

# Socratic Questioning to Recognize Imposter Syndrome



## Metacognitive Restructuring

Imposter Phenomena/Syndrome is when a high achieving individual doubts their skills, intelligence, or achievements despite having the evidence that proves otherwise. At its root, this is due to a broken metacognitive process that makes the individual internalize their perceived fails and externalize wins. This can lead to anxiety, depression, and fear of success This can be repaired by rewiring your thought patterns.

**Instructions:** Identify a thought that you suspect could be harmful and utilize the questions below to fully examine it. Answer each question as though you are providing support for a loved one.

### Thought I want to question:

*Example: I don't know what I'm doing, I'm just really great at making it look like I do.*

### What is the evidence for this thought? Against it?

*Example: Evidence for this is my gut feeling. Evidence against it is I have been doing the work for two years and am told by my peers and supervisor that I am doing a great job.*

### Am I basing this thought on feelings rather than facts?

*Example: Mostly feelings*

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### Is this thought critical or constructive?

*Example: It's critical because it focuses on my faults rather than ways to move forward.*

### Could my thought be an exaggeration of what's true?

*Example: Possibly, I don't always know exactly what to do but I know how to figure it out.*

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**How might a loved one interpret the same situation differently?**

*Example: They might say the work I do is challenging, but I find a way.*

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**Is my thought based more on habit or a past experience than what's true now?**

*Example: In the past when younger, I was told often that I don't know what I'm talking about and had my opinions mostly ignored. Now I have peers who seek out my opinion.*

**Is someone else's opinion influencing my own? Would I seek out their advice?**

*Example: My former colleague's critiques are influencing my opinion, I wouldn't seek their advice because they seldom offer solutions with their critiques.*

**Is my thought a likely scenario or just a possibility?**

*Example: Based on the limited evidence to show it's true, it is just a possibility.*

**Drawing from your answers, rewrite your thought so it's more accurate and balanced:**

*Example: At times I might feel unsure, even so I have and am capable of figuring out what to do next.*

