

## Imposter Syndrome

Welcome back. I'm Kim Baillie she's Fulyana Orsborn. This is Inside Exec.

Today, we're going to look at something that is often talked about and skirted around, let me say. But I think it's something that, in our experience, we have seen people in all walks of life at all levels in organizations feel. And that is the impostor syndrome. That's where you are so concerned that you've reached a level where someone is going to tap you on the shoulder and say, well, we've found you out, you're a fake, you don't belong here, You're not good enough to be here. You don't deserve to be here, whatever it is. And that's what we're waiting for all the time. And it clouds our thinking, clouds our judgment when for the most part it is simply not true. So that's what we're going to talk about today, imposter syndrome.

Lots of people listening will go, oh yeah, I feel like that - there's many, many people who made it big in life and key people in in your organization or in the world that feel that way.

I'm going to give you two examples that you may or may not know about. One of them is Tom Hanks. Tom Hanks is well known. He's already been in many movies. He's known for his acting etcetera. What he said was no matter what we've done, there comes a point where you think, how did I get here, when are they going to discover that I am in fact a fraud and take everything away from me. That was his words right in an interview. So you look at him and you think that you're successful, you can see that and you wonder why he's saying that.

Another example is the reporter, actress and activist Emma Watson. She also when people say compliment her on her acting and achievements, she looks at them and she said I feel incredibly uncomfortable. I tend to turn on myself and feel like an impostor.

Now I think these two examples would tell you that many people feel that way and I think what we want to talk about is, well what do you do about that? Do you just keep looking at yourself in the same eyes all the time and being afraid of being found out? Or do you start looking at what's real? And are you looking at the facts? Which you know, a lot of us tend to be, if you want to be humble and you think I'm not good enough et cetera.

Then you really go back to the fact sheet, what have I done. And the first thing is why am I feeling that way? Is it because I'm comparing myself to someone else and say, oh look at that person there in the same sort of space as me. But they are just so good and I'm nothing like them. This comparison is not very useful sometimes unless you get back to the facts. The second thing is how could you ignore your accomplishments.

Why do you think you're there? It wasn't an accident. You can't, you might have one example of where you winged it. But in fact you're looking at the situation where what have you achieved consistently, where did you start? Where are you now and accept that.

Another one is to say yeah I did fall along the way, accept that as well and say well why did I fail there and how did I recover?

So I failed along the way and now I had successes. These are facts.

To me, another very powerful one is can you just listen to some of the people that are in a position to assess you and recognize you, for example in a career or in some acting, pick you for another movie - you think highly of them, so why can't you respect that? They know what they're doing and they're the ones who promoted you. They're the ones who picked you for certain jobs projects whatever and why all these are before you just say, well I don't think I'm good enough. Well maybe not. But compared to whom and for what you're expecting to be?

My concern with the, I don't think I'm good enough, is that waiting for someone to say, oh but yes you are because other people's opinions don't matter. That's what they think of you is not important. It's what you think of you and how you conduct yourself. That is important.

My best recommendation for you is to do a swot analysis. Now we do a swot analysis on business opportunities and businesses generally, but very rarely do we do it on ourselves. So we're looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, the very old style swot analysis.

I like to go back to that because it's very clear about what you're looking at, realistically, you list your strengths. What are the strengths that you have that you know will benefit the organization in the position you're in at the moment.

What are the weaknesses that you personally have, not the

organization, not the job, not the role, not your team, not anything else but your own weaknesses, that you can realistically identify for yourself. And that should be a much smaller list than the strengths because that's why you're there.

What are the opportunities that you have in this role? And sometimes that might be - What are the opportunities you have to work on those weaknesses and make them into strengths? And what we're looking at in that analysis is that the things that are in the weakness column and the things that are in the opportunities column, you can bring somehow into the strengths column.

Then the last one, the threats, is not that someone's going to tap you on the shoulder and say you're not worthy. Threats are things over which you have no control. So there are things like a change in government regulations, change in the way that you can do business or activities, might be that the organization gets taken over by another organization, you have no control over that. So that is a threat. A threat is something over which you have no control. So, you can list them, but there's no point in focusing on them because you have no control.

So there's no reason that you should spend time and effort worrying about them. Worry never fixed anything. Worry doesn't solve anything. Well, it just gives you greyer hairs and wrinkles and more cholesterol in your system. So you have to do other things to get fit again and we don't want any of that. So let's put the threats aside. Certainly identify them if you can. But if you can't, then why are you trying to find something

to worry about? Why are you trying to find a reason to fail? Why are you looking for a Plan B? You know that I'm not into Plan B. I'm going to try - let's just make this work. And if it doesn't work for whatever reason, then you move on to the next thing. It's not a personal judgment. It's just the fact that all of the elements didn't come together the way you had hoped or you expected or you wanted. And so we move on to the next thing.

But my best recommendation is do that swot analysis because of what you will find if you sit down and think about it in a personal sense.

Think about it as those who are assessing someone else and say, okay, what are the strengths, what are the weaknesses, what are the opportunities, there are these threats, but I can't do anything about them. Put them aside.

Let's go back to the opportunities first of all. So what opportunities can I work on that would really enhance my strengths, and in working on those opportunities would that address some of the weaknesses that I think I have and if there are weaknesses there that you don't need to address for the current role that you're undertaking, then keep them to one side. Don't focus on them.

So this is the next point, is that don't focus on the 5%. Don't focus on the things that are not right. Focus on the things that you are doing, the reason you're there. The activities that you can do and do well. And again that's why you're there and then bring in the other things.

It's a bit like making a cake which I know is going to be an analogy that herself will just love. I can see her sitting back in the chair thinking of cake.

Let's talk about cake. I think it is about making a cake. So you do the basics and you do them well. And then when you want to experiment a little bit you think well it probably doesn't taste as good as it could. And so the weakness in that sense is the flavor. So I might add this, I'll try this, I'll tried this and it improved the flavor. Then that ability to adjust something to make it better becomes a strength. It's no longer a weakness because you've been able to do that and there was opportunity in that there was opportunity for you to improve the flavor of the cake. I don't care anymore because I have to get a taste.

Okay. I think that's really good. But also to add to that it's good to look at yourself from a continuous improvement because the more experience we have, the more information we have through the swot analysis is how can we continuously grow in that sense.

That's not saying I'm not good enough. That's saying I'm good and I can get better just like we do in life in general and in our processes, in our procedures. We could do that to ourselves as well just knowing that and that's why you acknowledge your failures if you like. And then you look at what did you learn? A failure is a learning experience basically. So what did I learn from that and what can I do to get better and the better can be variation. It doesn't have to be better at just doing the same thing but doing it to perfection. It could be like, okay, so taking those actors as an example, they are used to play these roles and now I want to play a completely different role which gives

me a different insight and challenges me into improving my acting. In business sense, it's saying, look, I've never worked in operations area or the sales area or the strategic area of business development, I think I'd like to try that and see how. What have I got to offer for that and what can I learn as well?

So the continuous improvement about challenging yourself learning and knowing there's no such a thing as perfection and the other thing is you're never alone, nothing you do. It depends on you from start to finish, it's always about working with others.

I think it's important for us to emphasize that it's not just in the acting profession, but we know people in the business world who feel the same way and that you are not alone, but it's not just actors that feels this, that there is a reason it's got a name is because there's so many people who suffer from this particular syndrome so I don't think that you have to do it alone.

Certainly look at the swot analysis but also think about what Fulyana said right at the beginning to think about why you are thinking this way, address that. What is the underlying cause now that we know that we're not imposters anymore.

We'll be interested to hear from you about your feelings, if you have felt this way, what you did to overcome them. Because there's all sorts of ways that we can help people, and we're more than happy to put your suggestions up on the end of these posts so that other people can read and see what everyone else has experienced and what has worked for them. Because, as you know, what we talk about is what's worked for

us. That's who we are.

I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec..