



M A V E R I C K L A B

'Creating changes by shaking the status quo'

MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOUR IMPOSTER SYNDROME IN 5 STEPS

According to Wikipedia IMPOSTER SYNDROME is a psychological pattern in which one doubts one's accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud". I want to share with you how I managed to deal with my imposter syndrome, which, I named Mildred.

Mildred represents everyone in my life, including myself, that in a passive aggressive manner, tries to put me down. She highlights every bad decision I have ever made, tries to guilt trip me and secretly would rather see me fail. The truth is, Mildred is afraid of change, she's lazy and she likes to blame others for her shortcomings. Mildred is comfortable with failures and is risk averse, because it makes her feel safe. After all, success requires accountability, disappointments, effort and courage. But that's not Mildred, Mildred is scared of being authentic and being judged, developing a growth mind set and stepping into the arena of a life less ordinary. Challenging the status quo is Mildred most terrifying nightmare.

What the research says: Valerie Young looked into fraudulent feelings amongst high achievers. From her book *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer From the Imposter Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It*, she was able to identify five subgroups this syndrome often falls into:

- **The Perfectionist** – You know who you are!! Micromanaging everyone!
- **The Superwoman/man** – Oh yes you!! You there running around like a headless chicken!! Find a hobby!
- **The Natural Genius** – I know you are a smarty pants after all you are used to get gold stars right?! God forbid if you try something new!
- **The Soloist** – You don't trust anyone, you have this idea that if you want something done properly you need to do it yourself!
- **The Expert** – I hate to break it to you but you don't know everything and that petrifies you!

Please note: Studies suggest that more than 70% of people experience the impostor syndrome at some point in their career.



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HOW DO I DEAL WITH MY MILDRED?

- 1.** Give it a name. Yes give it a name. Think of all the people in your life that your success would really annoy! Remember that your success is your biggest revenge. Every time I am fearful of taking on a new project and the nagging Mildred turns up in my head, I recognise her. I can then choose to allow her the power to stop me going forward or I can acknowledge her and politely say: "Shut up!"
- 2.** Write-Write down everything you have accomplish in your life that you are secretly proud of. I was so proud to have bought my house after a messy divorce. I am so proud of being able to speak English fluently. Believe me, Mildred turned up many times in my life during the early years of living in England just to remind me that I was Stupid and people were laughing at me!
- 3.** Be Courageous – As Brene Brown says "You can choose courage or you can choose comfort. You can't have both". When people remark that I am very confident, I usually reply saying that I am courageous first and confidence follows by many many falls. I remember when I bought my house after the messy divorce I talked about. Well, I was terrified! Honestly, I had a new born baby, I was working under a contract that would only guarantee me a job for just two years and all my family were living in Brazil. Then I came across a book from Dale Carnegie "How to stop worrying and start living". And Shazam!!! My mantra was "What that hell!!! If everything fails I can go to a hostel for single mothers" – BE BRAVE and BELIEVE THAT EVERY THING WILL TURN OUT GOOD IN THE WASH!
- 4.** Love yourself – I know this is a given and as I often say in my workshops: "it might be common sense but is not necessarily common practice". You know what to do, right?! Respect your body, after all this is the only house your will live in for the rest of your life. Move more, eat healthily, take time for personal grooming and treat yourself with kindness. You are enough!!
- 5.** Be a transformative force in your life. Take time to connect yourself to a higher power. You can meditate, chant, pray or simply have a conversation with God! Accept that more often GOOD ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! You have abundant knowledge and life experience to make decisions that work for you. Moreover, whatever painful experiences you have gone through they will have given you wisdom if you care to learn from them. DON'T WASTE A MISTAKE. You have the power to choose to transform yourself into either a person with substance and courage or be a victim of your own circumstances. I choose the first option. When I think of all the men and women in the world that would love to be in my position, and simply can't due to their situations, I feel encouraged to stand up and be counted. I owe it to myself and to them! They are my inspiration.

Find your transformative force!