



Episode 43: OVERCOME IMPOSTER SYNDROME

This is the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast with Lindsay Preston Episode 43, Overcome Imposter Syndrome.

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Welcome to the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast, the show for goal-getting, fear-facing women for kicking ass by creating change. I'm your host, Lindsay Preston. I'm a wife, mom of two, and a multi-certified life coach to women all over the world. I've lived through enough in life to know that easier doesn't always equate to better. We can't fear the fire, we must learn to become it. On this show, I'll teach you how to do just that. Join me as I challenge you to become even more of the strong, resilient, and powerful woman you were meant to be. Let's do this.

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Hi there, Ms. Unstoppable. Welcome to another episode of the show. Hopefully by now you've listen to many episodes of the show, you're loving it, and that's why you're back for another one. I just want to give a shout-out. If you haven't left a review for the show, please go do so, especially if you listen on Apple podcast. I would so appreciate it. Your review gives me that motivation to say, "Whoa, let's keep doing this stuff. Let's keep putting out this free content. Let's keep making it happen." There are hours upon hours and hundreds of dollars spent on each episode to deliver this free content, believe it or not.

Those reviews only take a few minutes of your time. It's free for you to do and it helps you keep getting this amazing content. Thank you so much in advance for leaving that review. Now, what are we talking about today? It's overcoming impostor syndrome and this is an episode that has been requested from me for goodness, at least a year now from many clients who have sad, "Lindsay, I struggle with impostor syndrome. What do you know about impostor syndrome? I feel like I have it, let's talk about it."

We've talked about in in coaching and we got to the heart of the matter many times through coaching, but to be honest, I really haven't liked the term impostor syndrome and I felt like I really couldn't relate to it because the heart of impostor syndrome is you feel like you're a fraud. You feel like you're not as qualified as everybody else and that what has



happened to you and where you are in your life or especially in your career is just a fluke. You just got lucky and everyone's going to find out that you're not as qualified as you should be or how everybody else is.

For me, I was like, "Oh, I don't feel that way. I know my stuff and I am honored and da, da, da, da, da." Then this past year, I've really gotten into an assessment called the Enneagram. You may have heard of it, it's very hot right now. It's all over Instagram, everyone talking about what number they are and how that relates to this Disney princess who's at number, and what kind of things you're doing in quarantine based on your number, and how you show up in all these different areas based on your number. I'm sure you've seen all the posts. I've really explored my Enneagram number which is five and fives are all about knowing things on a very deep level.

One of our deepest fears is being inadequate and appearing stupid. When I first discovered this, after I learned I was a five and I was in a workshop and the workshop leader said it out loud, "This is how fives feel." I felt like somebody had taken a knife and dug it in my heart a little bit. I felt like I have been exposed to, like someone had ripped all my clothes off and thrown me in front of a crowded room. When she said that, I was like, "Oh my gosh, she has exposed a fear in me, that I don't even know was there." I believe now, looking back on it, then I had this cockiness in a sense of, "Oh, I don't have impostor syndrome. I know myself and da, da, da," as a way to really hide inside how I was feeling. Can you relate to that? Oh, my goodness.

I must admit, this episode is hard for me, because I am still in this journey of understanding just how deep this fear is within me of appearing like I don't know what I'm talking about or fearing that. Right? Or putting myself out there and someone realizing that I don't know everything, because I don't, I don't know everything. I have to keep reminding myself that I do know a lot and I can keep putting that out there. Anyways, that's my tangent on where I am with my impostor syndrome and I tell you all that just let you know, I am in this journey with you.

I am holding your hand as we are walking down this whole impostor syndrome thing and many women are walking with us. It has been found that a lot of women experience these feelings of feeling like a fraud and that they're not enough. It's particularly shown in a lot of minority women, or just in minorities in general. Some of the research out there shows because we haven't seen women or minorities leading or doing certain professions as much as maybe white men or seeing other white men in the professions they're in. It's harder for us because for a lot of us, we're the first, right?



We're the first in our generation to maybe go to college, the first woman in a certain profession, or maybe you're in just a male-dominated industry and you're one of few women, your mom was a stay-at-home mom and you're not, and all of the things. Right? We just want models as much as maybe white men have been modeled, where they are at this point in their life. For us, it's like, "Well, I don't know if I'm doing it well because I haven't seen it." You have to do that whole thing of fake it till you make it of, "Okay, I'm just putting on this face and doing what I think I know I should do, but deep down, I don't really know if what I'm doing is right or wrong."

The research has also shown that a lot of people with high inner perfectionist have impostor syndrome. Perfectionism is something I'm working on with my clients, it's something that I actually test them for as they're going through my *Become An Unstoppable Woman* course. They're tested on all these kind of inner personas that are holding them back, we call the inner mean girl.

As I said perfectionism is one of them, and so people who have high perfectionist, they are really into the details, they want of course everything to be perfect, no surprise there, but when they're able to, in essence, diminish their perfectionist, or just calm that perfectionist down, they are the most talented people out there. They're the ones that just rock it, and they're able to use that streak of perfectionism in a way where it's awe-inspiring.

Again, if you are in this boat of, "Okay, I think I have impostor syndrome," just know that you likely have an high inner perfectionist and no, when it's focused in in the right way, you are an extremely talented person, my friend. I know if I was on the listening end of this, there would be a part of me that would say, "Heck, yes, I am," and a part of me that would be thinking, "Am I? Am I talented? I don't know." [chuckles] Can you relate? Oh, my goodness.

Today, we're just going to talk about how we can start to overcome this thing. I'm going to give you a couple tips on how you can start to recognize when you're in impostor syndrome, because a lot of times, it's living in our unconscious mind that we're doing behaviors based on this, in essence, inner perfectionist that's wanting us to prove ourselves and all of a sudden, we're not feeling good about ourselves, or maybe we're just doing too much and then we're burned out and not getting what we deserve in certain relationships, and in our career and things of that sort. It's really important that we know how to recognize that we're in that space and then, two, how we can do some work to diminish it.



When we're living in a space of impostor syndrome, we're coming out the world, yes, from an achievement place because if you think you're an impostor, you're going to want to prove yourself, but when you're wanting to prove yourself and you're seeking, in essence, external validation to prove to your mind that, "Hey, I'm not an impostor, look at all the things that I've done. Look at all the awards I've won and all the money I have made and how I've climbed the corporate ladder and help these people," or whatever it is, it's still not going to diminish the impostor syndrome.

The research has shown this that despite someone's external accolades, inside that inner perfectionist is still going to eat away at them. If you think, "Oh, when I hit this level in my career, when this happens, then I won't feel like an impostor anymore." That is not the way to go about this. We have to win it from the inside out and learn how to diminish them. That's what we're going to cover today. Buckle up, my friend, it's going to be a fun one. Let's first off talk about signs that you are heading into an impostor syndrome space. The first is that it is difficult for you to accept praise. Somebody is coming to you and saying, "Wow, great work on that project." Or, "Man, you just look so great today." Or "Man, you're an amazing mother."

Whatever it is, they're throwing praise your way and it's hard for you to accept it, that is a big sign that you may be living an impostor syndrome. I mentioned earlier that a lot of impostor syndrome people have a high inner perfectionist, that they also likely have two other inner voices that aren't so fun either. The first being their inner critic. Again, somebody throws a compliment their way and all of a sudden, that inner critic comes out and it's like, "No, you're not, you're not a great mom." Or, "They didn't see that one mistake on my paper. Oh, if they only knew that X, Y, Z was not in the paper, it should have been," or, "blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

For me, I will get praised from time to time of different things, especially from clients. When I'm done working with a client, they're like, "Oh, Lindsay, you've changed my life. You've done all these amazing things." Back in the day, it was really hard for me to take that in. I would say or think in my mind, "Oh, well, it was just a fluke, like we just meshed well together. It's just we've worked really well together and that's why we got amazing results." Or if somebody comes and tells me something about my business of, "Oh, my gosh, I just love your emails," or, "I love this post that you did on Instagram," or whatever it is, or this podcast, I'll just think sometimes like, "Oh, okay, well, it was just for the right person at the right time and it really wasn't that great. It's just that they got it and no big deal."



Already, I'm not fully accepting the praise, and you're likely doing this too. It can come out, like I said, is that inner critic and just being really harsh on you or it can be coming out in these little sly ways too of, "It was just the right person at the right time, or I just got lucky," and things of that sort. Now, I want to go back and I said there are two voices that the person with imposter syndrome has. I mentioned the perfectionist so that's not one of my two I'm mentioning here. I said the inner critic and the other one is an inner doubter.

They have that doubting voice inside of them that doubts themselves and doubts others. I know for me, this is a way in which if somebody shoots a compliment my way, my inner doubter will say, "What does he or she know? She doesn't know that much about coaching, or maybe she's not the smartest person and so I can't really trust what she's saying, my way." I can't it's like, oh, can you believe that our inner voices do this to us? It's ridiculous. Another reason why I wanted to do this episode today is I'm a part of this thing called the squad. I'm in a group called Ellevate, it's a women's networking group and I highly recommend joining.

They have chapters all around the US, and I think all over the world, but I may be wrong in that. I know they have chapters all over the US. In my squad, I have about I think six or seven women from all over the US. Every week, we have a different hot seat and we talk about things that are going on in our careers or in our businesses and how we feel. Week after week already as we're getting into these hot seats, because it's a new thing is all these amazing women.

I'm talking about like Ivy League graduates, partners in law firms, and they have these amazing businesses and they do all these incredible things and yet, when they get in their hot seats, the same things come up about, "I don't feel like I'm good enough to do X, Y, Z. I know I should be making blah, blah, blah, but yet, I feel da, da, da." I'm sitting there, pulling my hair out inside and to wanting to cry, because I just think, "Oh, my gosh, all these inner voices that we have of this inner critic and doubter and perfectionist, it's not serving us because when I look at them from the outside, I just think she's incredible and amazing."

There's so many calls we've had already where we're just reassuring one another of I would absolutely be paying you for that. That is an amazing service and what you do is incredible and just know that you're way better than you're giving yourself credit for. I really think that you're probably in this boat too of you're putting yourself down, you're not fully accepting the praise when it's given your way. Now, I will say I have worked on this in my own life over the years. Before, I would just not accept a compliment at all if somebody



threw one my way, I would easily and quickly dodge it and just be like, "Oh, well, blah, blah, blah, blah. blah."

For example, if they say, "I love your outfit," I wouldn't necessarily judge it in a very black and white way of, "Oh, why would you say that?" It would be more of, "Oh, I got a great sale on it." Or if they said, "Oh, I love your hair today." I would be like, "Oh, I just randomly had a great hair day today." Or, "I love that project you did." I would say, "Oh, did you see that mistake I made on slide 4? Oh, my gosh, I was just so embarrassed." I had to learn to just when somebody shot praise my way, I would take a deep breath [breathes] and then I would say thank you and I would just leave it at that. Even if they saw my mistake on slide 4, even if I was just having a random good hair day, even if my outfit was on sale, who cares? I just say thank you.

That took me a couple months of just learning how to accept the praise and sit with it and soak in it. Then the next phase came of, okay, now I've sat in the space of accepting praise and now I really want to feel the praise. This phase came from me when I was getting a lot of clients who were getting a lot of results and because I was working with many clients, they were coming quickly, especially if I was working with a group of clients and they were all at the same place, and so they all ended at the same time and then we would wrap and all the winds and all the goodness would come my way. I remember the first time this happening, I got off the phone and I just bawled and I cried and for some reason, I just went in a funk for a couple of weeks, and I didn't really want to get out of bed that much. I thought, "What is going on with me?"

Here I am, I just finished my first group program, they all got amazing results and then at the time, I was about to get married, and all these other great things are happening in my life and yet, I couldn't fully accept it and soak it in. As I heard to process the feelings of all that and realize what was going on, then I said, "Okay, I need to learn how to feel the feelings of this goodness and just take it in and really start to love myself a little more." I had to do some inner healing with that, I must admit from things of my past, and they were little things, things that you wouldn't think would still impact a person, like what a boy did to me in the eighth and ninth grade.

The things that just like I said, things that happened in school that you would think, "Oh, that was so piddly and not that big of a deal but for whatever reason in my brain, it really formed these beliefs around me not being good enough. That really fed into the imposter syndrome and not being able to accept compliments. If you're in that space, you're not accepting compliments, just check that box, you're probably experiencing some imposter syndrome. Know that you can start to diminish that by learning what those inner voices



are, we call them the inner mean girl voice as I said, you can do this in my Becoming Unstoppable Woman course. I'm starting to diminish that.

Then two, knowing it's a process, there may be some inner healing work that's needed there because that's where it all started this imposter syndrome of some things happened in your past to form these beliefs to say, "Hey, you're not good enough, or you're not smart enough, or you're not this or not that." It's just not true. We have to go in and explore those memories, heal them, reprogram them. In essence, again, we did this in my Becoming Unstoppable Woman course. I didn't mean to make this whole podcast like a pitch for my course but that course does really help you in this area of your life.

All right. What's the next sign that you have imposter syndrome? You overwork yourself to make up for that unconscious belief that you're not enough. A lot of ambitious women and men, they are working themselves constantly, burning the-- what do they call it? I can't even think of it. Burning the candle at both ends or something, I think the saying is. You're probably screaming at the phone what it is, but yes, they are just going, going, going. Again, raising my hand here, I was that person. I was always a person that had a job and a side hustle. I was working so hard at both things that I was putting myself into to a point of exhaustion.

Even people would say, "Oh you're employee of the month," or, "O h, my gosh, look at how you've turned this business around from the struggling dance studio with only 17 kids to 200 within a few months. How did you do that?" That would still never be enough for me. It would still just like I couldn't feel the achievement. I couldn't feel like it was enough. I would just always look at the next goal and the next thing to do and just think, "Well, I'm not to this next point yet. Yes, maybe I took 17 to 200 kids, but that's not a super successful dance studio. Now I need to take 200 and make it 300 and take 300 and make it 400. I'm not going to rest until I'm at 500."

Even with my coaching business, when I started my coaching business, it was all these checkboxes that I need to hit in order to feel successful and to feel like I had made it and I was a great coach and I'm a great businesswoman. It's just total BS. I really had to stop and catch myself. To be honest, I still have to catch myself. Now, I've gotten to a place where I've really done some work around knowing that I'm an amazing coach and know that I can give great results to people, but there's still a part of me that says, "Okay, well, yes, you may have done some work saying you're a great coach," and I've done some work around being a great mother, I'm still doing a little bit of work about saying I'm a great wife, but the big thing that my inner voice loves to tell me lately is I'm not a great businesswoman.



Knowing, A, that that's there, awareness is always the first step to change, because for a lot of us, we're not even aware of what that inner voice is telling us. It's whispering in our ear. We're not hearing it. Again, it's in the unconscious mind. We have to put a little megaphone on it and say, "What's going on here? Why is it that I'm working so much? Why is it that I'm just going, going, going, and I'm never feeling fulfilled? I'm never feeling complete. I feel like I'm just always one step behind where I want to be. Even if on paper, I may be many steps ahead or be in a place where other people would view it as great, why is it that I'm not fulfilled?"

It's really important, again, that you start to turn up the volume on what's going on behind the scenes so that you can become aware of it. Then you can start to see why is that voice telling me those things. Where is that coming from? A lot of times, that's memories from our past, going in and healing that work and then we have to reprogram them. It sounds a little funky if you're new to this whole process of me talking through that. It's all backed by neuroscience. This is just the way that our mind works. It's a super big travesty.

Travesty, is that even a word? What is going on with me? A tragedy, this is a huge tragedy. We're not learning those things in school of just basic how our mind works and having somebody like a coach or a teacher walk us through a process like I do in my Becoming an Unstoppable Woman course of here's how to understand your beliefs and your emotions and heal them and reprogram them. We would all be rocking and rolling and not having to face this crap that's going on in our mind all the time, and again, it's to strive for more and more and more and not be satisfied.

A really great life, my friend, is one where you can just be and not constantly feeling like you're always having to achieve and always having to be perfect and always having to know more and always be in control. Just allowing things to just slow down and be enough. If you're listening to this episode live or somewhat live, we're going through that right now with this quarantine stuff. With the Coronavirus, we're all having to slow down. For a lot of people with some imposter syndrome who are used to all the accolades of achieving and being out there in the world and getting stuff done, you're freaking the F out right now because a lot of that is turned off.

Maybe they've adjusted to getting accolades and moving and grooving in other ways, but for those who can't, maybe because they have kids at home, and so they're just not able to move and groove as much as they've used to, or they're out of work, or things of that sort, it's a huge wakeup call right now. I know I hit this a few years ago. I was really like the golden girl when I started my career in human resources. Like I said, I was like Employee of the Month really early on, and all these other things.



I had my dance studio and I was, go, go, go, achieve, achieve, achieve, and then I had my daughter, and I've left all that behind because I know or I just felt like she really needed me. It really rocked my world to not have that external validation anymore. Instead, I just had this little child who was looking at me and needed all these things from me. Instead of getting paid with cash, I was getting paid with kisses, which was great, but two, I was also in a relationship that was falling apart and he gave me no accolades. In essence, he was living a double life with another woman. How horrible is that for somebody that really feeds off of that stuff?

That was my time to really say, "Whoa, what is going on here? Something needs to change because I can't be so addicted to the external world to validate who I am." That's, again, is what the imposter syndrome is all about too, of when you slow down, you realize, "Hey, not all these accolades can go my way anymore." You start to realize, "Wow, there's something going on with me, and I need to figure out what it is." It's actually a huge blessing if you're in that space right now, to just be for a little bit and feel this.

Being on the other side of this now and realizing no matter what happens externally, if I get all accolades in the world or I get none, I still love myself. I still think I'm amazing most of the time, not all the time, but most of the time, and still deeply fulfilled internally. That's what creates a great life. That's what creates internal fulfillment and a sense of peace, and yet, achievement too. I achieve more in my life now than I ever did in those years when I was just going and going and going. Not only that, I felt like crap. I did not like the burnout feel. I did not like all the stress I was creating. It was hard on my body. Granted, I was young. My young body could put up with it, but there's just no way I could have kept on without momentum.

All right. Just to recap, again, you may be experiencing imposter syndrome if you are just overworking yourself a lot. Those are just two quick signs. I'm sure we could go into so many more. I am trying to keep this podcast episode a little bit short because I think for a lot of people with imposter syndrome, it can be really mind-blowing to just know that they have it. I do want to tap in some ways that you can overcome imposter syndrome really quick so that you can start to implement these maybe in subtle ways in your life, try some out, and start to see how that diminishes and how you feel so you can experience a little taste of what it's like on the other side of this, or just further along in your journey of imposter syndrome.

The first thing that I'm going to suggest on how you can overcome impostor syndrome is something that helped me tremendously, and what was really one of the biggest game-changers, from feeling like I wasn't enough to feeling like I was more than enough. That



was taking an assessment called the Clifton Strengths, also called Strengths Finder. If you follow me for a while, if you're a client of mine, you know I love this assessment. I'm talking about it all the time. I'm teaching from it. I even have a course that helps you take the assessment, and granted the assessment is pretty easy to take. It takes about 30 minutes. I think it's 19.99 to get your top five results.

There is a slight charge for it and I don't get any compensation for that, but then you get your results, and then I walk you through how to understand what your top strengths are. Your strengths are your natural talents. It's those things that you do, time and time again, to a near-perfect status, and you don't even realize it because it comes so natural to you. Why would you think that doing something like learning content, which is a strength called learner, why would you think that that would be a strength? We don't typically think of something like that as a strength. Or why would you think being able to move into action and getting started and motivate others to get into action, why would you think that's a strength?

We've, again, never really been taught that that could be something that could be a strength. Then two, you may just assume, "Well, everybody else has this, because it comes so easily to me." It's really important you go and you take that assessment. Then I really encourage you to take my strengths course. It's called Solidify Your Strengths. You can find out more about it just at solidifyyourstrengths.com. Again, in that course, I'm going to walk you through what your strengths are.

In fact, I'm going to walk you through all the strengths so that if you unlock your full list or if you have peers or people you're in relationship with that have their strengths unlocked, you can look at what their strengths are and understand them on a deeper level. I'll even walk you through how to use your strengths with your marriage and with your children and many, many things. At the core of the course, again, you're just going to learn about what makes you unique and special.

Just a fun fact for you, there's only one in 33 million people have the exact same top five strengths as you in the same order. If we were to expand that and look at your top 10 strengths or your top 15 strengths, the number would be even harder to find somebody who is as unique and special as you. When you're starting to take that in of, "Hey, I'm really unique and special, I'm one of a kind here, or just one in 33 million, if not more," because then if too, if we pair in your background and your passions, and your thinking and all that, you really are one in a million, my friend.



Then you start to take that in, you really soak it in and you have this concrete data to say, "Hey, here's how I'm unique and special." It changes the game and allows you to see that you're not an imposter at all. In fact, you bring a unique set of skills. I always call it your recipe, your unique cake to the world. It starts to calm that inner voice a lot and we talk about that a lot in my trainings of, okay, if you have this strength, this is likely how this negative inner voice is going to show up for you. This is likely what it's going to look like when the strength is in overdrive. Here's a way to balance that, so that you're moving and grooving, you're not feeling things like imposter syndrome or just staying stuck or whatever you want to call it. Instead, you're able to recognize it and move forward.

Again, I really suggest you taking that strengths assessments called Clifton Strengths and then taking my course called Solidify Your Strengths. Again, you can find all the information on solidifyyourstrengths.com. I'll leave a link in the show notes. Just a fun little tidbit for you, if you're listening to this episode somewhat live, I'm actually going to be running a really quick flash sell on that course. If you're on my email list, you will find out more information about that. Just keep your eyes posted for that.

The second thing that you can do to start to diminish your imposter syndrome is just talk about it. Talk about it with other people, knowing that you're not alone, knowing that this is just part of our human DNA, becoming aware of it, like I said earlier, is really important because if we can't recognize this kind of thing, a lot of times we just think we're crazy or that there's something wrong with us. We just keep repeating the cycle. When we wake up and realize, "Whoa, okay. This is just a normal thing. It's something that I have and it's something I can change."

I was reading an article as I was preparing for this podcast, from the woman who coined the term imposter syndrome. She said, "I wish I would have never come up with syndrome on it." I forget what she said she would have had it instead, but she said, "Syndrome is such a poor word because it makes us think that there's something wrong with us, that that's a disease and imposter syndrome is not a disease. It's just a way of thinking that we need to change." Just knowing that this is just a way of thinking that you can change is so freeing and knowing too that it happens a lot more to women and especially minorities.

That's simply because we just haven't had examples a lot of times to show us, "Hey, here's how it is to be on the side of things." Then you just know, "Okay, this is just part of the journey and that's just something I need to recognize and learn a little bit about and shift and then be about on my way," so that you're not out there hustling all the time and just feeling like you're never going to be enough. That feeling sucks, doesn't it? It sucks so bad, so, so bad. I'm just going to leave it at those two quick tips. Hopefully, you'll take me up on



one of those of maybe joining my community, lindsayepreston.com/community of where you can go and talk about imposter syndrome.

There are some books out there in the market. There's many articles out there in the market to learn more about it. Maybe you'll find other communities where you can talk about it. Just know it's a thing, it is happening everywhere. Like I said, it's happening even in my little Ellevate squad group with some peers of mine. You're not alone in this and hopefully, you gained a lot from today's episode of just recognizing what imposter syndrome is and starting to realize, "Hey, this is something that I can change in my life." Thank you so much, my friend, for tuning into this episode. I hope to see you here on the show again soon.

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Hey there, Miss Unstoppable. Thanks so much for tuning into this episode. If you enjoyed it, share it with a friend. Send them a picture of this episode via text, via email, share it on social media, I'm sure they would be so appreciative to know these strategies and tips on how to accomplish your dreams. If you are ready to guarantee you're going to accomplish your goals and dreams, then it's time to start coaching with me.

In my nine-month simple success coaching system, I am going to walk you every single step of the way to ensure that you get the goals and dreams that you want. The first step is to apply for a free 60-minute consult call. Just go to LindsayEpreston.com/apply to get started. As always, my friend, remember, you're only as unstoppable as you believe you can be, so believe in yourself. You got this.