Mindset Techniques That Will Help You Overcome Imposter Syndrome

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If you find yourself frustrated by an (apparent) inability to see projects to fruition, procrastinating behavior or overwhelming feelings of inadequacy in the face of the achievements of others, you could well be suffering from imposter syndrome (IS).

Unlike chronic conditions like clinical depression or generalized anxiety disorder, IS is not recognized as a disorder. It is, however, very common. So it behooves us to properly identify and understand the symptoms if we are to overcome IS.

How best to define imposter syndrome?

The true nature of IS is an absence of objectivity, resulting in limiting beliefs and self-doubt. IS makes us compare ourselves to the achievements of others and construct a narrative that we are not similarly worthy.

This can, of course, work in the opposite direction, with an unrealistic appraisal of one’s abilities resulting in arrogance and unrealistic aims. This is called the Dunning-Kruger Effect and is similarly undesirable with the added kicker that sufferers don’t possess the humility to understand that they have an issue that needs addressing. But odds

are: If you're reading this, that isn't you.

If you find yourself in situations, especially business opportunities, where you engage in self-deprecation to avoid the feeling that you don't belong and feel like someone is inevitably going to discover your shortcomings, you are probably suffering from IS.

Related: Real Imposters Don't Experience Imposter Syndrome. Here's What That Means for You.

What can we do to overcome imposter syndrome?

I can't stress this enough: Don't judge yourself for having imposter syndrome. If the above definition of IS triggers a degree of recognition in you, and you think that you probably have sabotaged opportunities as a result in the past – try to stop your mind from diving down that rabbit warren of blame. Thinking about everything you've potentially lost as a result will do nothing but make things worse. You'll just be tagging past experience with emotional trauma, causing more self-doubt, overwhelm and inaction in the future.

A great way to avoid getting hung up on the past is to regularly engage in mindful practices that enable you to focus your attention on the present moment. Meditation is a great one, but there are others out there.

Once you can calm those subconscious thoughts by bringing your mind to the present, you will notice a shift in how you see your future. The present moment is all that is really "real" after all. You can only make new choices and create new future experiences from now. The past is gone and the present is yet to be determined. Don't project mistakes of the past onto your future by focusing on them in the present.

Related: How to Stop Imposter Syndrome From Killing Your Drive

Don’t let imposter syndrome cultivate FOMO

Tied in with imposter syndrome is the Fear of Missing Out (or FOMO).

FOMO is very common, and I’m sure you’ve probably felt it to one degree or another. For example, FOMO occurs when a contemporary or peer achieves something that we want to. In our more lucid, objective moments we might dismiss it as nothing more than jealousy, but it’s more than that.

Quite often we might be justified in feeling the weight of just how unfair it all is. But don’t fool yourself into thinking of life as a zero-sum game. It’s very easy to make the mistake of comparing stage one of your journey to stage 45 of someone else’s. The real takeaway from somebody else’s success should be a celebration that they have provided evidence that it is possible for you too.

Remember that you are likely a type-A person, and as such you have a proclivity for wanting things to happen now. What you’re missing is that the journey to success is a major part of it. Without the context of the journey, the outcome is unsustainable. That’s why around 70% of lottery winners go broke within five years.

You have to remind yourself, as you bring your mind back to the present moment, that you are exactly where you’re supposed to be right now. When you look back and connect the dots, everything makes sense when it comes to timing. All of the wins you’ve had as a result of your hard work and patience wouldn’t be what they are without that.

We see this in relationships as well. When we place so much emphasis on the need to meet someone and desperately want to find someone to fall in love with, it doesn’t happen (or worse: we end up with the wrong person, convincing ourselves

that they are right for us). If we simply trust that we are on our path and that we will meet the right person when we are ready, it will happen.

I mean think about it: Maybe you want to be on TV. Say you want to be presenter or news anchor, what would really happen if, for whatever reason, someone thrust the opportunity under your nose right now? If you were rushed through hair and makeup, thrown on set and told to read the teleprompter – how would you fare?

Yeah, didn't think so.

You can't avoid the time it takes for you to grow into the person you want to be. These goals you have for yourself are, by their very nature, to occur in the future. Trust in that and take solace in it – you are on your way. The opportunities will come when you are ready for them, so stay the course. Remember: There will be those who look at where you're at on your journey and feel the same way that you do about others. Try to see things as happening for you, in the same way that you might when looking back.

You have to view your life in the context of time. Instead of looking at others or worrying about your worth, bring yourself back to the present and remind yourself that you are exactly where you are meant to be on your journey. Seek council with others from a desire to understand the wider picture and your place in it.

Related: 10 Successful Leaders Share Their Struggles with Imposter Syndrome and How to Overcome It

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