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The Green Room by Deloitte

Episode #5: Will I ever feel good
enough for my job? (airing 18 March)

The big question

Will I ever feel good enough for my job?

Have you ever questioned whether you're good enough? Afraid people will find out you're not capable? Felt like a fraud?

You're not alone. Imposter syndrome affects 70% of people at some point in their lives. That's 2 in 3 of people listening and we likely all know someone who struggles with these feelings.

So what does it feel like to have imposter syndrome? Why is it so prevalent in a high performance culture? Who's most likely to have imposter feelings? And most importantly – what can we do about it?

This week we get under the skin of this surprisingly common phenomenon. Our question is: Will I ever feel good enough for my job?



Recording on the day

Quick intro
1 min

Anchor George sets the scene and welcomes everyone in the room

Guests and icebreaker
2 mins

We introduce the speakers and pick an icebreaker from the 'icebreaker bucket'...

The conversation
30 mins

This should feel like a warm conversation over coffee with friends sharing personal stories.

Wrap & outro
2 mins

Back to the question and punchy wrap-up of the conversation

Any edits or retakes
5 mins

Time to cover any missing angles or retake questions or answers with our guests

Final bits (hosts only)
10 mins

Our hosts stay behind for intro and outro, quick chat to introduce the scene and any question retakes

The guests

A bit of background

Sharon Thorne

Managing Partner Global and Strategy and Deputy CEO

Sharon joined our Audit business straight out of university in 1986. She became a partner in 1998, held a variety of leadership roles and became the first female member of the UK Executive in 2006 as Managing Partner for Talent.

Since 2015, she's been the UK's Managing Partner for Global and has been at the forefront of the creation of Deloitte North West Europe. She's been on the UK board and is now a member of the Global board.

Sharon's impressive bio is well known. Lesser known is the fact that she has struggled with imposter syndrome in the past. We asked her to come on the podcast to talk about it openly and normalise it in our culture.



The guests

A bit of background

Poppy Jaman OBE

CEO of City Mental Health Alliance

For the last decade Poppy has been leading the conversation around mental health in the UK, helping organisations to place workplace health and wellbeing at the top of their agenda.

She built Mental Health First Aid England into an independent community interest company which has trained 300,000 mental health first aiders. She also co-founded the City Mental Health Alliance, a collaborative venture championed by senior leaders from London City's biggest corporations which helps to share experiences and talk about issues.

A bit more personal: Poppy is a third-generation British Bangladeshi who grew up in a traditional Bangladeshi household. She left school at 16, had an arranged marriage at 17 and had her first daughter at 20. Shortly after this she developed post-natal depression and anxiety. Eventually she ended her marriage and became a single mother.



The headlines

Imposter syndrome in one slide

- Imposter syndrome sufferers are in good company: Maya Angelou, Meryl Streep and Albert Einstein and **many more successful people** have expressed feeling like imposters
- The term was coined by two American psychologists, Dr Pauline Clance and Dr Suzanne Imes, in 1978 during **second wave feminism**
- It's one of the few psychological issues that was first thought to be specific to one gender, specifically **high achieving women**
- Not long after it was described, researchers found it was not exclusive to women and studies encountered it **across gender, race, age and background**
- It's important to not treat it as something shameful – it's a lot more common than you think so we need to have **open conversations to normalise it**



"I have written eleven books, but each time I think, 'uh oh, they're going to find out now. I've run a game on everybody, and they're going to find me out.'"

– Maya Angelou

A good conversation

Questions you might want to ask

1. First things first: what is imposter syndrome?

- Quick definition for those unfamiliar with term
- Hosts: touch on imposter test and your results
- Why is it prevalent in professional services firms and similar? Is it something we create as a culture of high performance?
- Can you see it in colleagues and people around you?
- We're seeing a lot more millennials [70% of our people] share imposter feelings. Why do you think that is?
- *[You can reference the Radio 4 podcast (Insecure Overachievers) here – see research slide]*

2. What does it feel like? Where we get under the skin

- Sharon: in other interviews you've mentioned you have imposter syndrome. What does it feel like?
- What are the thoughts going through your head?
- How does it affect you at work?
- Is it always there nagging in the background or does it come and go?
- Is it something you talk about with your partner at home? Or something you keep to yourself?
- Does it go away or become worse? Does it exist at all stages in your career or is more intense when you get the first big job? Or every big job?

A good conversation

Questions you might want to ask

Broadening out – who suffers and why

- *[play clip where Michelle Obama explains her experience with imposter feeling]*
- Poppy: those who belong to minority groups are said to commonly experience feeling like imposters. Why do you think that is? Can you relate?
- Does it knock your confidence when less people who look like you are in senior positions and may feel like a diversity checkmark?
- You have a lot of people in your wake benefitting from your achievements. People used to look up to leaders as those with all the answers. Why is it important to be open about this topic?
- Sharon: You mentor quite a few people I imagine. Do you make that part of the conversation? Is it actually healthy to have a little bit of imposter syndrome?

Advice for others – tips on how to spot and overcome

- When did you realise it was a thing? Did you find comfort in knowing there were others?
- How do you spot imposter syndrome? What are the signs, the language that people use?
- What are your main coping mechanisms? What tips do you have for others on overcoming imposter syndrome?
- You're only as good as your last job. What if you make a mistake? Did you ever make a mistake that made you feel like going back to square 1? Where do you go from there?
- What can the firm do to help our people with this experience and transitioning as they become more senior?

A good conversation

Ending in style

Don't forget to wrap up!

- What's your most important tip for others who identify with your stories and anecdotes?
- If you could record something for yourself to listen back to during those dark moments with the little voice in your head – what would you say?

Further reading

To add a bit of colour

- [The Imposter Test](#) – see homework...
- [Ted Ed video](#): What is imposter syndrome and how can you combat it?
- [VeryWellMind](#): What is impostor syndrome and tips to overcome it
- [Forbes](#): Two thirds of women in UK suffer from imposter syndrome (interesting section on which sectors are most affected). Don't read without reading next one...
- [Research Digest](#): New study claims that imposter syndrome hits men harder than women
- [Forbes](#): Why so many millennials experience imposter syndrome
- [Quartz](#): Michelle Obama on dealing with imposter syndrome (we'll play [this video](#) during the recording)
- Podcasts:
 - The Why Factor (BBC World Services) – [Imposter syndrome](#) (23 mins– covers lots of angles)
 - This is Capitalism (Radio 4) – [Insecure overachievers](#) (28 mins – about imposter syndrome in professional/financial services firms in the City, really compelling for our people)

Homework!

Do the imposter syndrome test

Getting under the skin of imposter syndrome

- Do the imposter test here:
<http://paulineroseclance.com/pdf/IPscoringtest.pdf>
- It's 20 quick questions [takes 3 minutes] to find out if you have no experience with imposter syndrome, some feelings or an intense experience with it
- Have a quiet cuppa before the recording (over the weekend or one evening) and think about your personal experience with the topic, both personally or professionally
- Think about the people around you. Do you think they might suffer from imposter syndrome sometimes?



Final things to remember

To help us make it even better

1. Be human.

Treat the guests as friends and be curious about their life experiences. Don't be afraid to ask inquisitive questions to really understand how they're feeling and put yourself in their shoes. And if you're comfortable, it would be great if you could get personal too.

2. Listen

Active listening is a skill. Things will get personal so really listen to what the guests are saying and make them feel safe to share more by being present and asking follow-up questions. Mind your questions – ask open questions and focus on the words “why” and “how”

3. Don't rattle off the questions

A culmination of the above – forget about the list in front of you and the time. There's plenty of time. You don't have to ask all the questions. Keep things natural and let it get personal and powerful



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