

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

---

*How To Overcome It  
With the 21 Day Action  
Plan*





# A 21-DAY ACTION PLAN

In some cases, 21 days can be enough time to create a new habit. Whether you manage to develop any new habits or not over the next three weeks, you'll certainly create a lot of momentum and make some significant changes.

Thought and behavioral patterns won't change easily, but you created your current set of thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. You can create a new set that serves you better going forward.

## *Day 1*

The first step to ridding yourself of a challenge is to admit that you have a challenge. And the more motivated you are to rid yourself of it, the more likely you are to experience success.

- List all the ways Impostor Syndrome negatively impacts your life.
- List all the ways your life will be enhanced when you successfully overcome it.
- Write out a goal statement that you're going to stick with this 21-day process until it's complete.

## *Day 2*

Address the issue of your inner critic. Take notes for a full day during the workweek and for a full day on the weekend.

- Make a list of the things your inner critic says to you and note when you're likely to say these things to yourself.
- Develop an alternative that you can say to yourself instead and use it. For example: "If I fail at this, everyone will know I'm a fraud" could be rewritten as, "I'm going to focus on doing my best since that's all I can do. I am free of worrying about the opinions of others."

## *Day 3*

Set at least three goals that are made more challenging by Impostor Syndrome. These will likely be career or financial goals, but any type of goal will do.

- This will provide additional motivation for overcoming the challenge of Impostor Syndrome.

- It's important to have goals in general. Everyone needs goals.

### *Day 4*

List your greatest strengths. Think back to your earliest memories and work forward to today. What are some things that you do well? List things that you naturally do well, and things that you've learned to do well.

- If you have an exceptional level of knowledge in a specific area, list that as well.
- Talk to friends and family and get their input, too.

### *Day 5*

Visualize yourself free of any signs of Impostor Syndrome. Imagine yourself going through a normal day, free of any thoughts or behaviors related to Impostor Syndrome symptoms.

- Notice how good it feels.
- Imagine how great it would be to feel that way every day.

## *Day 6*

Go through your memories from earlier where you identified incidents from your childhood that contributed to your Impostor Syndrome. This time, however, imagine that you're an adult bystander witnessing the event. See the other person talking to the younger version of yourself.

- What would a reasonable adult conclude from that interaction?
- If you could address the younger version of yourself in private, what would you say to them?

## *Day 7*

Think about how you want to be remembered. What do you want to leave behind as your legacy?

- What do you want to accomplish?
- How do you want your children to remember their childhood?
- What do you want to experience?
- What are your long-term goals?

.....  
*"There are an awful lot of people out there who think I'm an expert. How do these people believe all this about me? I'm so much aware of all the things I don't know."*

- DR. CHAN, CHIEF OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
.....

## *Day 8*

Develop affirmations for the things you identified in Day 7. Set up a schedule to repeat them to yourself. You might want to record them and then play them on a loop.

## *Day 9*

List your greatest successes and how you contributed to those successes. Be fair with yourself. Ask a friend for help if necessary.

Before you go to bed, plan out tomorrow in detail. You're going to need this tomorrow.

## *Day 10*

Spend a day being as mindful as you possibly can. Take the plan you made last night and stick to it. As much as possible, avoid thinking about

anything beyond what you're doing in the moment. Whether you're taking a shower, driving, or writing a report, keep your mind on your task.

- Your mind will wander constantly. Without any emotion, just bring your attention back to the task at hand.
- You'll be amazed by how much your mind wanders off task. You'll also be amazed at how relaxing it is to live this way, once you gain some skill at focusing your attention.

## *Day 11*

Today is a day of gratitude. Start a gratitude journal and write in it each day. Noticing, and being thankful for, the positive people and things in your life can help to minimize Impostor Syndrome.

- Spend five minutes asking yourself what you're thankful for and write down the answers you receive.

## *Day 12*



How well do you handle compliments? Let's find out!

Today, notice how you respond to compliments. What do you think? What do you say? What do your reactions suggest?

- To give yourself the best opportunity to receive compliments, make an effort to look your best. Dress up a little. Spend some extra time on your grooming today.

## *Day 13*

Unleash yourself at work today.

Pick one thing you've been holding back on at work because of Impostor Syndrome. Allow yourself one day to be free of concern and just do things the way you know they should be done. Notice how you feel at the end of the day. Notice everyone else's reaction.

- You'll likely find that you feel great and everyone else is the same as usual. Everyone is too busy to be overly concerned with you.

## *Day 14*

See if your diet is affecting your thoughts and mood.

There seems to be more evidence every day that diet can greatly impact a person's mood, thoughts, and general outlook on life. Let's do an experiment for three days.

- Cut out all processed foods. This includes everything that didn't grow in the ground or in the ocean, come from a tree, or have eyes. So, meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, and nuts are fair game. Leave everything else alone for three days.
- Limit your beverage intake to water. You can have coffee or tea if you have a caffeine issue. It will be hard to determine the impact of your dietary changes if you're also battling caffeine withdrawal.
- Before you get started, rate yourself on a 1-10 scale on the following attributes: Anxiety, Focus, Sleep Quality, Energy, General Happiness. After the three days are up, rate yourself again.
- What did you learn?

---

*"Impostor syndrome, or feeling like a fraud at work, at home, or anywhere else in your life, will probably affect you at some point."*

- CAROLINE GHOSN

---

### *Day 15*

Find someone to mentor. This can be in any capacity. You could help a high school student with algebra, teach someone to play the guitar, or mentor someone at work. Show yourself that you have valuable information to share that not everyone else in the world knows.

### *Day 16*

Reach out and find a mentor for yourself today. Those with Impostor Syndrome are filled with self-doubt. Get the reassurance that a mentor provides. You might not trust yourself to make a good choice, but you can feel more confident if a mentor agrees with you.

- Your mentor must be someone that you respect. It must also be someone that has the necessary expertise to help you.

- Be clear that you want to make recommendations on courses of action and receive feedback for your choices. Allowing your mentor to call all of the shots won't help you with your issues.

## *Day 17*

Embarrass yourself on purpose today!

Show yourself that embarrassing yourself isn't the end of the world. You could accomplish this in a variety of ways:

- Wear mismatched shoes to work.
- Spill a drink on your desk.
- Drop a stack of papers while walking down the hall.
- Burp out loud.
- If your work environment is truly too unforgiving, head to the local mall and make a fool out of yourself there. Wear something outrageous. Walk around and sing to yourself.

- You'll be surprised by how little others care.

## *Day 18*

Focus on providing value today. Make today about everyone else. Rather than worrying about yourself, put your attention on serving others.

- Serve your boss today in the best way possible.
- Serve your partner and children as best you can.
- Help your neighbors, coworkers, and strangers in any way you can.
- At the end of the day, contemplate what you learned.

## *Day 19*

Write your eulogy. You're going to do this twice.

- First, write a eulogy that someone close to you might actually write.
- Second, write a eulogy that you hope someone will be able to accurately write about you.
- How do you move your life from the first eulogy to the second? What changes do

you want to make in your life?

- This also reinforces the idea that your lifetime is limited. There's no time to worry about silly things.

## *Day 20*

Review your weaknesses. As someone with Impostor Syndrome, you might initially believe that you have a ton of weaknesses. Let's just see if that's true.

- Make a list of your weaknesses.
- Now, go back through your list and think about the evidence you have that it is actually a weakness that you possess. If you can't prove it, mark it off.
- Now, find a trusted friend and ask them if they agree with the list.
- With the items that remain, ask yourself if they negatively impact your life. If not, why worry? If they do, come up with a plan to address them or work around them.

You're not as weak as you thought!

## *Day 21*

Keep a journal.

At the end of each day, make a note of all the things you accomplished that day. Write about the times you felt like an impostor. Also, write about the times you felt good.

- What triggered the positive feelings you experienced?
- What triggered the impostor feelings?

# MOVING FORWARD

Celebrate completing this action plan by doing something nice for yourself. Few people manage to stick with anything for three days, and you lasted three weeks!

Keep up the momentum you've created by choosing tasks for yourself to complete for another week.