

THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME HANDBOOK

A guide for Executives & Leaders to
succeed in the workplace with
more confidence and ease

RAGHAV PARKASH

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If you have any questions about the eBook or related to Imposter Syndrome or coaching, please email us at raghav@raghavparkash.com

or visit www.raghavparkash.com to arrange a time to speak with Raghav and find out how he can assist your leaders &/or your organisation

An Introduction from Raghav

Dear Reader,

It's a pleasure to be sharing this E-book with you and thank you for your interest and downloading it.

Imposter Syndrome is a subject close to my heart having gone through and struggled with it myself many years ago. It is also such a prevalent and important conversation as the latest research shows that 70% of people will experience IS through their career I argue this number is even more based on my own research.

I share this guide with you today, not from a place of someone who has never had Imposter Syndrome or as if I've luckily always been a natural high performer, expert or someone who has always been brimming with confidence and conviction (if there ever are such people that's another conversation).

After spending the last 9 years studying the field of human potential, my passion as an Executive & Life Coach is helping Leaders in business achieve high performance in their work and navigate the challenges or those 'handbrakes' to their success that hold them back, one of them being Imposter Syndrome.

Imposter Syndrome can be a tricky conversation to understand, especially with the amount of misinformation & myths online. That's why my main goal through this e-book is to help you gain more clarity on:

1. What Imposter Syndrome actually is along with its symptoms, while busting common myths shared online
2. The Impact Imposter Syndrome has on performance & business
3. How you can navigate Imposter Syndrome yourself with more ease and help others to do the same

My intention is that this book serves you powerfully for your current role & business and I hope I have the pleasure of meeting you in person some time.

If you have any questions or would like to apply for my personal 1-2-1 coaching, visit www.raghavparkash.com

My best wishes and here is to you,

RAGHAV PARKASH

What is Imposter Syndrome?

Imposter Syndrome has fortunately become a conversation that many people today are talking about and rightly so.

The latest research shows that 70% of people will experience Imposter Syndrome through their career (I argue much more) and according to research conducted by LinkedIn, during the Covid climate alone, 52% of business leaders & C-Suite Executives struggled with Imposter Syndrome and questioned their ability to lead.

Imposter Syndrome is very prevalent and has a significant impact on business's, staff, wellbeing, performance and the working culture.

So what is it?

As someone who has personally struggled with Imposter Syndrome along with coaching thousands of people over the last 5 years and en-route to interview 300+ leaders as part of my upcoming book on Imposter Syndrome,

I've heard a range and variety of definitions from:

- Questioning yourself & asking WHO AM I to do this role? Am I the right person for it?
- Fear that prevents you from taking the right action and making progress
- Feeling worried that you are a fraud and will be found out

- Thinking you are not good enough
- Believing you have to be someone else
- Questioning whether you are deserving of success?
- Listening to the Invisible Voice in your head
- Feeling like you don't fit in
- Feeling you just are lucky to have achieved the level of success you have

I'm sure you can think of a few more that could be added to this list.

My personal favourite definition and how I would describe Imposter Syndrome from my own experience is that:

Imposter Syndrome occurs when you hold a belief that who you currently are is not who need to be. It's believing you need to be someone other than who you are to be doing the role, running the business or leading the teams that you are.

This then manifests as not feeling good enough, because you believe you (Insert First Name Surname) are not good enough as you currently stand.

Imposter Syndrome can be experienced in any environment and is not just linked to work such as starting a business or even becoming a parent.

It's why many people believe Imposter Syndrome is when you feel worried about being a fraud and that you'll be discovered one day.

This is not Imposter Syndrome, but a Symptom of Imposter Syndrome

We will be talking about Symptoms shortly but for now, Imposter Syndrome is a result of the misunderstandings we have around cause and effect.

As an example, if you believe you need to be someone else and you are not the right person for your existing or a new leadership role in your workplace

- Which is the Cause

Would you not then, as a by product feel concerned about being a fraud?

- Which is the Effect of believing there is a gap between who you are and who you need to be

or feeling like you don't fit in? Effect

Or feeling like you are just lucky? Effect

Or feeling anxious and stressed? Effect

Imposter Syndrome is purely believing who you are is not adequate and is short of who you need to become.

Everything that follows are the symptoms and effects.

The Symptoms of Imposter Syndrome

Although the research shows that 70% of people will experience Imposter Syndrome, I argue this is much more.

During one interview I was conducting for my book, I was speaking to a leader within the Healthcare sector. Let's call her Jane.

Jane said to me that she had spoken to several other leaders within the healthcare sector as part of some research she was conducting. One of the questions Jane asked the leaders at the time was whether they experienced Imposter Syndrome.

Some of the leaders said no but when they went home and googled what Imposter Syndrome was, they realised this was exactly what they were experiencing but they never had a word or term for it.

Although there isn't a mainstream awareness of Imposter Syndrome yet, it really is far more common of an unconscious experience than we realise.

Any research showing 70% of people experience Imposter Syndrome, doesn't take in to account the people who don't realise what Imposter Syndrome is or if they actually experience it.

How can you tell if you or your colleagues or members of your team experience Imposter Syndrome. Here are a few signs you can look out for in either yourself or others:

- Do you compare yourself to others often and feel others are better and more intelligent than you?
- Do you struggle to accept praise and receive compliments?
- Do you feel like you don't deserve your success or are just lucky?
- Is there a voice in your mind that says you are an Imposter and one day someone will find out/you will be discovered?
- Do you experience an anxious feeling of not being good enough?
- Are there moments you hold yourself back in your work/business e.g. from taking significant steps forward, going for a promotion, speaking up in meetings, taking risks, procrastinating over what you need to do?
- Do you find you take on too much work & burn out, believing that you constantly need to prove yourself that you're worthy of your salary?
- Do you believe you have succeeded by luck and just going off your gut instinct/you're winging it?
- Do you over-prepare, overwork or describe yourself as a perfectionist?
- Many people call you successful but you never understand what they are referring to?

How many of these points apply to you? It may help to make a note as we proceed through this guide.

Busting the Myths and Falsehoods

As I already mentioned above, Imposter Syndrome has really turned into a buzz word, which is unfortunately associated with an abundance of misinformation, myths and falsehoods.

Before I talk about the approach to address Imposter Syndrome, I want to start with the myths first as they often can exacerbate the experience of someone struggling with Imposter Syndrome and guide the individual in the wrong direction.

Myth 1.-Imposter Syndrome is a Syndrome & a problem to be fixed

Unfortunately the name 'Imposter Syndrome' itself does make us inadvertently build this up in to more of a mountain in our minds.

As part of my research, I like asking interviewees how they would describe Imposter Syndrome to a child (to make sure we focus not on the title but boiling our description down to the most basic explanation anyone can understand).

The responses all range from thoughts, feelings & emotions which are actually very human experiences we will all go through our entire lifetime and often not look to eradicate or avoid. It's the inevitable.

Also the research stating over 70% of people will experience Imposter Syndrome shows just how human, common and normal it is to experience Imposter thoughts.

I'm personally not a fan of the title 'Imposter Syndrome' and 90% of the people I have interviewed hold the same view. I go as far as saying, there is no such thing as Imposter Syndrome but only the thoughts & feelings we can experience in any moment.

Do you see/feel any difference between these two ?

1. Imposter Syndrome

2. Commonly Experienced Thoughts & Feelings

What difference do you notice and do you feel different when you think about 1 vs 2? What would change if you saw your experience in line with point 2?

Myth 2- We need to Cure Imposter Syndrome and Fix It

There is a statement I once shared with an audience in my seminars that landed particularly well with them.

"If you realise you are not broken, you'll see there is nothing to fix."

Having Imposter Syndrome is not a concern, nor is it a problem to be fixed or something we need to eradicate.

Imposter Syndrome is a human experience we have which requires us to ask better questions. To slow our thinking down, to bring presence to what we feel, to understand ourselves better or the people we work with who are struggling with it.

The less judgement and assumptions we have about Imposter Syndrome, the more open we can be to discovery & learning. This is what Carol Dweck calls a Growth Mindset in her book Mindset.

There is no way to eradicate Imposter Syndrome (Imposter Syndrome meaning the common thoughts and feelings over 70% of us experience) as we cannot eradicate any type of thinking entirely.

What people are often referring to when we say 'Navigating Imposter Syndrome' is how we can thrive, succeed, perform & experience greater fulfilment in spite of experiencing Imposter Syndrome.

This is a completely different conversation and what we are focused on through this guide.

Navigating Imposter Syndrome is like surfing. The aim isn't to eradicate the waves, the aim is to better see the nature of the waves and in turn, learning to surf them well which makes the game of life more fun.

From my own personal experience and the many clients I've coached and people I've interviewed who have struggled with Imposter Syndrome, all of them including me still experience Imposter thoughts today, but it's the learning to dis-engage from and spend less time listening to our Imposter thoughts or the voice in our head as many people call it.

It's building a greater comfort with the discomfort.

Myth 3: Imposter Syndrome affects women more

Not only is this statement completely inaccurate but it's also steeped in judgement and misinformation.

From the clients I've coached and research I've done, I have found that men experience Imposter Syndrome equally as women do but with one difference.

Women tend to seek help and speak out about their experiences more openly, whereas men tend to bury/bottle up their experiences and push on through their work/business & life.

I really relate to this myself as it's a cultural expectation many men place on themselves.

Consciously you may agree, but sub-consciously we believe we need to be role models, confident, successful, strong, powerful and more which then forces us to inadvertently project an image of who we need to be and caking over who we really are.

Not only is this unhealthy for our emotional wellbeing, but it further exacerbates Imposter Syndrome by us believing if having thoughts & emotions are weakness, we need to act as if we don't which is being less of ourselves. It reinforces Imposter Syndrome and a sense of Toxic Masculinity.

Furthermore, research by the National Science Foundation shows that on average we experience anything from **6,000-12,000** thoughts a day.

This statistic is gender neutral and very telling that our nature as people, as humans, as leaders, as parents, friends, family members, pizza lovers etc. is that we experience our thinking which we don't control or necessarily choose. We just experience the thoughts.

This is where Imposter Syndrome comes from for both men and women. The amount of time we spend in thoughts disguised as Imposter Syndrome and us not being good enough.

We try to fix the content of our thinking and to solve us being Imposters but we rarely question our thinking in the first place and whether any of it is true.

The Business Case for Addressing Imposter Syndrome

It can be very easy to think Imposter Syndrome is just a wellbeing or mental health related concern but it goes much further and deeper than that.

Imposter Syndrome is probably and single handedly one of the biggest factors that affects and impedes Business and Personnel Performance today.

From the countless coaching hours I've conducted with clients through to the workshops I've run and research I've conducted, here is an outline of the various areas that can be affected by Imposter Syndrome and I'm sure there are many other factors that exist beyond this list:

1. Procrastination and Overall Business & Staff Productivity
2. Personnel Performance & Decision Making
3. Staff Absenteeism
4. Staff Presenteeism
5. Talent Retention and losing high performers/high potentials from the workforce
6. Leadership/Executive challenges and conflicts
7. Mis-alignment of talent due to high potential candidates not putting themselves forward for leadership roles

- 8. Revenue & Profitability
- 9. Overall Mental Health & Wellbeing
- 10. Income & Gender Inequality
- 11. A Negative Impact on the Company Culture
- 12. A block on staff growth and development

Can you think of any other factors or implications? What's missing from this list.

The Way Forward

Following the points I've made in the previous section about busting the myths on Imposter Syndrome, here are some of the ideas I work with my clients on to help them do the following:

1. To understand Imposter Syndrome Better
2. To navigate it better

As I mentioned earlier, if we can bring greater understanding & presence to our experiences, we can navigate our experiences with more ease.

1. Embrace the Imposter Thoughts and Feelings

One of the biggest challenges I see around anything we can go through, struggle with or experience is often never the actual activity itself whether business, life, sport, uncertainty, resilience through to Imposter Syndrome.

In this sense, it's not Imposter Syndrome itself that causes the biggest obstacles, but what we think about Imposter Syndrome.

I was coaching a client once who was a very young, ambitious & an aspiring C-Suite Executive. Let's call him John.

During the session, John mentioned there were a couple of obstacles that were causing him to struggle with his performance at work.

As I dug deeper, John revealed that there were some thoughts/emotions that were very uncomfortable and getting in the way.

John then proceeded to tell me that:

- A. He shouldn't be going through these experiences
- B. It was wrong
- C. He shouldn't talk about it
- D. Let's move on and focus on something else

Do you see how loaded our own beliefs and thoughts can be about what we go through?

(See Image on Next Page)

For John, it seemed very alien that it was ok to have and sometimes come up against your own thoughts, feelings & emotions.

The only difference is that not everyone is talking openly about their emotions which is why it is so easy to feel it may just be you.

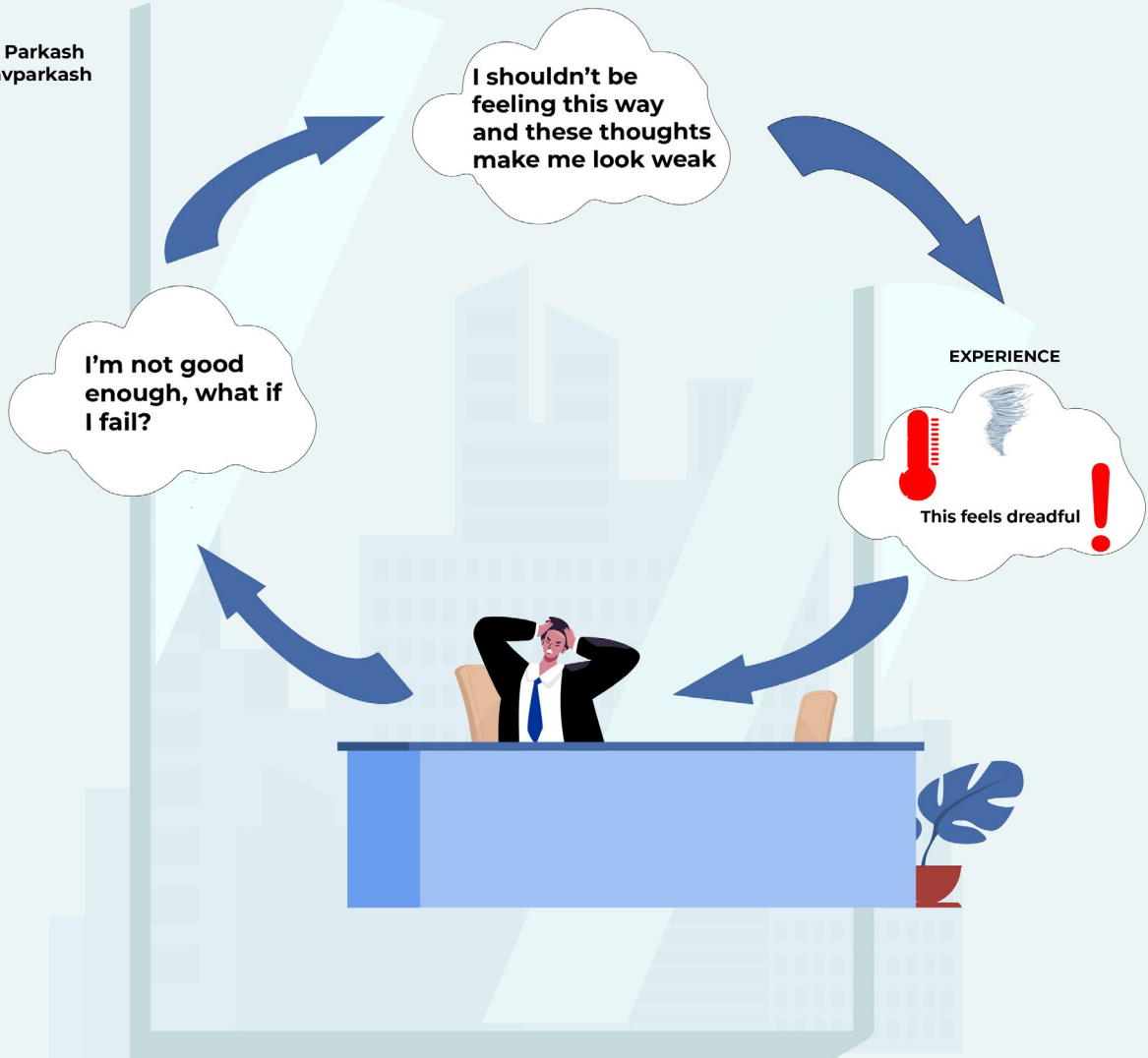
This was my experience anyway.

Here's a couple of reflection questions that I ask my clients:

Q. What if it's actually ok to feel the way you do?

Q. How might you show up differently to your work, life & business if it was ok and very normal, innocent and common to experience the thoughts/feelings you do?

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Client Case Study: David

(All clients actual names have been hidden for confidentiality purposes)

David had a senior position in his company and he came to me for coaching as he felt as if there was a handbrake on his success that was keeping him stuck and preventing him from moving forward.

It was frustrating for him as he couldn't figure out what was holding him back from feeling and performing at his best.

Through our sessions, David told me how he frequently would question himself and feel not good enough when dealing with other leaders in the organisation.

He would be overwhelmed by stress, fear & anxiety and at the same time, he found it very difficult to be himself at work.

The stress he experienced would affect his confidence, his ability to make decisions but also it stopped him from feeling good and having greater peace of mind.

Through our work together, David began feeling more confident & in control about his thoughts, feelings and emotions.

He found that he was less stressed & anxious about entering specific situations he previously felt nervous about but also, he experienced more confidence and it was the first time he felt completely himself in the workplace.

One of the great benefits of our work together was how much more productive and efficient with his time he became, as fear, anxiety or stress no longer impacted his performance. He started taking important, bold steps much more fearlessly towards his career vision, and stopped questioning himself and his capabilities.

David has now gone on to achieve key milestones in his work, trusting himself and his skillset so much more, while making a greater impact in the organisation he's part of.

2. Seeing Imposter Syndrome for what it is & why you don't need to fake it

One of my biggest bug bears and frustrations around the Imposter Syndrome conversation, so much to the point that I thought about making this a myth, is on the advice of 'Fake It Till You Make It' advice.

I can't stand this message at all for a number of reasons. Imagine you are someone who feels like an Imposter or a fraud or a fake, and you now have an expert telling you to 'fake it'. Do you see the conflict here?

Sure, I feel like an imposter/fake, why I don't fake it to fight feeling like a fraud by faking it which is also a really great way of trying to put out a fire with petrol. (I don't recommend this and please do not put petrol on a fire unless you want a massively uncontrollable fire).

As I mentioned earlier in the e-book, if you see you are not broken, you will realise there is nothing to fix.

This really does speak to Imposter Syndrome and there is a difference between understanding & working with v.s. fixing. What helps further, is seeing Imposter Syndrome for what it is.

Ask yourself this question, how would I explain Imposter Syndrome to a 5 year old? **Spend 5-15 minutes journaling on this right now.**

Why I love this exercise is because:

1. We put the title Imposter Syndrome to the side for a second which is often loaded with our own thoughts, beliefs and perceptions.
2. We begin to make things even simpler by getting rid of the Imposter Syndrome title and asking, what am I actually going through?

How can I explain it to a 5 year old in the most simplest way possible which will give me even more clarity.

What am I actually experiencing here?

As I also alluded to earlier in the book, most answers I've heard to this question are along the lines of, thoughts, feelings and emotions which really de-personalise Imposter Syndrome and make it feel less serious and far more human.

One lady I interviewed for my book calls her Imposter thoughts Angie. When Angie turns up, she says oh look Angie is here everyone. She'll be leaving in a moment now so why don't I go and make myself a cup of tea in the meantime and put my feet up.

What I initially thought Imposter Syndrome was when I experienced it:

Imposter Syndrome is a problem & issue within me that was affecting the way I showed up to my work, business, life & more. It really is a problem and is there something wrong with me? Am I broken? Does this make me weak? Does this mean I shouldn't be doing the work I am? Does this.....etc

What Imposter Syndrome really is: A series of common thoughts or feelings that we label as Imposter Syndrome

When I coach my clients, what really helps them is seeing the subtle thinking behind the scenes that is the cause of the experience and absolutely nothing to do with them being an Imposter.

Exercise: What does it feel like &/or how do you know when you are experiencing your Imposter Thoughts and Feelings?

Q. How is this different to times you feel in the zone or relaxed?

Q. How could you notice the difference between the two moving forward?

Some of my clients like to label their Imposter Thoughts with a name such as Bob, Angie etc so that they feel more relaxed but also aware when their Imposter Thoughts crop up.

Q. Is there a creative name you could use for your Imposter Thoughts?

3. You are not your thoughts or feelings

I remember once I was running an online webinar/training on High Performance and a lady shared her experience about Imposter Syndrome and some of the thoughts she was having.

She also mentioned she struggled with anxiety and was an anxious person.

As I was responding to her question, I said to her that you experience anxiety but it doesn't make you anxious or who you are.

We have thoughts but we are not our thoughts. We have feelings and the more we think about the content of our thinking, the more we feel our feelings

but we are never our feelings.

We feel hungry but hungry is not our nature, but merely an indication of where our hunger levels are in the day. We can feel thirsty but we are not thirst, tired but.....i'm sure you catch my drift.

You can have anxious feelings but that doesn't make you at all anxious as an individual however severe the feelings are.

It just means you are having a human experience but who you are is not the human experience. As I shared this with her, she gasped and covered her mouth with her hands.

She had always judged herself very harshly and defined herself by her feelings and experience, but it never dawned on her that this is not who she was as a person, individual or her identity.

This realisation was profound for me and a number of clients I coach as today, it's so easy to box, label and try to find a name for everything and anything which gives us a sense of control in a way.

The problem occurs when we define ourselves by this label and think feeling like an imposter makes you an imposter. The more my clients experience insights about their thinking, the more comfortable they feel with their thinking and experience Imposter Syndrome for what it is. (See Image below).



I liken it to a series of levels below:

Level 1: I feel like I am an Imposter. I believe I am my thoughts and feelings.

Level 2: Realising you are having thoughts and feelings shaped as being an Imposter

Level 3: You are not and can never be your thoughts and feelings

I'm not saying that living through our thoughts and feelings don't shape reality or drive decisions, they do. When we recognise the true nature of our thoughts and feelings, we make decisions and live our lives from more creativity, flow, peace of mind, ease, focus, confidence, natural resilience and so much more.

Exercise: What would change if you never defined yourself by the Imposter Syndrome you feel or your thoughts/feelings?

What would be different? What impact could this have on your work, life &/ or business?

Client Case Study: Sarah

(All clients actual names have been hidden for confidentiality purposes)

Sarah was a VP at a bank who had been in her role for a number of years.

Although she was a successful high flyer, she initially approached me for coaching as she was regularly feeling anxious, stressed and that her work felt harder and harder.

Sarah would often tell me how much she would compare herself to other people, her colleagues & how she would be constantly trying to prove her worth in her role as she felt like she was lucky to be promoted to a VP role.

One key challenge for Sarah was that although many people would call her successful, she couldn't identify with this level of success which would then negatively affect her confidence.

Through the work we did together, Sarah was more able to navigate her Imposter thoughts as they cropped up.

She felt more confident, decisive, relaxed and didn't feel the need to constantly prove herself in her current role. She finally saw that she was very good at what she does, acknowledged her success which allowed her to experience a new level of self-esteem and self-belief.

By the end of our work together, Sarah trusted herself, her instincts and took significant steps forward with so much more ease than before, and a strong ability to handle uncertainty and setbacks with confidence.

Sarah would have previously felt her life was a reflection of Imposter Syndrome having a grip on her. Today, she has a grip on Imposter Syndrome and her career is not stalled by it in any way.

4. Our Job and role in dealing with Imposter Thoughts

So as you are reading this, you might be thinking,

"Is there anything I can practically do to change my thoughts or feelings?"

I used to ask this question and it's one many of us ask from time to time, but the problem lies in the question.

We are not meant to change our thoughts & feelings.

The nature of our humanity is that we will experience thousands of thoughts a day (up to 16,000 & maybe even more according to wider research) and the more we can be present with and unattached to our thoughts, the more our thoughts come and go on their own...

and the more our body can handle the thoughts and feelings we experience.

One of my favourite quotes in the Inside Out Revolution by Michael Neill is that *"There is nothing you can do to change your thinking quicker than to do nothing to change your thinking"*

What our feelings are actually telling us.

It's easy to believe that our Imposter thoughts and feelings arise and tell us we need to fix something. It's actually the opposite.

Imagine you are driving down a road and you notice your car is making strange noises. As you pull over & open up the bonnet, you realise the engine is overheating and needs rest.

Do you:

- A. Rev the heck out of the car, try to push it further to the point of collapse?
- B. Or let the engine cool down on it's own which will enable you to restart more effectively?

Our thoughts and feelings are similar to a car engine in that, our feelings are a result of how hard we are mentally engaging with our thoughts.

The more we can let our thoughts come and go, the less the anxiousness and intensity our feelings hold.

The Beach Ball Analogy

Imagine you are with your friends at the beach and you decide to take a dip in the sea as it's a nice hot day.

As you are swimming, you notice a beach ball float past you which you then proceed to grab hold of & push under the water.

You notice the pressure building as you force the ball deeper into the sea below your feet. As you push, you feel the increasing pressure building in your arms until you eventually let go of the beachball which rises up and explodes out of the water.

This same metaphor is a description of the nature of our emotions. If we notice a beachball floating by you, it will eventually pass with the current of the sea just in the same way our thoughts and feelings rise and fall, like anything in life such as the stock market, the weather, like the temperature.

Change is the constant BUT the more we hold on to our emotions/thoughts & try to fix them, stop them, change them, eradicate them....the more pressure builds until we snap or explode at the people we work with/love.

Along with this, we experience massive levels of stress, burnout and overwhelm till we are forced to let go of our thinking when we return home to eat, sleep or be with our family which eventually brings us back to a natural balance....until we return to the office the next day and start the cycle again.

It's one of the reasons I also don't buy in to the positive thinking camp for navigating Imposter Syndrome or our emotions, because you are suppressing your thoughts, by spending more time trying to be in slightly better looking thoughts while reinforcing the message that some thoughts are bad and it is I who need to fix them.

There is a term called Toxic Positivity which was coined recently, I would recommend looking that one up.

Q. What if we made the goal to be aware of our thoughts and let them fall away on their own?

There really is a safety in letting go of the grip you have on some of your thoughts. The safety that by letting go, the thought will eventually dissipate.

It's easy to feel if I let go, will my feelings intensify? It's the holding on that intensifies, it's the letting go that brings more meditation, peace of mind and the quiet/flow state of confidence, resilience and focus we are looking for.

There is nothing we can do to change our thinking.

Thoughts and feelings are like trains, they come regularly and if there is a train that isn't heading in the right direction, you don't need to jump on to it.

5. Your Imposter Syndrome Plan

In this section, we will now map out how you can thrive and succeed despite those Imposter thoughts cropping up from time to time.

Here are a few of my favourite mindsets and coaching questions I would invite you to play with and journal on to see what answers, insights and ideas stand out for you.

A. What if it was ok to feel the way you do from time to time, what would then change for you? Write as much as you can

B. What Imposter thoughts/beliefs do you notice have held you back in the past. Now I'd like you to reflect and journal on this question, who could you BE if you took those thoughts less seriously? How would your thinking to feelings be different?

Who could you be meaning, would you be more fearless, courageous, confident, outspoken, dedicated, committed, passionate, playful, focused etc

What do you notice?

C. What could you do and would be possible if you took the Imposter thoughts less seriously?

What might you do meaning: Is there something you have been holding yourself back from doing? Asking for a promotion, raise, speaking up at meetings. Perhaps there is a secret dream you've been holding yourself from achieving, starting a business, career ambitions?

What do you notice?

D Building Evidence- Question the Imposter Questions

It really is so easy to be caught up in a spiral of the What If Imposter Thoughts

- What if I'm not good enough?
- What if I'm not qualified enough?
- What if I'm a fraud? Etc

Our first instinct is to believe and listen to our Bob's or What If Imposter Thoughts but we never question them or challenge them.

Whenever your Imposter Thoughts pop up again, here's something simple you can do:

Flip the statement.

If you've had the thought, 'What if I don't belong or am the right person for the role' flip the statement and ask yourself,

'What if I am the right person for the role and what if I do belong?'

and then write down as many reasons that come to your mind about why this is true.

Whatever thought you've noticed crop up, flip it to the opposite and then find evidence to back it up.

write as **MUCH** as you can for all questions.

Finding Opportunities

When you have the thought 'What if I am not Qualified or the right person for the job', that itself isn't a problem and it's rare to find anyone that ever feels fully qualified to do anything.

The best way forward is being able to use the Imposter Thoughts to bring about objectivity and opportunities for growth.

Imposter Syndrome itself isn't ever a reflection of you being an imposter or you being unqualified, or not good enough.

As we've explored already, Imposter Syndrome is a reflection of your thinking and feelings in the moment. If we want to be objective, it really helps to do the exercises mentioned in the eBook so far and then use some of the questions below to firm up your strategy:

- If there was a gap in my skillset, how would I know or find out?
- How can I identify the relevant skills I will need?
- What steps can I implement to ensure I am ready to succeed and what strategies or systems would need to be in place?
- What is in my control right now toward the current situation?

What do you notice from the questions in this section?

6. Make a Personal Internal Commitment (PIC) to yourself.

All of the above ideas and insights can help but what strengthens our foundation is the way we treat ourselves during times we feel Imposter thoughts.

A distinction I share with clients is **Self Judgement v.s. Self Confidence**. In any moment you can have and hold one of these but not both.

During moments Imposter Syndrome crops up, you can choose to experience the self criticism and judgement that comes you impose on yourself or you can choose to step in to the confidence that already exists within the comfort of what we think and feel.

so, what will you do?

When Imposter thoughts crop up, will you?

Accept the thoughts or judge yourself harshly?

Make yourself wrong or give yourself space?

Who will you **BE** when the thoughts crop up, kind, present, gracious or dismissive, argumentative and involved.

Make a pledge to yourself and write it down.

When my Imposter Thoughts crop up I commit to.....

- What will you do?
- How will you speak to yourself?
- How will you respond?

Client Case Study: Peter

(All clients actual names have been hidden for confidentiality purposes)

Peter was in a Senior Director role in his company and he came to me as he had been headhunted and offered the role as Managing Director for an Organisation that was a leader in its industry.

This was of course a significant professional advancement but also a daunting prospect for Peter as he would also have to relocate and spend time away from his family too.

In our 1st session, Peter mentioned he was feeling anxious & stressed as he had never held a Managing Director role before with such a large responsibility for the teams and people he would now be leading.

He was questioning himself, his capabilities and unsure about if he was really the right person for the role & whether he would be able to deliver and achieve the objectives set out for him.

Through the sessions we had together, Peter felt much more at ease about the new role and certain he would settle in well and make an immediate impact over the 1st 90 days.

He also felt confident that he now had a set of strategies about how to engage and lead his core team while enhancing the company culture.

As we had dealt with the challenges Peter was facing about the prospect of his new role, it was so much easier for him to now create a vision of the impact he wanted to make as a Managing Director but also believing this was possible and achievable for him.

7. Create a support group or Speak to your friends – Vulnerability is power

Whenever a client first initially decides to work with me, they sometimes can feel a little bit nervous which is absolutely expected. They then begin to tell me about their goals, plans, dreams and vision.

Eventually they apprehensively talk about the things holding them back such as Imposter Syndrome or self doubt. It's usually at this point they finish and often expect me to look surprised but often my response to what they experience is 'Oh me too, I experience Imposter thoughts in my own life/business & work'.

They are pleasantly surprised and now more relaxed to see that it's not just them who has their own demons.

The truth is, everyone faces challenges and no one has their life perfectly together. Many will pretend they do which leads to toxic leadership and cultures where people then feel the pressure to be perfect.

This is very problematic as you can imagine given the false impression everyone is working under which then impacts their productivity, performance but also wellbeing.

There is nothing you can experience others around you won't have experienced, are experiencing or will experience. **You might want to read that again a few times.**

Reaching out for help is a sign of ambition, strength and a desire to be your best but never a sign of weakness. Humility and vulnerability is power.

As you turn to colleagues, your boss, friends who you feel you can speak to or trust, you'll find that they will most likely relate to exactly what you share with them. Your courage to speak up will inspire and incite courage from within others.

The most effective & inspirational leadership we can have is leading from who and where we are, not from who we want others to see us as.

Showcasing humanity and vulnerability is such an underrated personal trait. The more you can adopt this, the safer other people will feel in your company to know they can have good days, bad days and ask for help.

As a leader in your company, can you kickstart and facilitate a monthly Imposter Syndrome & Wellbeing workshop to begin addressing this conversation?

This could be a powerful way to bring your colleagues together and normalise Imposter Syndrome while creating more safety for everyone to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Imposter Syndrome really does have a lot of ideologies and beliefs associated with it which prevent people from coming forward and asking for help. This is why creating a safe and open environments really can make a huge difference on an individual and cultural level in the workplace.

8. Support is available, would you be open to Coaching?

Before I expand on a point that is very self explanatory, I want to say that I always make a disclaimer to my clients that 'no one **NEEDS** coaching or any form of support'. Wanting support is great and can absolutely help you reach the next level.

There is plenty of merit in hiring a coach.

I have and will continually be coached myself because of my passion for growth, high performance and making sure I'm my best.

If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact me at **raghav@raghavparkash.com**

For Leaders in the Workplace

If you are a leader in your business/workplace, you may be wondering how I can best support my colleagues, team or staff that are struggling with Imposter Syndrome.

Having an understanding of Imposter Syndrome is absolutely the first step and what can make the world of difference and a sustainable long term impact, is committing to a road map with easily implementable steps, strategies and initiatives to support any staff experiencing Imposter Syndrome.

Here are some questions for you to begin defining your organisational IS plan.

- What do we currently understand as a business about Imposter Syndrome?
- How would we rate our understanding out of 10?
- What understanding do the leadership team have on Imposter Syndrome and what trainings have they done for themselves?
- What steps & resources do we have in place to support the business?
- How would we rate our level of support out of 10?
- What else do we need to consider moving forwards to better support and empower our staff? Coaching, trainings, workshops?
- What impact does Imposter Syndrome currently have on the business growth, people, output, performance, effectiveness/ productivity & revenue? What is the business case for addressing Imposter Syndrome?

What actions are you inspired to take? What can you now do?

Are You Or Your Organisation Ready For More Success

If you would like to have a conversation about how I can work with you 1-2-1 or support your leaders to overcome Imposter Syndrome, achieve consistent high performance and create a bigger impact in the workplace, please reach out to me via email to book a call on raghav@raghavparkash.com or alternatively you can visit my website, www.raghavparkash.com

As a certified Executive & Life Coach, I work with my clients who range from Director level and above toward a number of aspects involving:

- Executive & Life Coaching: Achieving Career/business goals and milestones
- Confidence in their leadership skills
- Successfully Transitioning into a new/more senior role & leading teams
- Personal performance
- Overcoming personal/career challenges such as Imposter Syndrome and more

I can also deliver a range of workshops on the above for your organisation too.

Testimonial

The higher your ambitions, the steeper the waves of success & the crashes that come with it! From personal experience I know that doing things alone is not possible, it is lonely but on top of that, it takes time to come back up as soon as you crash.

Do you need a coach? No, but do you need to be in the top 1%?

The two for me go hand in hand, having someone who understands the journey (specifically crashes!), asks the right questions and provides a cushion for when you are at a low point is what coaching means to me.

I love the power of Raghav's coaching because he is real, authentic and has a direct approach. I would recommend him to anyone running a business, in a director role or with the ambition to be in either of those. Most stressful positions require the toughest minds and you are not born with one, toughest minds are trained! Get a coach!

Victoria Tattum CEO



Thank you

For now, I hope you have enjoyed reading through the Navigating Imposter Syndrome guide I've put together.

Imposter Syndrome is a subject close to my heart and as someone that has experienced it, I'm passionate about supporting leaders, change makers and ambitious individuals to understand this conversation much better themselves, so they can then be the difference in the lives of the people around them.

My best wishes to you wherever you are and if you have any questions about Imposter Syndrome or you are a leader/in HR and would like to speak to me about my Executive & Life Coaching services, please feel free to contact me at raghav@raghavparkash.com.

Raghav Parkash

About The Author

As an Executive & Life Coach, Raghav Parkash specialises in helping high performing executives, professionals and entrepreneurs achieve their very best both professionally through their business/career & also personally.

Through his coaching practice and seminars, Raghav has been privileged to run over 200 + workshops sharing his best tools, strategies and insights for High Performance with thousands of people and witnessing them create extraordinary results.

As a qualified & trained coach, Raghav's experience spans over 10 years working with, training & learning from some of the biggest names & organisations in the coaching industry.



The reasons ambitious professionals and entrepreneurs enjoy working with Raghav is because they want to perform at a very high level and Raghav understands the precise challenges they face and how to best help them navigate the obstacles that arise in business.

Through working with Raghav, his clients feel their best personally, have the strategies they need to thrive and go on to create the success and impact they envision.

As a result, Raghav is regularly invited to coach/speak on the subjects of High Performance & Leadership for organisations and conferences including Prudential Insurance, The Natwest Business Hub, Kallo Foods, Aldermore Bank and the annual Women's Economic Forum in Delhi.

He has also been featured in the media including SKY TV & Yahoo Finance.