fear but the meaning we give to the thought of the object.

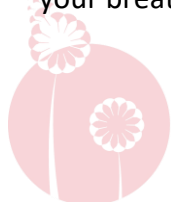
Research has shown that trying to suppress our thoughts is an ineffective coping strategy, so can we find another way to change these troubling thoughts that can trigger our fears?

Simply recognising and naming the emotion as we experience it will often reduce the effect.

Even something as simple as, “Hello there Imposter! I see you and I’m not going to let you stop me today” can create a very powerful shift.

Accompany this with deep, slow breathing.

Pay attention to your breath. Focus. Notice that you are slowly breathing in, pausing at the top of your breath, slowly breathing out and pausing before you breathe in once more...



More confident body language and words

Small changes in how we appear in the world physically can make a big difference to how confident we feel. Think “Fake it ‘til you become it!”

So how would you be, physically, if you didn't feel like an imposter?

Would you stand differently, fidget less or make more eye contact?

Sometimes we habitually make excuses, apologise or undermine our own credibility...

“I'm not sure but...”, “It's just that...” “Maybe we could...”, “I thought I read...”

How would you be more confident in your speech, less apologetic, make fewer excuses?

What phrases would you eliminate from your vocabulary?

What would the new, improved, more confident you like to think/say in this situation?

Possible examples can be individual to each person but things like this might help:

“Yes, I feel like an imposter but I'm going to do it anyway”

“I recognise these familiar feelings and this time, I'm not going to let them stop me”

“The only way I will know how well prepared I am is to put it into action”

“If it's not perfect, at least I'll be clear on how much more I need to do”

“If I get it wrong I know I can improve next time”

Take a moment to write down a new positive belief that will help you:

This needs to be something that is helpful, believable or possible for you. For example:

I am intelligent and able and I can do my job to the required standards.

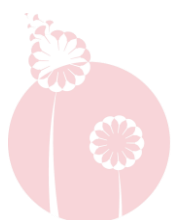
I am a hard-working and valuable colleague with the right to make occasional mistakes.

I can contribute a lot while still growing and learning more.

It's perfectly normal to be less than perfect while learning and becoming better at my job.

Good enough and done is better than perfect and not finished in time!

Can you re-frame or challenge your negative thoughts?



When can you take a test drive?

Trying out your new beliefs probably feels a little strange at first.

Your old beliefs probably feel like a really comfortable pair of shoes, they fit you so well they feel a part of you. In contrast, your new beliefs, like your new shoes, might feel a little tight at first.

So let's see how we can "break them in" gently.

Can you think of some situations where you can begin to safely test your new beliefs (without too much risk of getting blisters!)?

Next steps: Some practical considerations:

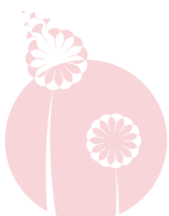
In particular situations there are different ways of moving forward. It might be helpful to brush up on specific skills in influencing & negotiation or assertiveness. Most of us, as individuals and organisations, need reminding of the pervasive power of unconscious bias so we can make better choices going forwards.

There are many ways to build personal confidence and to learn more effective managerial skills.

Remember to practice:

Brené Brown's 10 Guideposts for Wholehearted Living

Cultivating	Letting go of
Authenticity	What Other People Think
Self-Compassion	Perfectionism
Cultivating Your Resilient Spirit	Numbing and Powerlessness
Gratitude and Joy	Scarcity and Fear of the Dark
Intuition and Trusting Faith	the Need for Certainty
Creativity	Comparison
Play and Rest	Exhaustion as a Status Symbol
	and Productivity as Self-Worth
Calm and Stillness	Anxiety as a Lifestyle
Meaningful Work	Self-Doubt and Supposed-To
Laughter, Song, and Dance	Cool and Always in Control



Going Forward....

"If we want to be courageous and we want to be in the arena, we're going to get our butts kicked. There is no option.

If you want to be brave and show up in your life, you're going to fail. You're going to stumble. You're going to fall. It's part of showing up."

Brené Brown

Courage is when you feel the fear and you do it anyway because you know how you choose to be, when you know what your best self wants because you know it's in alignment with your values.

When you begin to change, you may experience stress or anxiety...
So take some deep breaths and carry on!

Your self-critic will re-appear...
So remind yourself that's normal and carry on!

Your might not get it right first time...
Remember it takes time to grow new brain cells!

During this programme you've learned so much, added to your resources, committed to change.

Your past doesn't determine your future, you and your choices will.

You can also learn more about archetypes and energies, the Women's Powertypes and how to use these in your life and work.

Voice Dialogue coaching can also give you a whole new relationship with the parts that currently drive you, maybe your Perfectionist, Pusher, Pleaser and more.

