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Releasing Imposter Syndrome so you can flourish

Words: Caroline Shola Arewa

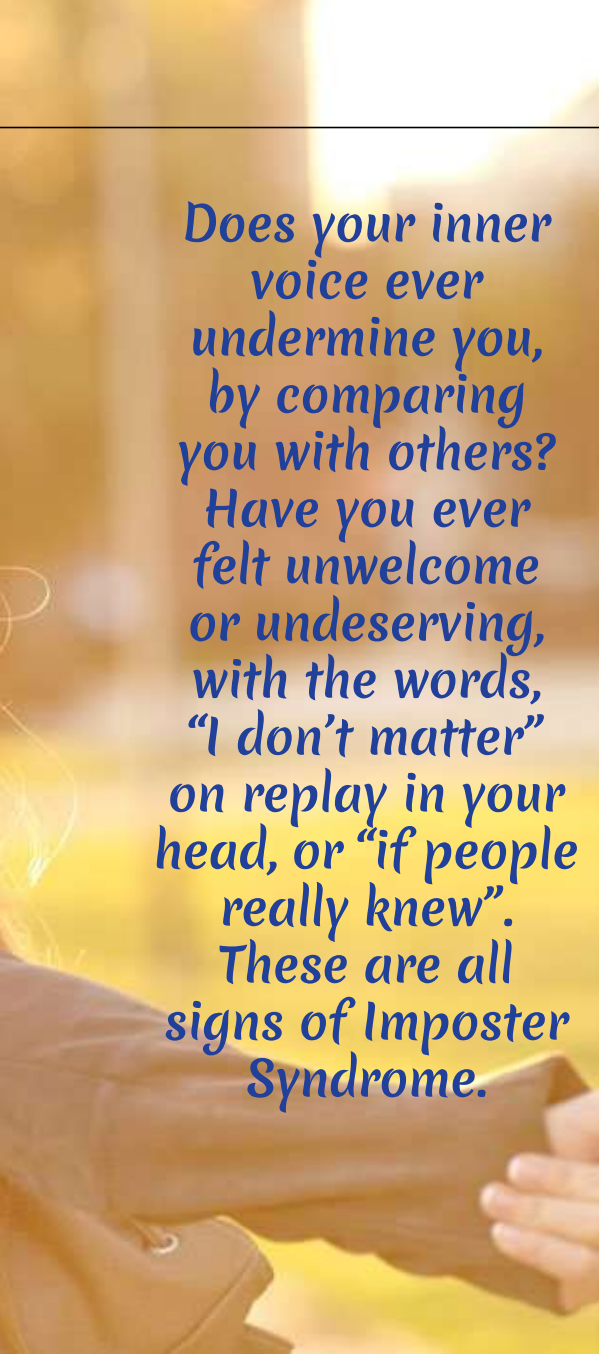
These words from my childhood still ring in my head “Who do you think you are?” Being asked to justify your very existence. Patterns get laid down in the psyche really early and can stay with us throughout adult life. I definitely suffered from low self-esteem as a child, resulting in little confidence, plus I’m an introvert, so standing out was my worst nightmare. It can be easy to feel like you’re in the wrong place. Have you ever doubted yourself, felt as if you didn’t belong, and that someone might eventually find out?

What is Imposter Syndrome

Imposter Syndrome, can be defined as “a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents, or accomplishments and has a persistent internalised fear of being exposed as a “fraud”. I define it simply as “not feeling good enough!” In my work as a psychologist, this is the most common life script I come across. So many people just don’t feel good enough, and that includes lots of Yoga Teachers. You may be a new teacher and not yet

confident, or more established and not confident with all the technology required these days, or a combination. Not feeling good enough can plague us all at different times in our lives.

It’s called a syndrome because it can show up in our lives in a myriad of different ways. Not feeling good enough, having recurring doubts, fears, feeling small, downplaying achievements, shrinking, avoiding being in your full power; plus the dread of exposure and feeling like a fraud. Does your inner voice ever undermine you, by comparing you with others? Have you ever felt



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I hear more and more people getting distressed by Imposter syndrome; a term that was coined by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978. Research suggests it can affect people from all walks of life and have a deeply negative impact.

Implications of not feeling good enough

1

The desire to work harder than other people

We live in societies that cultivate a strong work ethic. This can feed into Imposter Syndrome, where there may be a tendency to work hard because you don’t feel that you deserve to rest. If you don’t believe in yourself, then you may fear failure and as a result, keep working hard to the point of burnout, and still not achieve the result you desire.

2

Low Self-esteem

Low Self-esteem and undervaluing yourself go hand in hand. This has numerous implications for your Mental Health and wellbeing. You may not invest in yourself or your yoga business when needed. You may not charge enough for your services. This can result in feelings of resentment, anxiety, shame, and ultimately depression.

3

Perfectionism and Procrastination

When perfectionism and procrastination kick in, they can seriously hold you back. And Imposter Syndrome is definitely a trigger for these two thieves. They can rob you of satisfaction and fulfilment. You may for example set unrealistic goals that tap right into feelings of not being worthy.

4

I can do it all myself syndrome

This is probably deserving of an entire article. We have all been there, especially those who are self-employed, heart-centred businesses. Not always seeing the need for support, for mentors, or feeling able to ask for and receive help. That’s where the fear of being seen and found out can raise its head and create limitations for you.

Is Imposter Syndrome holding you back?

Do you identify with any of these implications? Can you see where Imposter Syndrome can be problematic? Is it holding you back in any area of your life? I want to share with you, how to start shedding the

limitations of Imposter Syndrome and begin releasing what holds you back, so you can move forward and enjoy the fullness of your life.

Before I share some solutions with you, let me just say, I have never identified with imposter syndrome, and there is a reason for that. As I said earlier Imposter Syndrome is a psychological pattern, it is a mindset issue. I am not promising instant results, but I am asking you to be open

to instant change. I often say on my Spiritual Coach Training and also with my Coaching clients: *"Change can happen in an instant; it's resistance that takes time."*

So if you have been experiencing Imposter Syndrome, if it has been holding you back, and you are ready to release it and move forward; I invite you to take a deep breath and be open to change.

Beliefs and values that can release Imposter Syndrome

It may be easier than initially suspected.

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1

Self Care

Start with nurturing you. Taking care of self is paramount. And that means plenty

of rest. When you are stressed out, overworked, and running on empty you cannot do your best work. No one can! It's physiologically impossible! Stress chemicals flood your system, the pre-frontal cortex is deprived of energy, brainwaves are no longer conducive to problem-solving and the nervous system is stuck on flight or fight. You have to become a priority in your life. And of course, Yoga provides many of the tools needed. Start to value rest, make time for relaxation in Yoga Classes and in your daily life, watch what changes.

2 Acknowledge and Approve
Speak to yourself, as you would a treasured friend. You speak with yourself more than anyone else speaks to you. Do your words affirm or dismiss? Think about it, and be willing to speak to yourself with respect. Try addressing yourself as you would address someone you love dearly.



3 Principles to live by
It can be useful when releasing Imposter Syndrome to have some principles to live by. These principles elevate you. For example *Progress, not Perfection!* This can help you move forward instead of staying stuck. Less is more, is one of my favourite principles. Often things are not as difficult as we think and we need to do less, not more to get our desired results.

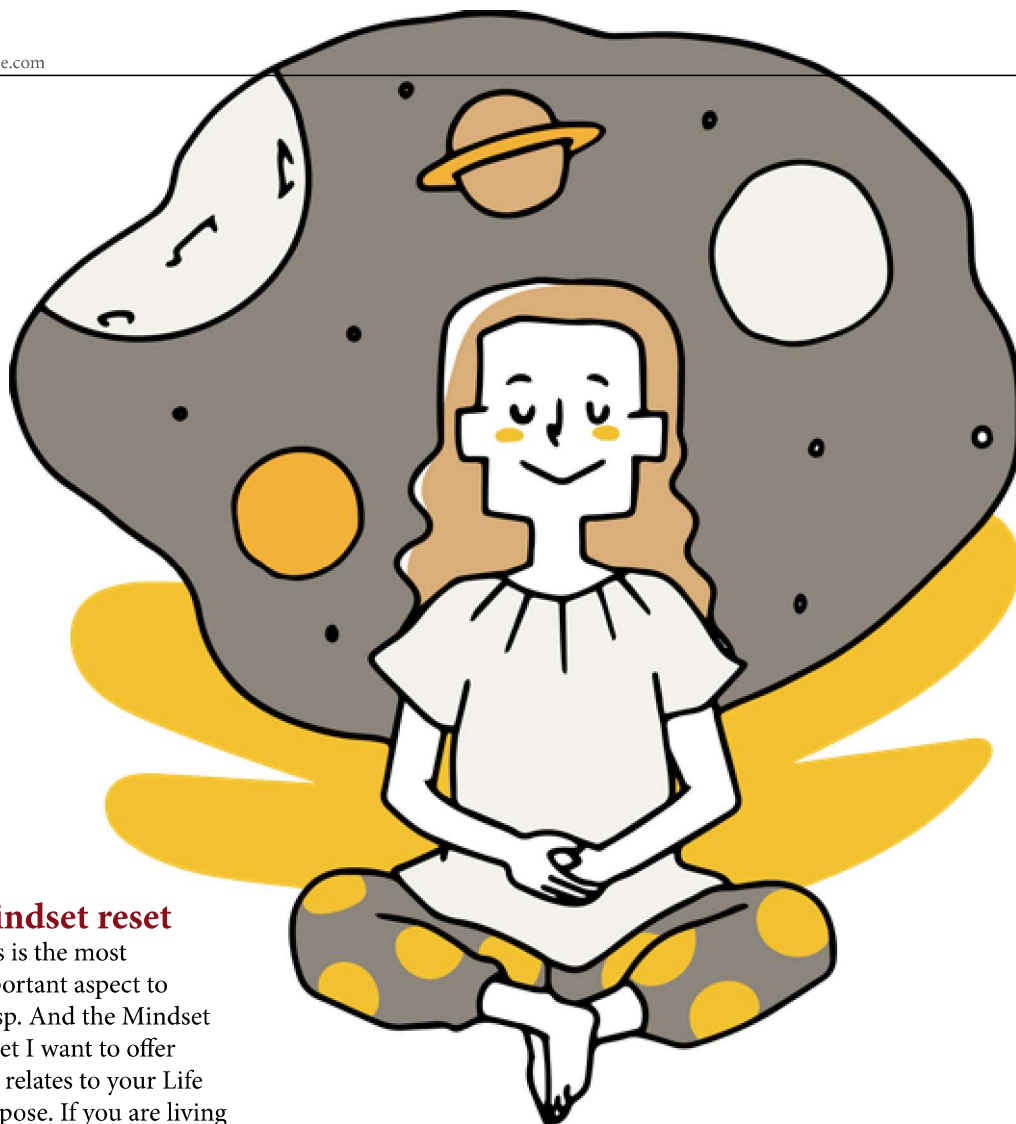
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4

Don't be afraid to ask for help

I have found this challenging too. But all successful people have Mentors, Coaches, and Trainers. They do not go it alone, and nor should you. It's that simple. Determine what you need and ask for assistance. People will be happy to support you if they know you need help.



5

Mindset reset

This is the most important aspect to grasp. And the Mindset re-set I want to offer you relates to your Life Purpose. If you are living

on purpose in your life, you cannot be an Imposter. If you are aligned with your *Dharma*, you cannot be an imposter, if you are walking on Purpose, you cannot be an Imposter. So, are you doing the work you were born to do? Are you living your life on Purpose?

I mentioned at the beginning of this article, that I don't identify with Imposter Syndrome. Despite being an introvert, I have travelled all over the world speaking to large audiences on many stages. I said there is a reason I don't identify with Imposter Syndrome. This is what I have learnt and the main message I want to leave you with: Only you can be you. There isn't another you. And when you are being the best you, you can be; you cannot be an imposter. Remember *you are totally unique, just like everyone else*. You deserve to shine.

As you release Imposter Syndrome and start to flourish, as your inner voice starts to affirm you, always remember in the words of Marianne Williamson, *"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure."* Don't blend into the background afraid of being seen, when you were born to stand out! Release Imposter syndrome. Reclaim your inner power and flourish!

Caroline Shola Arewa is a leading figure in the world of Spirituality and Wellness. She has delivered her energy-based work internationally for over 3 decades. Psychologist and author of five books, including bestseller *'Opening to Spirit and Energy 4 Life'*, Shola offers The Spiritual Coach Training Program and Mentors Heart-centred businesses worldwide.

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