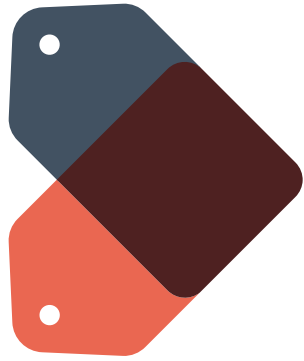


# Finding Freedom From Imposter Syndrome

with Melody Wilding, LMSW

# Thank you



# INTURN<sup>TM</sup>

# Sound familiar?

Credit: Dr. Valerie Young



- Do you secretly worry that others will find out that you're not as bright and capable as they think you are?
- Do you sometimes shy away from challenges because of nagging self-doubt?
- Do you tend to chalk your accomplishments up to being a “fluke,” “no big deal” or the fact that people just “like” you?
- Do you hate making a mistake, being less than fully prepared or not doing things perfectly?
- Do you tend to feel crushed by even constructive criticism, seeing it as evidence of your “ineptness?”
- When you do succeed, do you think, “Phew, I fooled 'em this time but I may not be so lucky next time.”
- Do you believe that other people (students, colleagues, competitors) are smarter and more capable than you are?
- Do you live in fear of being found out, discovered, unmasked?

You're not alone &  
You're in exactly the right place

# Today we will...

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- ① Gain a clear understanding of what Imposter Syndrome is
- ② Learn to recognize fraudy feelings in yourself and those you lead
- ③ Develop core confidence skills to boost your sense of competence and assurance

# By the end of this training, you will:

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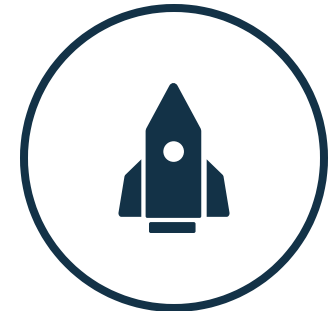
**Recognize Imposter Syndrome  
so you can limit the impact it has  
on you**



**Pull yourself out of self-doubt  
spirals so you can get your day  
back on track**



**Own your strengths and talk  
about your accomplishments**



**Have tools to help you  
internalize your successes and  
rise as a leader**





# Hi, I'm Melody.

- I'm an Workplace Success Coach and licensed social worker
- I help top performers like you get out of their own way
- Author of the upcoming book Trust Yourself: Stop Overthinking, Master Your Emotions, and Channel Ambition into Success







They all have one thing in common...

# They are Sensitive Strivers™

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- Think and feel more deeply
- Lifelong goal-oriented, high-achievers
- Thoughtful, intuitive, driven, hard-working
- Highly self-aware
- Have a rich inner world
- Deep capacity for empathy

# Sensitive Strivers also...

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- Are self-critical
- Tend to overthink everything
- Are easily overwhelmed
- Struggle with people-pleasing
- Put undue pressure on themselves to succeed

Because of their mental and emotional depth...

Sensitive Strivers struggle with  
Imposter Syndrome often

# Imposter Syndrome

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**Crippling self-belief that  
you don't deserve or  
couldn't replicate your  
success**

And an inability to internalize achievements

# Imposter Syndrome

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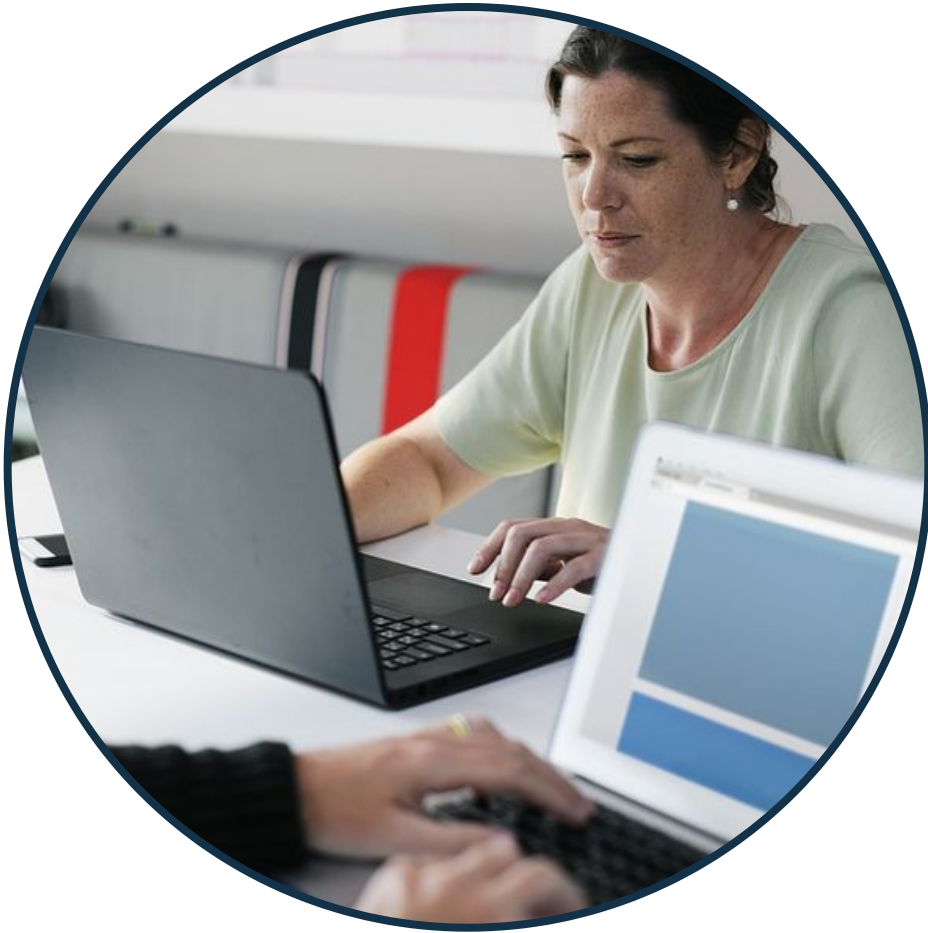
**It manifests in feeling like you're a fake who will be exposed as incapable or ill-equipped**

... Despite plenty of evidence to prove you're skilled and competent.



# Imposter Syndrome

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**Especially prevalent in  
fields like science,  
technology, design**

Or if you feel like an outsider

# Common Signs of Imposter Syndrome

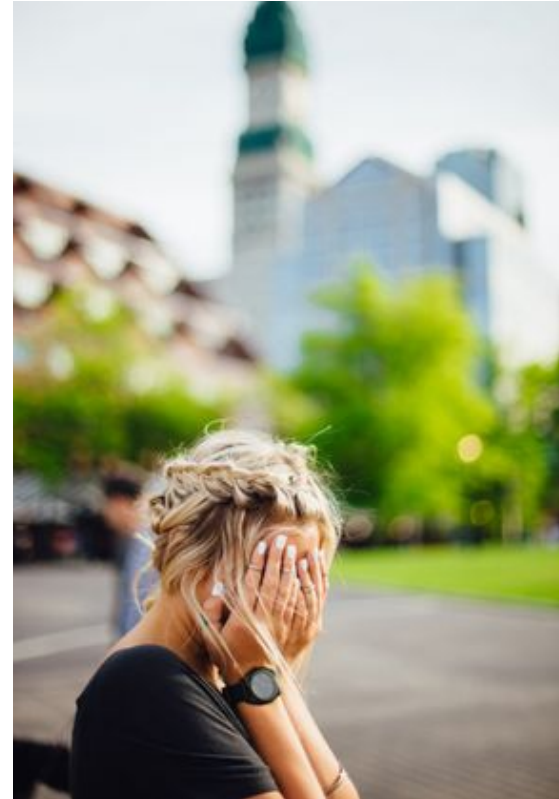
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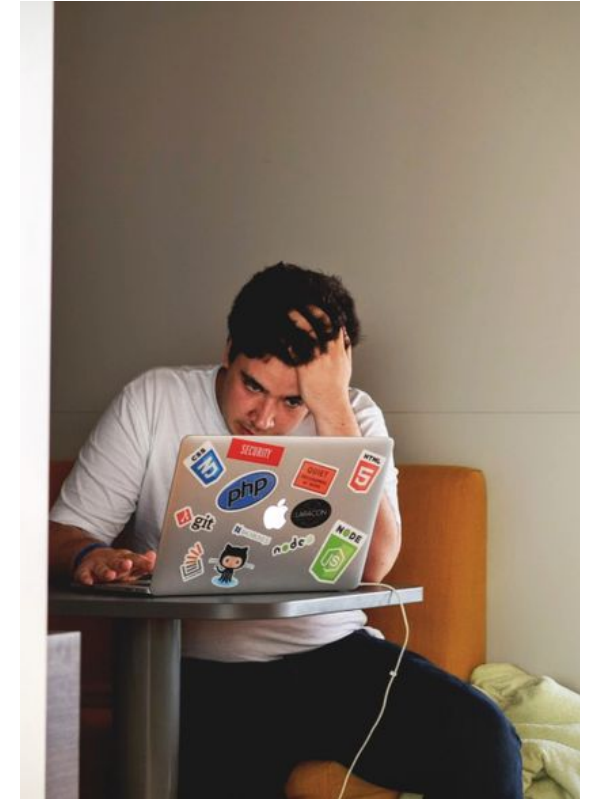
**Downplaying  
accomplishments**



**Attributing success to luck**

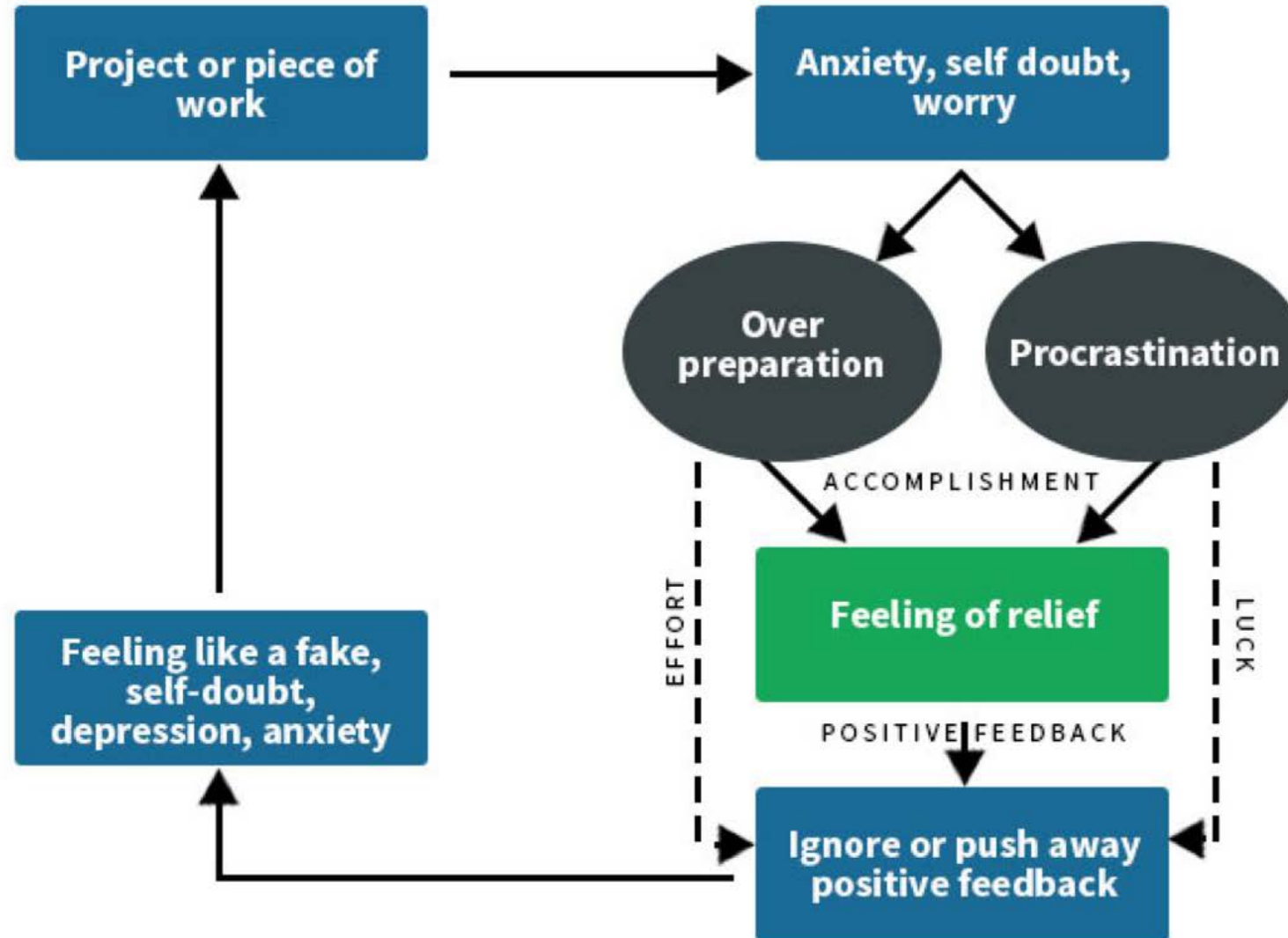


**Constantly  
second-guessing yourself**



**Fear being exposed and  
fear of failure**

## The Imposter Cycle



# How it holds you back at work

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- Don't speak up with ideas or kept quiet when you had answers
- Avoid putting yourself forward for promotion or raise
- Don't complete important projects
- Reluctance to ask for help
- Turning down opportunities you secretly want
- Avoid feedback or criticism
- Low self confidence
- Anxiety and depression
- Overachievement and burnout

70%



of people experience Imposter Syndrome during their career

Share your experience

# What impact has Imposter Syndrome had on you?

What aspects do you relate to the most?

What similarities or differences are there in the experiences of your peers?



The image is a composite of two photographs. The top photograph shows a man with glasses and a grey sweater sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. He is in a room with exposed brick walls and large, dark, cone-shaped pendant lights. The bottom photograph shows the same man from behind, sitting at a wooden desk and working on a laptop. On the desk, there is a smartphone, a notebook, and some cables. The background is a brick wall and a window.

**Recognizing Imposter Syndrome  
is the key to changing it**

# Three Core Confidence-Boosting Skills

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Reframing  
negative self talk

Internalizing  
achievements

Accepting, not  
deflecting, praise

# Core Confidence Skill #1: Reframe your self-talk





# Unhelpful Thoughts

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- Also called “cognitive distortions”, these automatic, self-critical thoughts drive Imposter Syndrome



# Time to play... Imposter Syndrome Bingo!





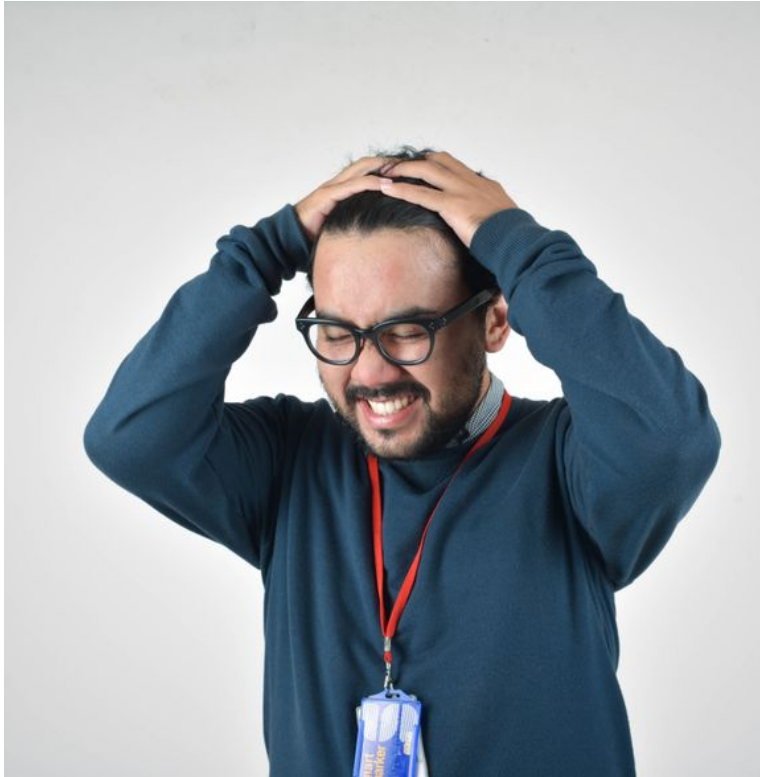
# Types of Cognitive Distortions

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<b>Catastrophizing</b>	You expect the worst.	I'm going to get fired and end up broke and homeless.
<b>All or nothing thinking</b>	You see situations and yourself in black or white absolutes	I have to be perfect, or I'm a failure.
<b>Overgeneralization</b>	You take one unfavorable example and make it an ongoing pattern.	I'm always screwing up.
<b>Mental filter</b>	You ignore positive aspects and focus on the negative aspects only.	I obsess about the one "meets expectations" rating on my performance review.
<b>Emotional reasoning</b>	You believe what you feel must automatically be true.	I feel stupid, therefore I am stupid.
<b>Jumping to conclusions</b>	You make unwarranted judgements and think you know what others are feeling and thinking without them saying.	She didn't respond to my email. I know she hates me.
<b>Personalization</b>	You hold yourself accountable for things beyond your control.	The project failed. I didn't spend enough time on it.
<b>Should statements</b>	You attach yourself to a certain outcomes or expectations.	"I should be better at this by now"

# Now reframe it

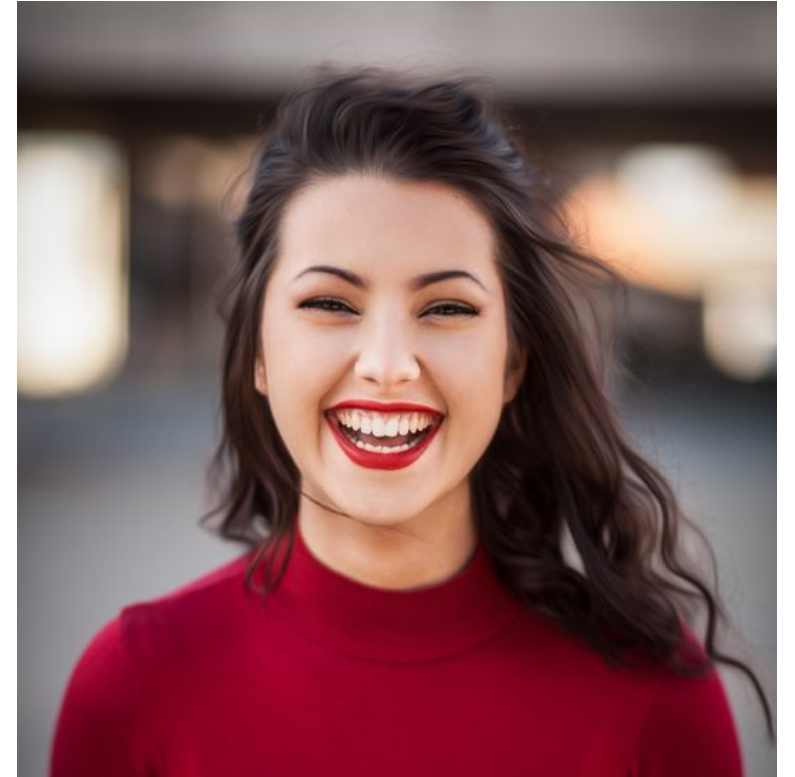
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The way you view something can exacerbate your stress — or minimize it



Reframing is a way of changing how you view inner experiences and events to find a more positive alternative



Shown to boost a positive outlook and lower stress

# Reframe your self-talk

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UNHELPFUL THOUGHT	EXAMPLE OF	REFRAME
I can't do anything right.	All or nothing thinking	This is a minor mistake. You're stressed, so slow down.
If I speak up, everyone will laugh at me.	Catastrophizing	It's better to ask the question than spend two weeks going in the wrong direction
My direct report didn't do a task right once. It's easier to do it myself.	Overgeneralization	It's time to flex your delegation muscle



# Activity: The Rule of 5

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7 minutes

- 1 Find a partner
- 2 Write down an example of an unhelpful thought you struggle with
- 3 Work with your partner to reframe the thought and brainstorm 5 other ways to view the situation
- 4 Share your reactions with one another

Then we'll share with the group

# Questions to Help You

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- How would my best friend / hero / someone who is confident respond?
- If I knew everything would work out, how would my view change?
- What can I learn from this?
- When have I handled something like this before?
- What thought would get me closer to my goals?
- What other angles have I not considered yet?

A top-down view of a light-colored desk. In the upper left, there are several small rectangular pieces of paper with watercolor washes in shades of green, purple, and grey. Below these, a few pens and pencils are scattered. On the left side, three orange paper clips are visible. In the lower left, there are more watercolor paper scraps, some with gold glitter. A white rectangular box with a dark blue border is centered on the desk, containing the text.

**TIP:**  
**Give your inner critic a name**



# Core Confidence Skill #2: Internalize your achievements

# Internalize your achievements

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**It's really hard to  
recognize and own your  
accomplishments**

But it's essential for your advancement, and your  
mental well-being



# Activity: Success Pyramid

7 minutes

- 1 Find a partner
- 2 Share with them 3 accomplishments from the past 6 months and why you're proud of them
- 3 Name 2 professional skills you possess
- 4 Identify one personal quality you consider to be your superpower

Reflect as a group: How did it feel to talk about yourself?  
TIP: Create a “brag file”

The background is a solid teal color, densely populated with small, multi-colored confetti pieces. The confetti includes shades of pink, orange, yellow, and light blue, scattered across the entire frame. A white rectangular box is centered horizontally and vertically, containing the text.

**TIP:**  
**Create an ongoing brag file**

**Core Confidence Skill #3:  
Accept, don't deflect, praise**



# Activity: Take a Compliment

5 minutes

- 1 Find a partner and sit facing one another.
- 2 One partner will offer the other a genuine compliment.  
Focus on strengths, qualities, & characteristics
- 3 The partner receiving the compliment will take a moment to let it wash over them.
- 4 Say “I receive and accept your compliment” then switch roles!



Reflect: What was it like to sit with the compliment instead of responding right away? How is this different from how you normally respond?





**TIP:**  
**Replace “sorry” with “thank you”**

# What you learned

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- ① **How to identify Imposter Syndrome**
- ② **How Imposter Syndrome can hold you back from success**
- ③ **3 core confidence skills**
  - Reframe negative self-talk
  - Internalize your achievements
  - Accept, don't deflect, praise

**What is your biggest takeaway?**

You're invited...

[melodywilding.com/community](https://melodywilding.com/community)



*Melody*  
WILDING





[melodywilding.com/inturn](https://melodywilding.com/inturn)

# Last thing

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## Presentation Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

1. The most valuable idea and how I'll apply it

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2. One suggestion to make Melody's presentation better

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- ☐ I'm interested in coaching with Melody
- ☐ I'd like to refer Melody to another organization/group she could speak at
- ☐ Add me to your email list to get your newsletter with information, resources, tips, & recommendations.

# Please fill out the feedback form!