



Mastering Imposter Syndrome

INTERNALIZING
YOUR STRENGTHS
AND SKILLS WITH
THE 555 TOOL

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USING THE *555 TOOL*

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his is a tool I've used many times working with clients who suffer from being unable to connect to and accept their own strengths. It's particularly helpful for addressing Imposter Syndrome.



If you suffer from imposter syndrome it's likely you have some or all of the the following symptoms

- a sense of being a fraud
- fear of being discovered
- difficulty internalizing your achievements and skills

Having a level of self-doubt can help a person assess their achievements and ability accurately, but too much self-doubt can adversely impact a person's self-image and the consequences can impact negatively on your performance your potential and your mental health

Perfectionism is a common element of imposter syndrome but the success that can come from doing the job well can create a cycle of self-doubt for people with impostor syndrome. Even when the person achieves an important milestone, they may be unable to recognise or acknowledge their accomplishments because there's always that feeling that it's somehow not enough or it could have been done better.





So an important cognitive step in dealing with Imposter Syndrome is to be able to see yourself objectively – all the positives that will help you to build rather than allowing your inner critic to mistakenly defend you by dismissing or belittling your achievements.

The 555 tool will help you to internalise your strengths by asking for and accepting explicitly positive feedback. It works like this:

Think of 5 people whose opinions you respect and trust and give them the short questionnaire below with 5 questions on it. The activity should take around 5 minutes.

It works best if you can ask your 5 people to read out their answers to you verbally rather than doing it by e-mail (although that's still beneficial). The real power of this exercise comes from hearing and responding in the moment.

As they read out each of the answers, ask them to pause for a moment until you nod for them to go on.

During that pause, repeat what they've said in the first person in your head. For example, if the person says "I think your greatest strength is your ability to deal with customers. You never let them leave an interaction without a resolution", you would say to yourself. "My greatest strength is my ability to deal with customers and I never let them leave an interaction without a resolution".

Ask supplementary questions if you need to but always listening to the positive comments and just nod and accept the comments. Afterwards thank them very much.



Template for the 555 Questionnaire

Below are 5 questions I'd like you to answer based on your perception of me. I've chosen you as one of 5 people whose opinions I trust, value and respect. I'd like you to be honest. This will probably take about 5 minutes of your time and I'd like you to write down your answers first. Then, when you're ready, I'd like you to tell me what you've written, one section at a time.

Thank you!

1. What one word or phrase describes me best?

2. What do you think is my greatest achievement?

3. What do you value most about me?

4. What one thing could I change for my own benefit?

5. What do you believe is my greatest strength?



Next steps...

Remember this is supposed to stretch you so be courageous! After you've gathered all the feedback, try acknowledging what you've heard with others and saying things out loud.

If someone gives you a compliment practice just smiling and saying thank you.

Acknowledging your strengths is like a muscle and the more you do it, the stronger it gets. At some point you'll find you are beginning to feel this might be true. In time you'll come to fully internalize your true and genuine achievements.

*Warmly,
Mandy*

