

## Imposter Syndrome: My Own Battle

By Kellie Hale

I had the pleasure of attending the [Empower: Women in Leadership](#) Conference on March 9, which was hosted by the Centers of Excellence for [Construction](#) and [Marine Manufacturing](#). It



was my first time attending the conference that was geared towards women in the trade industry. With an array of women presenters offering insight into their own experiences in areas such as discrimination, sexual harassment, mental health, and equal rights, it was very eye opening that as women, we still have quite a way to go in order to be viewed as equals to our male counterparts.

One topic that came up quite a bit at the conference was “imposter syndrome” and how it can negatively affect a woman’s mind set on whether or not she can succeed. What is imposter syndrome? The term refers to “the idea that you’ve only succeed due to luck, and not because of your talent or qualifications” and was first identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. Both psychologists theorized in their [paper](#) how women can be “uniquely affected by imposter syndrome.” Imposter syndrome can have damaging effects on a person’s career progression, particularly for women entering into the workforce.

It can be hard recognizing one’s own success and abilities to do amazing work. For myself, I had imposter syndrome when I started my job at the Center of Excellence – Homeland Security Emergency Management. I could not fathom how my supervisor, Linda Crerar, believed in me so much and had such confidence that I could do anything if I put my mind to it. I would think to myself, “Today is the day where she is going to see that I don’t have it in me. That something is missing.” I would also worry about what my coworkers would think of me and wonder if I deserved my position at the Center. That feeling of doubt and lack of self-confidence in my knowledge,

skills, and abilities lasted for 2 ½ years. I actually expressed to Linda how I felt and in doing so, helped alleviate that stress. I told myself, “Yes, I deserve to be here. Yes, I might not know everything, or it may take time to understand certain aspects of the job, but I deserve to be here.”

Once I got rid of that negative mindset, I was able to flourish at my job. I felt more confident in my abilities to take on certain tasks and projects, such as establishing the Women in Leadership conferences back in 2015, along with mentoring others who are starting their careers. I make sure to remind myself of the positive impacts I can have on others, while also accepting my strengths and limitations.

## **How to take on imposter syndrome**

- Accept that there is no cure. This is an issue that can be managed over time but will never completely disappear.
- Talk about your feelings to people you trust. If you don't have support in place, find that community online, through your bank or at business networking events.
- Positive thinking does not work so do not beat yourself up if your attempts to cheer yourself up and leave IS behind are unsuccessful.
- Remember that IS tends to affect high achievers who set far higher standards for themselves than other people.
- Imposter Syndrome is irrational so combat it using your rational mind: write down all your achievements and look at your career history. If you've been successful, accept that it's because you are good at your role.
- Accept your strengths and your limitations: outsource the stuff you hate doing or are bad at.
- Motivate yourself through kindness, not fear. Think of the positive impact you've had by starting your business or creating jobs.

Source: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/women-entrepreneurs/imposter-syndrome-women-careers/>