Imposter Syndrome

Impostor Syndrome

Professionals in many fields including IT sometimes feel like they don't belong in their positions. They look at others they work with and feel like the other people are real professionals in the field and they are impostors and are not worthy of their positions. They feel like they got into their fields through luck or timing, and they are worried others will find out they are impostors. This is impostor syndrome. This reading will help you understand impostor syndrome and how to deal with it if you see it in yourself.

How do you know if you have Impostor Syndrome?

- You feel like all the success you have in your career came from luck, not learning skills and working hard.
- You are afraid someone will discover you are not qualified for your position. Once someone does, you will lose your position.
- You will be perceived as dishonest, and you won't be able to work in your field again.
- You feel like you need to put a lot of extra effort in to try to be worthy of the position.
- If you do something well and your team members or supervisors praise you, you feel you are not worthy of the praise.
- You sometimes don't try to reach for goals because you feel like they are unattainable goals.

How to deal with Impostor Syndrome

First, don't feel bad about yourself if you have Impostor Syndrome. Many professionals in your field share it with you. There are even Nobel Prize winners who have impostor syndrome. It's very common. You are not an impostor, though. You worked hard to get this far. Here are some ways to deal with impostor syndrome:

- Look at all you've done in the course and in your experiences. Keep a journal of all your accomplishments. Every time you think of another one, write it in the journal. Be sure to include your achievement of successfully completing this IT Support Specialist certificate. When you feel like an impostor, read through your journal and look at what you have already accomplished. Write down any new accomplishments in the journal as you make them.
- Become a teacher - teach someone about your field. Let them ask questions and answer those questions the best you can. You might find out you know a lot more about the field than you thought you did.
- Take out your accomplishment journal sometimes, read it, and celebrate your accomplishments. You can even reward yourself with something you really want and celebrate your success.
- Every time you doubt yourself, think about a real problem you solved or an important task you completed successfully on the job. Find something good you did that week. Maybe you were able to troubleshoot a problem others struggled with, and you solved the problem successfully. Acknowledge your accomplishments and you will find plenty of proof you are very worthy of your position, and you are a true professional in your field- not an impostor.

Taking risks

Once you have beat impostor syndrome and proven to yourself you are worthy of your position, you may fail in a task or on a project and feel like an impostor again, or a failure. Even the most well known professionals, scientists, inventors, and other innovators have failed, and they have failed often. Failure does not make you an impostor. Instead, by learning from your failures, you will become even better at what you do.

To move ahead in your career, sometimes you need to take risks. Here are some tips for dealing with risk:

- When you fail at something, learn from the failure. What went wrong, and how can you do it better next time?
- Examine each project or task carefully, and think about it succeeding. What is the outcome? It may take a few failed tries to get to that outcome, but if you never start, you will never achieve that outcome.
- Find others on the team who have done similar projects. Ask them for advice about how they worked on those projects. If the project fails, share what you learned with them and ask them for advice on how to avoid the same problem from happening again.

Safe identity workspaces

Safe identity workspaces are a recent development in workplace environments, and their design lets employees share their ideas freely. In these spaces, employees feel a strong sense of belonging. They feel like essential parts of the team, and are less likely to be intimidated. In your career, you may work in one of these environments, as many companies are moving toward them and away from traditional offices.

In a safe identity workplace, there is a leader, but the leader pays close attention to what the employees have to say and acts on their suggestions and ideas. In some of them, managers and supervisors are open to constructive criticism from the team. All team members in the workspace are treated as equals and encouraged to move forward in their careers.

Key takeaways

- Impostor Syndrome happens when a professional in a field feels unworthy of their position. People with impostor syndrome are scared someone will find out they are impostors and that they got their positions through luck and timing.
- You can fight impostor syndrome by beating self doubt and using your accomplishments to prove to yourself you are a worthy professional in your field
- Failure is always a possibility, but if you don't take risks, you won't move forward in your career. Learn from your failures.
- Safe identity workspaces are a recent development, and they provide a workspace where everyone is treated as an equal. This encourages creativity and helps employees experience their parts as important members of the team.

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