

# Are you suffering from imposter syndrome?

Do you ever feel like you got your job as a result of pure luck? That it wasn't the result of any skill or hard work, and that you've been fooling your coworkers? And do you worry that someone's going to unmask you as a fraud?

You may be suffering from imposter syndrome.

This phenomenon was coined by psychologist Pauline Clance in 1985 and plagues many people to this day, making us feel like imposters in our own jobs. It's also often a key factor that holds many of us back from achieving our full potential in our careers.

"Imposter syndrome isn't actually a syndrome or a clinical diagnosis, but rather a largely universal fear of not being good enough," says Sabina Read, SEEK's Resident Psychologist.

If this sounds like you, don't be alarmed. Not only are you not alone in feeling this way, but there are things you can do to overcome it. But first, you need to familiarise yourself with the phenomenon.

## **Why do we get imposter syndrome?**

"Often we fall into a cycle of working hard, being super diligent, or utilising traits such as charm or empathy, all of which tend to bring positive results," Read explains.

But with imposter syndrome, we see success as a result of luck, not hard work, and then we feel like a fraud. We worry we might not be able to have the same success again, Read says, "So we work even harder, to avoid being seen as a fraud. And before we know it, we're on the imposter syndrome treadmill, and we can't get off!"

## **How can imposter syndrome negatively impact your career?**

"Unfortunately, imposter syndrome can impact our careers in numerous negative ways," says Read, "Including preventing us from applying for a new job, leading us to become workaholics in an attempt to avoid failure, and trying to please everyone, often

at the cost of our own well-being.”

If you think you may be suffering from imposter syndrome, learn to nip it in the bud with our tips, below.

### **How to overcome imposter syndrome**

- **Recognise it when you see it.** If you have that nagging feeling that you’re not good enough, you first need to acknowledge it. “It’s important to name it so we can tame it!” Read explains.
- **Focus on the positive.** Try to stop doubting yourself and your abilities. “Look at the correlation between actual positive behaviour and positive outcomes, rather than searching for self-doubt or where there may be gaps.” Remember what you have achieved.
- **Don’t minimise your success.** You may be tempted to chalk up any achievements to luck, or call it a fluke. Don’t! Read says, “I’m always quick to politely interrupt someone when they attribute pure luck to their success. Even those with a healthy dose of luck usually possess many genuine skills to create positive outcomes.”
- **Acknowledge your accomplishments.** “There may be plenty of things you don’t know, but shine the light on what you have done well, and challenge the negative or black and white thoughts that hijack you,” Read advises.

In other words, own your achievements, accept compliments, and celebrate when you do well, and you will be well on your way to overcoming imposter syndrome.