

Lesson 1 Discover Who You Are

You Are Good Enough

Maya Angelou, a famous American poet and civil rights activist, once admitted, "I have written 11 books, but each time I publish my book, I think, 'Oh, I've fooled everyone again. They're going to find out soon.'" Likewise, Albert Einstein, a world-renowned physicist, confessed a similar feeling, describing himself as an "involuntary fraud." Even with the tremendous talents that Angelou and Einstein possessed, they had difficulty justifying the recognition they received. Feeling like them is a widely shared experience. The following message is from one of our magazine subscribers.

Lee Jisoo @happy_ jisoo

Hello, I'm a second-year high school student. Many people around me acknowledge my hard work, but I'm not confident in my abilities. Even though I've been earning good grades in school, I don't feel that I deserve any recognition for my success. In fact, the better I do, the more inadequate I feel. I'm afraid that others will discover I'm less intelligent than they assume. I'm reaching out for your help on this.

Thank you.

#HelpNeeded #ConcernedAboutMe #HighSchool

Why do so many of us struggle to shake the feeling that we haven't earned our accomplishments? A possible explanation is a phenomenon known as "impostor syndrome." It is a psychological state that causes individuals to doubt their success and feel like a fraud with a persistent fear of being "found out." Impostor syndrome was first identified by psychologists Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978. The concept was based on the observations of high-achieving women. Further research, however, has found that impostor syndrome is shared across all ranges of social and economic status regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity. To call it a syndrome is to downplay how universally it affects people.

Psychologists estimate that 70% of people will experience impostor syndrome at some point in their lives.

Do You Feel Like an Impostor? Test Yourself.

Read the following statements and rate how accurately each one describes you.

(1=Not at all true 2=Rarely true 3=Sometimes true
4=Often true 5=Always true)

1. I feel my success has been due to some luck.
2. I'm disappointed in my present accomplishments, and I think I should have achieved much more.
3. I'm afraid others will discover I lack the knowledge or ability to be successful.
4. I'm afraid that I may fail at a new undertaking, even though I generally do well at what I attempt.
5. I find it hard to accept praise for my intelligence and accomplishments.
6. I'm afraid people may discover I'm less capable than they think.
7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I haven't done my best.
8. I'm afraid of the evaluations of others, and I try to avoid them.
9. I believe my success has happened accidentally and not due to my own efforts.
10. I've succeeded at something, but I doubt I can repeat that success.

Total Score

If your score is

- 10 to 20, you have few signs of impostor syndrome.
- 21 to 30, you have some signs of impostor syndrome.
- 31 to 40, you have apparent signs of impostor syndrome.
- 41 to 50, you have many signs of impostor syndrome.

What Happens When We Are Trapped by Impostor Syndrome

When we experience impostor syndrome, we fail to attribute our accomplishments to something internal, such as our talent or ability. Instead, we give credit to external factors, such as luck. By distancing ourselves from our successes, we deny ourselves the support we need in order to thrive. Research has identified many of the self-defeating behaviors that feature in impostor syndrome. For example, people with impostor syndrome tend to expect poor exam grades even when they perform brilliantly. In addition, they usually overestimate the number of mistakes they make on their exams. These beliefs cause us to doubt ourselves and struggle at the worst possible moments, which will lead us to underperform at what we usually do best and love most. Some might argue that the self-doubt or uncertainty from impostor syndrome can protect us against overestimating our abilities. Despite this, impostor syndrome can lead to eventual failure if left unchecked.

You Can Combat Impostor Syndrome

First, start a conversation. You can quiet your inner critic by discussing what's happening in your mind. Sharing your impostor feelings can reduce loneliness and open doors for others to tell you what they see in you. Next, celebrate your success. We often get so focused on the outcomes of our work that we brush off praise and only remember the criticism. The next time someone starts to sing your praises, allow yourself to appreciate it. Finally, let go of perfectionism. While it can be helpful in specific contexts, aspiring to perfection is more often counterproductive. Instead, see failures as opportunities to learn and grow, and it will ultimately move you toward the success you seek. Most people experience moments of doubt, and that's normal. The important part is not to let that doubt control your actions. Don't forget these simple truths: You're not alone, you're talented, and you're capable.

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Working as a Team

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. While collaboration is essential for tackling large and important projects in or out of school, it's not always easy to work with others. Let's look at two common questions about how to excel as a team.

How can we come up with new ideas together?

Hold a brainstorming session! Suppose you are having a session about building an ecotown. First of all, inform the members about the problem to be solved, such as developing a public transportation plan for the ecotown. Let everybody know the conditions for the solution, like being eco-friendly and noise-free. Then, encourage all members to contribute without judgment and document every idea. Next, identify characteristics of an ideal solution and evaluate proposals accordingly. Lastly, vote as a team to choose the best solution.

How can everyone be heard during a discussion?

First, prepare a list of topics you want to discuss in advance and encourage others to share their ideas.

Appoint someone to keep track of the list to ensure all points are covered.

Additionally, designate another person to monitor the time and provide updates when the halfway mark is reached, when a quarter of the time remains, and when the time is almost up.

Most importantly, avoid interrupting others by using a talking piece, such as a marker or key chain, which can be passed around the group. The individual holding the object will have the exclusive right to speak, which fosters a respectful and disciplined atmosphere during heated moments.