

# DESTROY IMPOSTER SYNDROME

How to overcome imposter syndrome when transitioning from an executive to non-executive.

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Making the transition from an executive to a non-executive role is a daunting task. Its understandable that such a significant change may trigger what we know as “Imposter syndrome” which Wikipedia describes as “a psychological occurrence in which people doubt their skills, talents, or accomplishments and have a fear of being exposed as a fraud”. If we are honest with ourselves, we all have felt like this at some point in time. Often when we step out of our comfort zone and venture into a new role or activity. Its therefore completely understandable that these feelings are often felt by executives stepping up into the “hands off” world of the NED.

In this article we explore some coping strategies that could help. Overcoming imposter syndrome requires self-awareness, perspective, and proactive steps to build confidence.

1

**Recognise your achievements:** Take stock of your accomplishments as an executive. Reflect on the skills, knowledge, and experiences that have contributed to your success. Remind yourself of the value you bring to the table.

2

**Accept the learning curve:** Understand that transitioning to a non-executive role involves adjusting to new responsibilities and expectations. Recognise that it's natural to feel out of your comfort zone initially. Give yourself permission to learn and grow in your new role.

3

**Seek support:** Reach out to mentors, colleagues, or friends who can provide guidance and reassurance. Discuss your concerns and feelings of imposter syndrome with them. Their perspective can help you gain insight and alleviate self-doubt.

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**Embrace the learning mindset:** Approach your new role with a mindset of continuous learning. Focus on expanding your skills, acquiring new knowledge, and adapting to the non-executive position. Emphasise growth and improvement rather than perfection.



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**Set realistic expectations:** Understand that you may not have all the answers immediately, and that's OK. Set realistic expectations for yourself, acknowledging that you are in a transitional phase. Break down your goals into smaller, achievable steps.

8

**Seek feedback and learn from others:** Actively seek feedback from colleagues and stakeholders. Engage in conversations to learn from their experiences and perspectives. Embrace constructive criticism as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

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**Celebrate small victories:** Acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments along the way, even if they seem minor. Recognize that progress takes time, and each small step forward is a sign of growth and development.

9

**Focus on your strengths:** Identify your strengths and leverage them in your new role. Understand how your unique skill set can contribute to the organisation's success. Building on your strengths can boost your confidence and counteract imposter syndrome.

7

**Challenge negative self-talk:** Be aware of your self-talk and challenge negative thoughts that contribute to imposter syndrome. Replace self-critical statements with positive affirmations. Remind yourself of your capabilities and past achievements.

10

**Practice self-care:** Take care of your physical and mental well-being. Engage in activities that help reduce stress and promote a positive mindset, such as exercise, mindfulness, hobbies, and spending time with loved ones. Taking care of yourself is essential for maintaining confidence and resilience.

*"Remember, overcoming imposter syndrome is an ongoing process. Be patient with yourself and celebrate your progress along the way. Transitioning to a non-executive role can offer new opportunities for growth and fulfilment, and with time and experience, your confidence will continue to strengthen. Most of the time you will be the smartest person in the room – share your wisdom and grow!"*

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