



The Consulting Team, LLC
Facilitating Positive Change

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Leadership Tips August 2021: Overcoming the Imposter Syndrome

Message from Dr. Marilyn Manning



Hi Friends,

In the past six months there have been many articles on the Imposter Syndrome, including in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Harvard Business Review*. A recent article from the Cleveland Clinic reminded us about a study from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that showed 7 out of 10 adults experience this syndrome at some point or another.

During the past two years of constant change in the business landscape, many of our clients have expressed feelings of self-doubt and a loss of confidence. What follows in this issue of Leadership Tips are steps we have recommended and have helped our clients in overcoming this syndrome.

Best,
Dr. Marilyn Manning

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P.S. Our new website was designed with you in mind: www.TheConsultingTeam.com.



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In this issue of *Leadership Tips*...

1. Article: Have you ever Doubted Yourself? 3 Tips for Overcoming the Imposter Syndrome
2. August 10 Zoom mini-training: *Making Powerful Agreements*, 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)

3. September 14 Zoom mini-training: [Putting Off Procrastination](#), 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)
4. Our new website's new on-line trainings: www.TheConsultingTeam.com



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Have You Ever Doubted Yourself?

3 Tips for Overcoming The Imposter Syndrome

What Is Imposter Syndrome?

Whenever you haven't felt confident, or over your head, did you immediately start doubting yourself? Have you ever been afraid that if you weren't careful (in a new job, presenting an unusual solution, acting like the expert, etc.), someone might find out that you don't know what you are doing? This sort of negative thinking can severely reduce your effectiveness.

These feelings of self-doubt are not unique to you. This phenomenon has a name: *Imposter Syndrome*. And it manifests in many ways. Luckily, it can be overcome with awareness and our 3-step approach explained in this article. It's prudent to replace feelings of doubt with self-confidence, a strong belief in yourself, and a vision of success.

How can you determine if you suffer from Imposter Syndrome? We invite you to read the next few paragraphs to elevate your self-awareness while you do a reality check.

Worthiness of Praise

Are you someone who consistently deflects compliments? For example, you may feel embarrassed when someone compliments your skills or an achievement, and bow your head, looking down or away. You may downplay praise publicly, deflecting it by saying 'it's no big deal.' These are typical reactions when one is experiencing the Imposter Syndrome.

Do you belong to the 'No Joy' Luck Club?

You may also be suffering from Imposter Syndrome if you think some of your achievements are just luck, and that you don't really deserve the credit. You can also feel like an imposter when you don't believe you are as skilled as others think you are. And it isn't just among entry level employees and new hires in their probationary

periods. Imposter Syndrome grips leaders at all levels, as well as public figures, professional athletes and celebrated entertainers.

Anxious about a Promotion?

Have you ever been promoted or given more responsibility and worried that you might not be good enough for the new position? This is another symptom. In this case, others feel that you are certainly deserving of the new assignment, but you may feel afraid of failure. Remember that you are being promoted because you ARE good enough. And everyone wants you to succeed — your managers, your peers, and most of all your direct reports. You are usually able to get more help than you need. Just ask for it.

Replacing Fear and Tension with Focus and Trust

Recall a time when you were asked to accept an assignment that you felt was a real stretch:

- Presenting bad news to your supervisor
- Forming a new team or department
- Launching a massive public outreach program as a new hire

When you accepted this stretch assignment, what were your initial feelings and sensations? Fear, anxiety, stress, racing pulse, breathlessness, or tension? These are all normal reactions when we think that we're out of our comfort zone.

Have A Conversation With Yourself

When you experience negative emotions and some physical tension, first have a talk with yourself. Ask: "What am I feeling right now?" That helps calm down negative emotions merely by admitting your feelings and especially by taking a moment to write them down.

Next, ask "What do I need right now?" Focusing, just for a moment, on your unmet needs can also calm down any negative emotions. You may need security, reassurance, respect, trust, empathy, or support. If appropriate, make a request of others such as: "I need support right now. Could you hear me out?"

Think of some challenging situations that could trigger some insecurities or anxiety. For example, you may be asked to:

- Give a presentation on a complex topic that's new to you
- Consult with a new industry where you have little expertise
- Take on a large project with high stakes and high visibility

In any of these situations, it's normal to feel a bit like an imposter. We've found that by reframing intimidating or stressful situations into personal growth opportunities, our clients have been able to deliver an excellent presentation, lead their project confidently, or make bold decisions without fear.

**Tap into Your Personal Power:
*Apply this 3-Step Approach for
Overcoming Imposter Syndrome***



When experiencing self-doubt, fears, or feelings of inferiority or insecurity, try these three steps to help you refocus your energy, reframe the situation, and tap into your personal power.

1

Claim your own successes and skills at a deep internal level.

When I'm asked to present a new topic, I focus on my presentation skills and my past successes. Then I do extensive research and preparation for the new topic, drawing on any related experiences I already have.

It is also helpful to make a list of your achievements and of things you are proud of. List your top three superpowers. What do you do that is unique and valued? Give yourself credit. Don't wait around for others to compliment you. Appreciating your own talents has to start from within, your internal locus of control.

2

Stop comparing yourself to others. Comparing leads to despairing.

Don't do it. If you're running a crucial meeting or delivering a presentation to an audience full of esteemed, accomplished colleagues, remind yourself that for this meeting or presentation you are the expert with valuable knowledge to share. Channel your passion, expertise, and experience to enrich your audience with

valuable information they need. See yourself as the solution to their problems.

Focus on how much you have learned and achieved in the last year or two. Give yourself credit for your professional growth and openness to learn. Keep a list handy of your accomplishments and review it regularly. At the end of each day, write down which of your achievements you are grateful for.

3

Talk things out with a trusted friend. Early in my consulting career,

I was asked to consult and facilitate a corporate-wide change initiative for General Electric. I was both excited and scared. It was not only a new industry for me, but a much higher profile assignment than I had ever had. By talking with my best friend, she reminded me that I had the appropriate skills and experience and that I was not an

imposter, as I was initially feeling. I was grateful for her reassurance and support which gave me the confidence to do a good job, gain some recognition, and get repeat business.

Expressing your doubts and negative feelings to a good friend can be a good release. However, once you vent, shift your attention to what actions you can take to be successful in an upcoming task that may be intimidating. Look for ways to reframe the situation from a fearful one to an opportunity to showcase your talent.

Turn Your Inventory into Your Story to Yourself

Following these three steps can will remove your doubts and fears. You will no longer possess Imposter Syndrome. Rather you will enhance your skills as an outstanding

professional.

Any time fears arise, remind yourself of all you've done, all your successes, the ceilings you've broken, the innovations you fostered, and the projects you managed to magnificence. Make this script part of your self-talk as you tackle newer and greater challenges this coming year and accept more and more responsibility. Remember, you're a champion!

Additional resources to help you topple Imposter Syndrome:

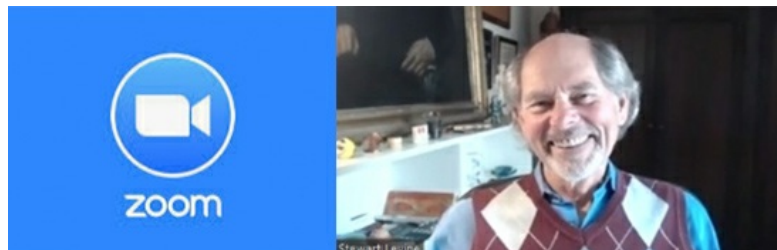
TRAINING to bolster your skills and confidence:

- [Crash Course for Supervisors](#)
- [Enhancing Your Executive Presence](#)
- [Credibility — How to Earn It, How to Earn It](#)
- [Presentation and Influencing Skills](#)
- [Creatively Managing Today's Constant Changes](#)
- [Creating a Culture of Trust](#)

COACHING to replace doubt with decisiveness and fears with focus.

Register for this free 30-min. online mini-training in mid-August

FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday August 10, 1PM: "Making Powerful Agreements"



Facilitated by Senior Associate Stewart Levine, J.D.

Attend this complimentary program to learn how agreements promote collaboration and prevent conflicts:

- Get tips on when to use agreements
- See how to craft powerful agreements

**Tuesday, August 10
1:00-1:30PM Pacific**

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

Click here to register for our free August 10 mini-training

Register for this free 30-min. online mini-training in mid-September

FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday September 14, 1PM: "Putting Off Procrastination"



Facilitated by Senior Associate Craig Harrison, CVP

What are you procrastinating about:

- Starting a writing assignment?
- Tackling a pesky project?
- Conducting a critical conversation?

Attend this program to learn why you do it, and what to do about it to be more productive and feel great about yourself.

**Tuesday, September 14
1:00-1:30PM Pacific**

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

[Click here to register for our free September 14 mini-training](#)

Our Team of Trainers, Facilitators, and Coaches



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Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about our online training, group and one-to-one virtual coaching, and consulting assistance for leaders and employees.

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