



Success by Design

Move beyond the Imposter Syndrome

How the Imposter Syndrome impacts YOU!

When we're triggered into feeling we're not good enough, we unconsciously and instantly react to protect ourselves. We don't want to feel uncomfortable. We don't want others to see we're not good enough; to judge and reject us. So we react in two ways:

1. We believe we don't have the capabilities to do a great job, so we sign up for one more programme or read one more book to ensure we know what we need to be doing so this situation doesn't occur again.
2. We engage in coping behaviours designed to reduce vulnerability, increase control and take away the fear.

While it never hurts us to take on more knowledge, that is not where the problem lies. So, the worst that happens is that we use time and resources that could have been spent elsewhere.

However, when we engage in the coping behaviours, we can pay a significant price including lack of engagement, not putting ourselves forward for new opportunities, not asking for the salary we're worth and know others are getting. Not going after clients worried that we can't do a good enough job, or aren't any good at selling ourselves. We may not be engaged at work. We may pull back from leading effectively. We may procrastinate, worried that once something is produced and put out there to share with others, we will be subject to judgement and rejection.

It's the coping behaviours that can create a problem for us.

So, think back to a time when you felt that you weren't good enough. Perhaps you were in a meeting and someone simply talked over the top of you. Perhaps an idea you put forward was met with deadly silence. Maybe you have a manager who criticises you in public. Or it could be that someone in your team has more or better qualifications than you do.

Whatever the situation, immerse yourself in it just for the moment. Remember what happened, what was said or done and how you felt. See if you can get inside the experience to focus on your specific response. And ask yourself whether you behaved in any of the following ways:

- Withdrew so you were there in body but not in spirit. You no longer participated.
- Withheld what you really thought because it went against the majority or the most important person in the room
- Felt criticised and became defensive
- Took it personally and became prickly
- Put aside your thoughts, downplayed your talents so you could fit into the group
- Slipped under the radar, just wanting to get on with your work and not be noticed, judged and criticised.
- Became judgemental of others over the way they handled the situation
- Gave yourself a hard time for not handling it differently
- Thought to yourself 'what the hell, I'm going for it anyway' and then done precisely what you wanted to.

Make a note of your thoughts, feelings and specific response in as much detail as you recall.

This will make sense when we drill down into the Imposter Syndrome on the webinar.