

ASK THE EXPERTS

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CAREER

I find myself constantly struggling with imposter syndrome. How can I overcome these feelings of inadequacy?

Dealing with imposter syndrome – a common experience where individuals doubt their accomplishments, believe that they don't deserve what they have achieved, and fear being exposed as a "fraud" – can be challenging but manageable. Here are 10 action items to help you overcome these feelings of inadequacy:

1. **Recognize Imposter Syndrome:** Acknowledge that what you're experiencing is imposter syndrome. Many successful people experience these feelings, and recognizing that you're among them is the first step.
2. **Reframe Your Thoughts:** Challenge negative thoughts and reframe them into positive affirmations. Instead of thinking, "I don't deserve this," try, "I worked hard to be here."
3. **Keep a "Success Journal":** Maintain a journal where you record your achievements, positive feedback, and moments of success. Review it regularly to remind yourself of your accomplishments and their impact on others.
4. **Share Your Feelings:** Talk about your feelings with mentors, peers, or a therapist. You'll often find that others have had similar experiences and can offer support and advice.
5. **Set Realistic Goals:** Set achievable goals and celebrate small victories. This helps in building confidence and a sense of accomplishment.
6. **Focus on Learning:** Embrace a growth mindset. View challenges as opportunities to learn and grow rather than as threats to your competence. (Check out "Step Away From the Checklist Mindset and Into the Growth Mindset" from our July 2023 newsletter for more great information.)
7. **Seek Constructive Feedback:** Actively seek feedback to improve and learn, rather than to solely validate your work. This can help shift your focus from seeking approval to pursuing growth.
8. **Stop Comparing Yourself to Others:** Everyone's journey is unique. Focus on your path and progress, rather than comparing yourself to others.
9. **Practice Self-Compassion:** Be kind to yourself and acknowledge that no one is perfect. Accept that making mistakes is a part of the learning process.
10. **Consider Professional Help:** If imposter syndrome significantly impacts your quality of life, consider seeking help from a psychologist or counselor who can provide strategies to manage these feelings.

Remember, overcoming imposter syndrome is a process, and it's okay to seek help along the way. By implementing these action items, you can start to shift your mindset and acknowledge your abilities.

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