

DITCHING IMPOSTER SYNDROME

HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION IN YOUR ORGANISATION



Clare Josa
AUTHOR & KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Got Questions?

Email hello@clarejosa.com

or visit www.ClareJosa.com/call/
to book a time to discuss with
Clare how she might be able to
help you or your organisation.

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A MESSAGE FROM CLARE

Thank you so much for being interested in tackling Imposter Syndrome in your organisation.

In this guide, I have included some of the main background information you will need, to be able to talk about Imposter Syndrome, plus questions you can ask at a team level and with your leadership teams, to start creating your organisation's Imposter Syndrome Action Plan

One of the biggest blocks to clearing Imposter Syndrome is the myth that it's incurable - it isn't; it's just that people have been trying classic coaching or mindset tools, and they don't work for Imposter Syndrome.

Then we get to the elephant-in-the-room of '*but people have succeeded in the past, despite having Imposter Syndrome!*' And that's true. But it was a more difficult path, and often came at great personal cost.

The 2019 Imposter Syndrome Research Study proves what those who struggle with Imposter Syndrome know from personal experience:

It can have a huge impact on our performance, our productivity, emotional wellbeing and mental health. It's the 'final frontier' of personal development, hitting outwardly confident people the hardest.

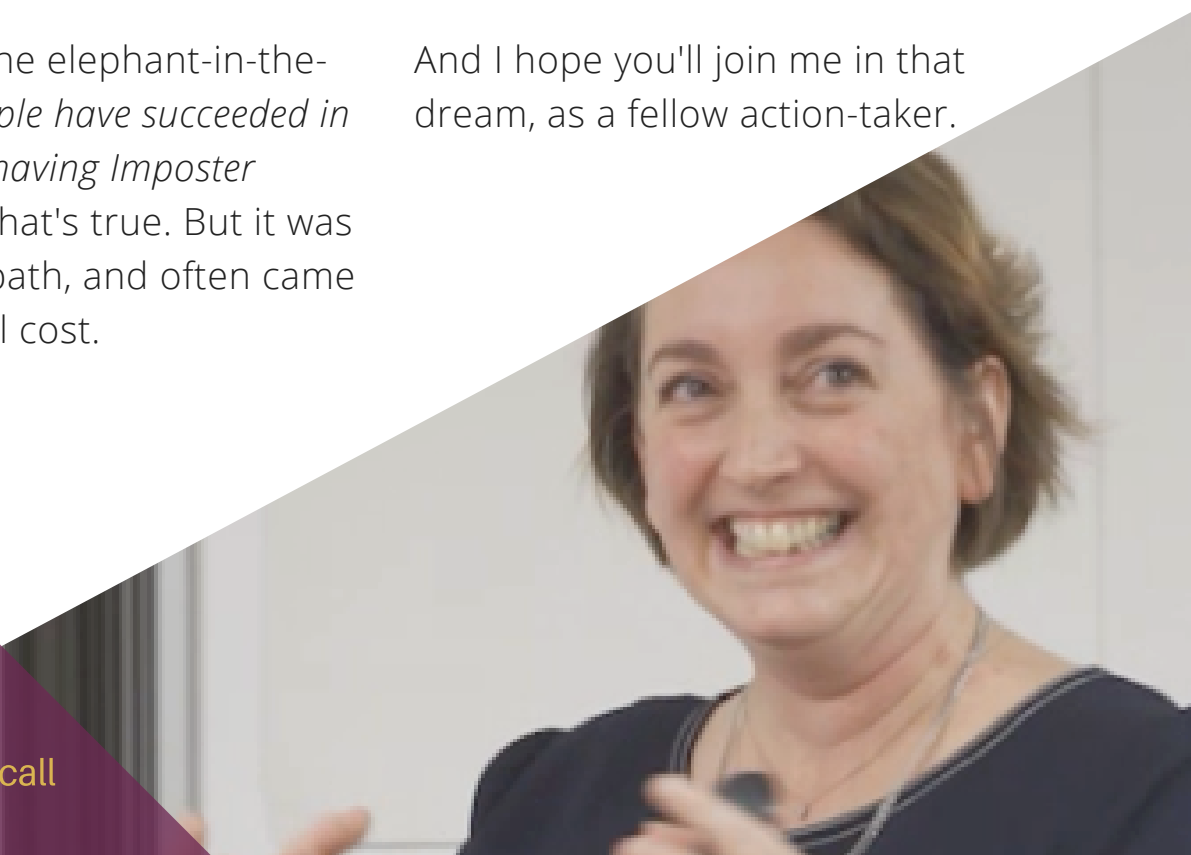
I dream of co-creating a world where people don't have to lie awake at 3am, worrying that someone might 'find out they're not good enough', or self-sabotaging their true potential, for fear of failure and rejection.

And I hope you'll join me in that dream, as a fellow action-taker.

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WHAT IS IMPOSTER SYNDROME?

It's more than self-doubt in a spiky suit.

Imposter Syndrome is the secret fear of others finding out we're '*not good enough*' or '*a fraud*', **despite the outside world thinking we're confident and successful.**

Those who struggle with it work hard to hide it from others.

Their secret 3am self-talk is filled with worries that others will '*find out I don't belong*' or '*realise they made a mistake giving me this role*' or will '*figure out I'm faking it*'.

This can lead to increased stress and anxiety, and reduced performance, especially at a transition in a job role or at the start of a project that feels like a stretch.

Imposter Syndrome is the gap between who we see ourselves as being and who we think we need to be, to achieve our goals.

I call this 'The Imposter Syndrome Gap'. It can feel like a ravine, over which we have to build the 'bridge of coping strategies', in order to achieve our goals on the other side.

But that bridge can feel rickety and the ravine can look deep, so people hold back from crossing it, and subconsciously self-sabotage in order to stay safe.

People often try mindset-work to deal with Imposter Syndrome, which doesn't work, because it's a much deeper issue than that. So people put up with it and 'push on through', even though that can mean they don't fulfil their potential and can trigger anxiety and mental health issues.



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KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

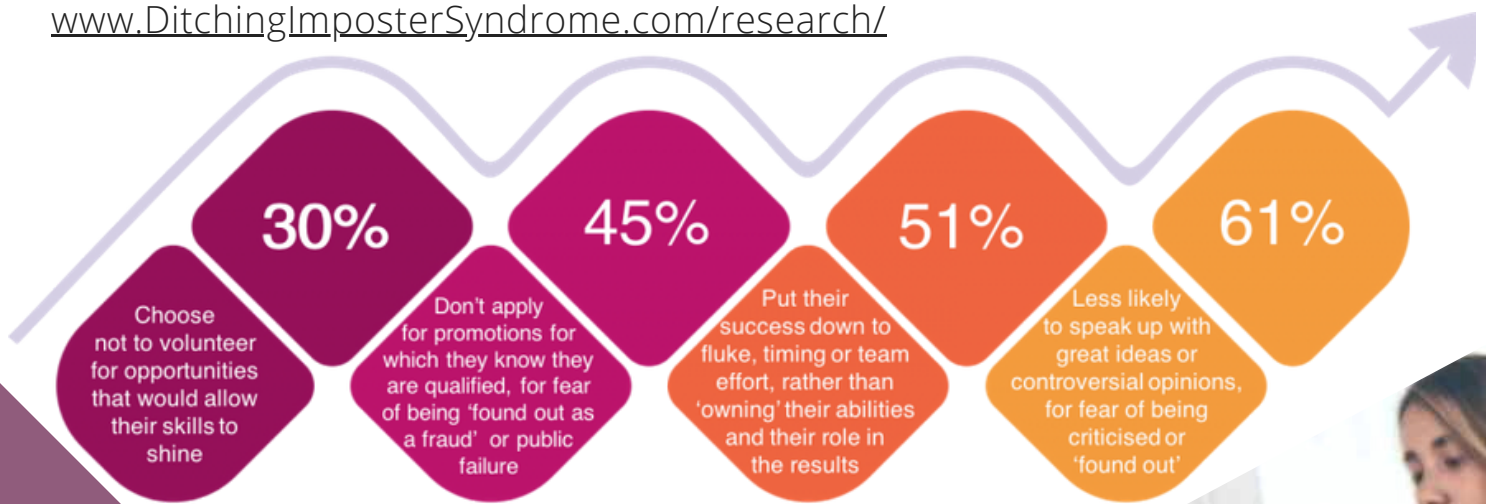
Although incidence rates are similar for male and female respondents, the way they handle it is very different. And this disproportionately disadvantages women.



Male respondents tended to 'push on through' - leading to stress and anxiety down the line. Whereas female respondents tended to take actions that subconsciously sabotaged their success, waiting until they felt 'ready' before applying for promotions.

Imposter Syndrome was found to be one of three hidden drivers of the gender pay gap. Research white paper with more details:

www.DitchingImposterSyndrome.com/research/



And 37% of female respondents said they hadn't asked for a pay rise or promotion they knew they deserved, in the past year.

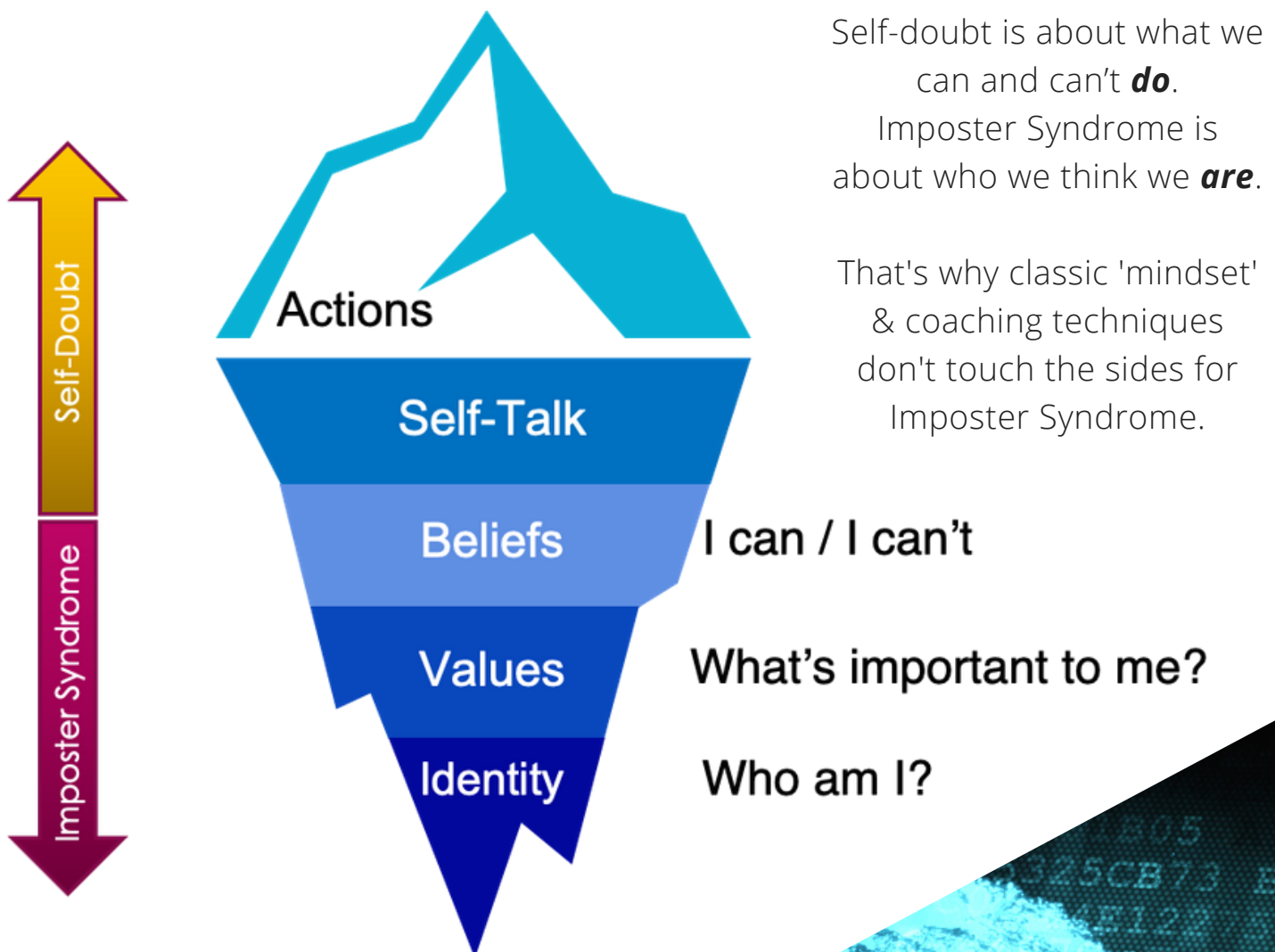
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IMPOSTER SYNDROME ICEBERG

Imposter Syndrome isn't a mindset issue. It's an identity-level problem.



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AUTHOR & KEYNOTE SPEAKER

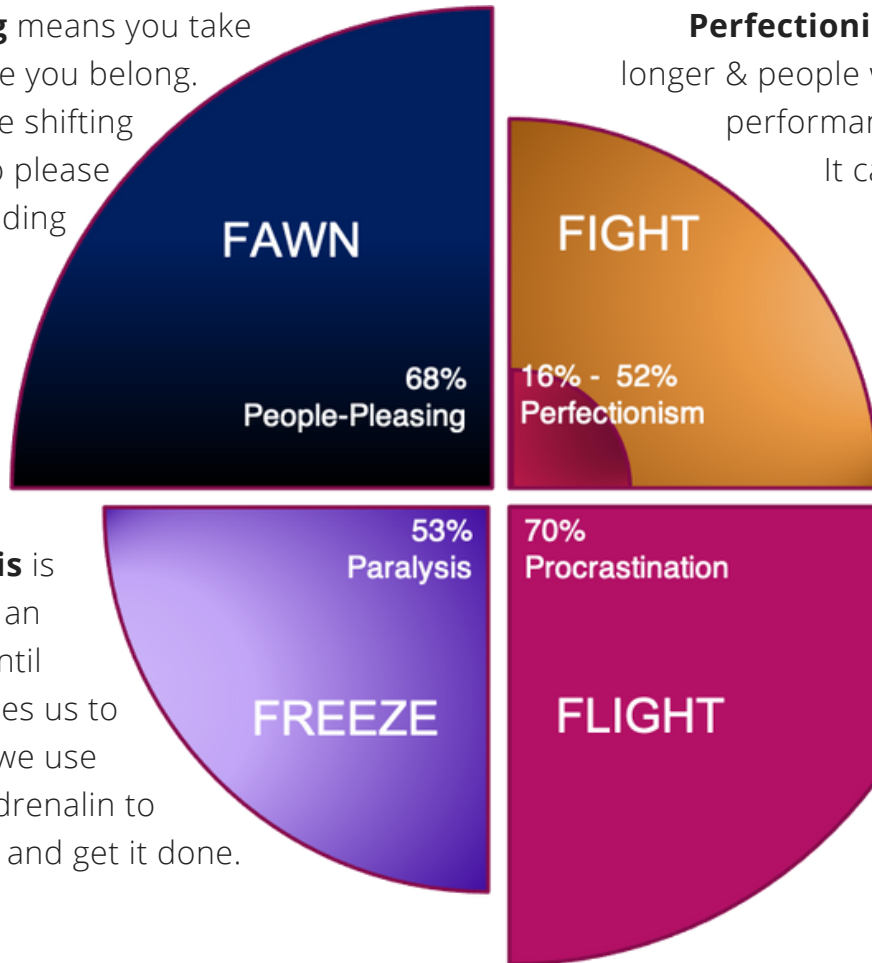
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4 PS OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Perfectionism. Procrastination. Project Paralysis. People-Pleasing.

People-pleasing means you take actions to feel like you belong. These can include shifting your priorities, to please others, or pretending to be someone you're not.



Perfectionism means projects take longer & people work overtime, reducing performance and risking burnout. It can also turn a rising star into a micro-managing bully-boss, as they pass on their fear-based perfectionism to their team.

Project paralysis is where we ignore an important goal until the deadline forces us to take action, and we use the fear-based adrenalin to push on through and get it done.

Procrastination means we fill our time with 'busyness' and tasks that are like dancing around the one we're avoiding.

The 4 Ps are a way of measuring the impact of Imposter Syndrome. You're looking for changes in these warning signs, if a member of your team is struggling with the 4 Ps.

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THE COST TO COMPANIES

Imposter Syndrome affects **productivity**, because the 4 Ps (page 7) mean tasks take longer and are delayed.

It affects **performance**, because one of the stress-responses for Imposter Syndrome is holding back with your best ideas. This impacts creativity and innovation, within the wider company. The subconscious self-sabotage behaviours that accompany Imposter Syndrome can have a knock-on effect for company goals.

It affects **people**, because you won't be getting the best from team members who are struggling with Imposter Syndrome and you will be missing out on some of your best performers, who will hold back from applying for leadership roles. Perfectionism can turn a former rising star into a micro-managing bully-boss, which can create a toxic working environment that causes your best employees to leave.

And the reduced productivity, performance, innovation, creativity, and potential toxic working environments can have a negative impact on **profit**.

This is why it is so vitally important that companies implement strategies to help spot who is secretly struggling, and have appropriate training - in-house and externally - to support them in clearing out Imposter Syndrome.



WHY WE NEED TO GO BEYOND COPING STRATEGIES

Back on page 4 we looked at how we use the 'bridge of coping strategies' to get across that ravine - the Imposter Syndrome Gap, to achieve our goals.

However, the problem with coping strategies is that they're like sticky plasters (Band Aids) - eventually they fall off.

And whilst Emergency Quick Fix strategies like my ABC process can stop an attack of Imposter Syndrome in under sixty seconds, it won't stop us from subconsciously self-sabotaging.

So it's important to work on both 'quick fixes', for those moments when you are about to walk into a meeting or pitch a client, as well as long-term solutions, to finally set yourself free from Imposter Syndrome.

The reason why most people believe that Imposter Syndrome is inevitable and incurable is because they didn't have the tools to make it a thing of the past.

With the right strategies and support, it is possible to clear Imposter Syndrome in under ninety days. And by working at the deeper 'identity' level, it means you're making yourself Imposter-Syndrome-proof in the future, too.

So you no longer have to live in fear of it coming back, the next time you stretch a comfort zone.

It makes you naturally resilient, improves your performance, and helps companies and their teams to thrive.



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QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK

The first step to clearing Imposter Syndrome in an organisation is to remove the stigma.

People who struggle with it work hard to hide it, because they are scared of being judged, missing out on opportunities, or even being fired, if they open up.

So holding an in-house event to talk about Imposter Syndrome can be really powerful, especially if that event is for both men and women, so it doesn't accidentally perpetuate the myth that it's just a 'girl thing'.

Having a speaker to explain what Imposter Syndrome is - and what it isn't - is a great way to start, followed by an in-house panel discussion with leaders talking about how Imposter Syndrome has affected them and why it's so important to do something about it. Please include men in this line-up!

Here are some useful questions you can ask, either in a team meeting, or in a more formal panel discussion:

- How has Imposter Syndrome affected you?
- What did you do to overcome it?
- How do you see it affecting the wider company?
- What do you think might support people to move beyond 'coping strategies', to finally clear Imposter Syndrome out?
- What can we do, as an organisation and as individuals, to support ourselves and others in ditching Imposter Syndrome?

TAKING CONCRETE ACTION

Major events, like the one run by Women In Cyber from Deloitte, are incredibly important for raising awareness of Imposter Syndrome and removing the stigma around it.

But they're just the first step.

What really makes the difference are the actions we take *after* such an event.

What can you do, for yourself, to get support on ditching Imposter Syndrome? How can you support your team members? And what could your organisation do?

With the right strategies, people can set themselves free from Imposter Syndrome, once and for all, in as little as ninety days.

But that means we need to take inspired action.

So here are some questions you can ask, to help your organisation to get active on ditching Imposter Syndrome:

- How do we see Imposter Syndrome affecting our organisation?
- What is it costing us, in terms of people, performance, productivity and profit?
- What role could it be playing in the gender / BAME equality gap?
- What resources do we already have in house, to support this? What external support might we need?
- How serious are we about getting the training and support our teams need, to ditch Imposter Syndrome?

HOW CLARE JOSA CAN HELP

"Changing the world isn't so much about what you do, as about who you allow yourself to become."

Since 2003, Clare has specialised in helping business leaders to finally clear the secret self-sabotage thoughts and behaviours caused by Imposter Syndrome... along with other self-imposed glass ceilings.

Prior to that, she held a range of corporate roles, including being Head of Market Research for one of the world's most disruptive brands.

An expert in the neuroscience and psychology of performance, her original background as an engineer means her inspirational approach is grounded in common sense, helping you to create breakthroughs in minutes, not months.

To book a call with Clare go to:
www.ClareJosa.com/call/

