



Episode #11: Imposter Syndrome

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

feelings, agility, fraud, imposter, wins, imposter syndrome, impostor syndrome, success, thoughts, podcast, moment, failure, podcast episode, challenge, pretty, dog, feel, risks, life, easy

This is the agility challenge podcast with Daisy peel, you're listening to Episode 11. Welcome to the agility challenge podcast. I'm your host, Daisy peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk, and my lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do lists and so long that you don't even know where to get started, then this podcast is for you. For more podcast episodes, training, content and coaching from me, head to [www W agility challenge.com](http://www.wagilitychallenge.com). Where members get access to monthly training and handling challenges, in addition to league play, and a whole lot more. Let's dive in with today's episode. You worked hard on your training, and your handling and your mental game. So that when you step into the ring, you've got all your bases covered. And it works. You do well, you have a great run, you're connected with your dog, you're in the zone, you maintain criteria on your start line on your contacts. And your cues were timely and sharp. You cross the finish line and it's amazing. You know that you did well, just now your fellow competitors congratulate you. And then in response to their praise and their congratulations, you say something like, Oh, I just got lucky. Oh, it won't happen again for a while. Oh, the course was in our favor. The stars aligned or something like that. This, my friends is imposter syndrome, rearing its ugly head. And that's what I'm going to talk about. In today's episode, I'm going to talk about what impostor syndrome is, why it happens. How to avoid suffering from impostor syndrome, different types of imposters, who suffers from impostor syndrome, and how it can undermine your ability to really enjoy the sport and contribute to anxiety and ringed nerves. And also how it can interfere with your ability to continue to progress with your skills and your training. So first off, what is impostor



syndrome? Imposter syndrome is that feeling that despite having enjoyed success at something, you feel like a complete failure who just happened to have some luck, and stumble across across some success. And that while you're holding that ribbon for a photo, or standing on that podium, or you're up in front of a group of students that you're teaching or coaching, at any moment, somebody is going to stand up and point at you and say loudly, you are totally right, you're a fraud, and you're only standing where you are because of a mistake somebody made in the program. The crazy thing is that this feeling is not only pretty common, especially amongst women, but it also tends to pop up in our brains in those areas of our lives where we actually are more skilled. For example, I never feel like I'm going to be exposed as a fraud. When it comes to baking. I bake on the regular, my baked goods are tasty. I enjoy eating them. I feel mostly good about my baking efforts. And I never ever feel like I'm a total fraud who just got lucky and that the next batch of baked goods could be a total horror show. But when it comes to dog agility, boy, boy, I feel like a fraud pretty often. It's a regular occurrence for me, just before teaching a seminar to think to myself that I just can't believe anybody would listen to me, I can't believe people are going to show up to learn from me. And they could do just about literally anything else with their day and be better off for it. Then the seminar starts. And I completely forget that feeling. I get 110% invested in the teaching, and the learning and the helping. And we all as far as I can tell, have a great time. When I sit down to write out my thoughts prior to recording a podcast episode like this, I think to myself, Why would anybody even bother to listen to this from me? It's why it's taken me years to get around to even doing this podcast. But you're I am finally when I do well on a course I relish the moment for a moment. And then I rationalized my success as luck completely ignoring all of the effort that went into that success. I minimize the enjoyment of my success because I don't want to be found out as a fraud. I mean, come on, what a con job to pull over on my own self, right. So impostor syndrome is a thing. It happens to a lot of us and it tends to happen in those areas of our lives where we are excelling. And that's some pretty rough irony right there. If you can do an internet search on



impostor syndrome and come up with tons on successful people who are pretty open about having these thoughts and feelings themselves, listen to this clip of Tom Hanks. Yeah, Tom Hanks being interviewed on the Today Show.

And I did wonder if there is ever and we can do all the caveats about your lucky life, and how wonderful it is to be you. And I know you know that. But is there ever kind of that burden of being Tom Hanks? Sure, the America's Sweetheart,

I don't think there's a person on the planet Earth no matter where they are, unless they are sociopaths, that don't don't have a moment somehow where they think, am I a fraud? Am I actually what this is? Am I actually being true to myself enough to feel as though at any given moment I truly am present?

So why does imposter syndrome even happen? Everybody on the planet has a different body of knowledge and experience that they're carrying around with them. Your experience and body of knowledge are different from mine, and mine are different from yours. If we all had the same experience and body of knowledge, life would be pretty boring, really. So when we're aware that other people may know more about what they know, than we do, we start to twist that a little bit in our minds, we start to think not only do they know more about what they know than we do, but also maybe they know more than we know than we do. And the truth is, as with a lot of stuff, most of us are way more concerned with being found out quote unquote, as a fraud or whatever, than we are in exposing anybody else. So while I may be busy being worried about being found out as a fraud, the truth is that most of the other people in the room are way too busy worrying about their own internal states to care even a tiny bit about my legitimacy with really anything. Feeling like an imposter or a fraud also comes from feeling like we're way out of our depth, that we don't belong where we are, and that it's shortly



going to be obvious to everybody around us that we're way out of our depth. Again, you have to remember that other people are busy being worried that they're way out of their depth, regardless of what's happening around them. And most of us are not looking at other people and thinking man, that person is way out of their depth just isn't as much of a thing as we'd like to think it is. And the truth of it is, if you're feeling out of your depth, probably you're exactly where you need to be for growth and learning to be happening. And we've talked a lot in the agility challenge about growth, mindset and failure, and purposeful practice and also edge work working at the edge of your skill level for improvement and all of that. And being in that space means that you are out of your depth. So if you're feeling that, then you know really congratulations because you are where you need to be and you're on the right track. Now, I also want to talk about how to never suffer from imposter syndrome. And the easiest, simplest number one way to never suffer from any of those feelings to never feel like a fraud or an imposter. Or that you're out of your depth is this. You ready? Never try anything new. Never try anything that might involve learning something, and definitely never try anything new or that it might involve learning something in front of other people. That's it. That's all you have to do to never ever, ever suffer from feeling like you might be a fraud or an imposter. So think on that for a moment. It's not basically there is no way to never feel that feeling of having that sense of not being qualified at something or not good enough at something means that you're probably doing something that's a difficult for you and be new for you. And if you're working in that space that involves challenge, and that involves doing challenging things, you're going to bump up against those feelings of being a fake, or that you're going to be discovered as an imposter and that you don't deserve the success that you do achieve. Feeling lost and out of your depth is normal and natural. Letting it keep you from doing things is where it can become a problem. So like I said before, I have those feelings all the time. Typically right before I'm about to do something challenging for me like recording a podcast episode or teaching a seminar or judging a competition or competing at a big event. It's easy to get the idea that nobody else



has these feelings. We see photos or videos of people with their ribbons and their awards or we see videos of their winning runs. And it just can look like everybody else has an easy that they're so successful, and they wake up with a gem Jews laced uptight and they're just leaping forth into life with no sweat, no tears, no struggle whatsoever. That learning comes with ease to everybody but us, or whatever. And so, when we struggle, or when we feel uncomfortable with some learning, it can be really easy to fall back on a fixed mindset, where we tell ourselves that everybody else can learn quickly and easily without any setbacks or failures. And since we're struggling or stumbling, it must mean we're idiots or we lack talent, whatever that is, those at the top must be naturals or geniuses or lucky in a way that we aren't. Another way that impostor syndrome can rear its ugly head is if you're a perfectionist if the perfectionist in US kicks in. If you've ever had a run, that you thought wasn't perfect, and you won the class, or you did really well in the class, this is where the perfectionist and you can lead to feelings that you're an imposter. One of the ways we all get better in the sport is to constantly be analyzing our performances and aim for better, but that can pretty easily turn into perfectionism. So if we have a run, or a weakened performance, let's say at a big event, and we do really well, but we didn't think our runs were perfect, then we'll tend to feel like we didn't deserve that success. Or we'll say things like, Well, my performance wasn't great, I guess, but I guess others did more poorly. And that's why I did well, that's why I won the class. And we let the perfect be the enemy of the good in that case. Sometimes we can also fall prey to the quote unquote, I am an island imposter where we assume that that other person got there on their own. So surely, we don't need to ask for help. And if we do ask for help with something, it means we're a fraud. And we'll be discovered as such. But literally nobody is an island, we all need help. And asking for help. Even if you're really good at something does not make you a fraud. It makes you a smart person who knows that getting help from the right people at the right time is necessary for growth and progress. And that being able to enjoy the success you achieve with those people who helped you along the way is one of the coolest experiences that a human being can



have. So how do we get beyond that concern that we're going to be exposed as a fraud or an impostor? Like I said before, having those feelings and thoughts is one thing. It's totally normal. Letting those thoughts and feelings stop you from stepping into the ring. Whatever the ring is, is where we get into trouble. If we let our thoughts and feelings keep us from trying new and challenging things, or enjoying the success we earn as a result of trying new and challenging things, that's a big bummer. We're missing out on part of the best things that the sport has to offer, if we do that. So the first thing I want you to do in terms of homework for this podcast episode, is if you're having these thoughts and feelings, or have you ever had these thoughts and feelings to do a thought dump now thought dump is something I've talked about before in previous episodes. And a thought dump is where you just sit down and dump out your thoughts. You write them down, you type them down, you dictate them into a Notes app on your phone, whatever. But take like 10 to 15 minutes and just get it all out of your head. Why do you feel like a fraud? Why do you feel like an impostor? What about you is so bad that you feel like the you that others see is not the real you and if they see the real you it they're going to be horrified. And what will happen if people actually find out that you're not as confident about your abilities as you'd like them to believe. That's kind of a big one. For me. Even doing this podcast means that I have to sit down and think about Alright, what's the worst that can possibly happen? If I tell people that I'm not as confident about my abilities, as I'd like them to believe. So, write it all down, and then walk away from it for at least an hour or better yet, walk away from it a day or a couple of days, and then come back to it and read it. If you're feeling really brave, read it out loud to a friend or your partner. But really, just looking at it yourself. You're gonna do what you do if a friend was reading their thought dumped to you. And you're gonna say, Wow, seriously, look at all the hard work you've done. Look at all the experience you have and look at all the other successes you've enjoyed. No way are you a fraud or an impostor, you need to go easy on yourself here. So that's the first thing, do the thought dump. The second thing I want you to do is to really capture your wins. So maybe you're coming home from



nationals AKC agility nationals were just this past weekend. Maybe you're coming home from another big event. I really want you to capture your wins. If you haven't done this before, sit down and start now make and keep a list of your wins. And my wins really what I mean is successes, they may not be blue ribbon wins. But let's say either Blue Ribbon wins or non ribbon wins. The I tried this and achieved it type successes, the I worked hard at training a running dog walk for two years, and now I have a dog that can do it type successes. And be sure to include the work that it took you to achieve those wins. The work you did to achieve those wins, no matter how small is something you did, it happened and it was real.

And when you have a success, take some time to reflect on how you got there. Even in the moment, just after you've walked out of the ring, when somebody comes up to congratulate you take a moment and think about your response, be really careful and capture that win and appreciate the effort that it took to get there. You don't need to minimize it to yourself or anybody else. You don't necessarily need to dive into a 20 minute conversation with that person congratulating you about the effort it took you to get there, or how proud you are. But absolutely say thank you, I worked hard for this. And I'm really pleased about it right now. And then hold on to it for a little while. And then write it down somewhere, hold on to it till you can write it down. Even if it's just in a list app or a Notes app on your phone. You know, just keep a list or journal or thought done whatever works for you, but hold on to it and make a list somewhere that's outside of your brain so that you can refer to it later when you've forgotten it. Now, with regards to risk taking, because I want you to not only capture your wins, but also calculate your risks. Part of impostor syndrome can be when we ask ourselves, if we're trying hard enough, maybe I'm not working hard enough, maybe I should be taking more risks, maybe I'm being lazy or whatever. So if we take risks and fail, we can validate our feelings that we're no good. And if we take risk, and we succeed, we can also validate our feelings that it's all just luck, and we're a fraud. So either way, if



we're not careful about it, we can end up back in the same place feeling like we just got lucky. And someone's gonna find out that we just got lucky and we're fraud. So it's important to recognize that taking risks will include failure. And that failure doesn't mean we are a failure or a fraud, it just means we're trying. And then it's even more important to keep track of our successes, particularly when they involve that reaching mentality where your reach exceeded your grasp, and then you expanded your grasp of something. We're all pretty good as dog agility handlers and trainers at the whole analyzing failure part. And we're sometimes so good that we analyze failure to the point that we're sure we are a failure. And analyze your failures with an eye toward a plan toward improvement so that you don't repeat those same failures, and then be prepared to capture the small wins that you gain as part of that process. Try fail, fix and or win, celebrate, and then step up to the next level, which will be the same cycle all over again. So this was kind of a short podcast episode. But it actually came up in the agility challenge office hours that I have for agility challenge members, not too long ago where we talked about. Alright, so how do we deal with these feelings of I don't belong here. You know, what if you made a team and national team as an alternate, so you didn't quite make the team. But then at some point, you get called up to be on the team? How do you deal with that moment where you're super simultaneously super excited to be on the team, but also thinking, I don't know that I really deserve this, I was just an alternate. So I really want to talk about that and those feelings that somebody's going to find out that I don't belong here. I'm just a fraud. And and really get that one out, flip that rock over and let the creepy crawlies out into the daylight as it were, if you're having thoughts that you're an imposter that you're going to be found out or that you don't deserve that spot on a team or that win or that title, you have to remember, these feelings are pretty normal. But you can take some time to feel out where they're coming from, and then move on with them. You don't have to wait until you've sorted it all out to just go out and try and have an amazing experience with whatever it is that's causing you to have these thoughts and feelings in the first place. Those thoughts are there to protect you or at least that's what



they tell you. But really, they're also there to let you know that you're on the cusp of doing something really, really cool and probably new and probably challenging, and it's just going to be amazing and tear horrifying all at the same time, and you're going to feel really, really alive. So that's it for this week. I hope you guys have a great weekend coming up. I'd love to hear your thoughts on this whether you have experienced those feelings before, maybe not even in dog agility. Maybe you are a Brain Surgeon and you're really good at brain surgery, but you still have that moment just before you go into surgery of oh my god, people are gonna find out that I'm a total fraud. It's a thing. And yeah, so I'd love to hear your guys's thoughts on this topic. Leave a comment at the website, either podcast, the agility challenge.com. Or if you're an agility challenge member, head to [www dot the agility challenge.com](http://www.thetheagilitychallenge.com). And check out this episode and share your thoughts. That's it for now, guys, buh bye. If you enjoyed today's podcast, and you've got somebody in mind, who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things we talked about today, head to the web page for today's episode, [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.thetheagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 11. And scroll to the bottom you'll see a section that says Share the love that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. I'm a pretty tech savvy person but even for me it was a little tricky. So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead and head on over to [podcast dot the agility challenge.com](http://podcast.thetheagilitychallenge.com) forward slash 11. subscribe to the podcast, leave a review and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know your thoughts about what we discussed today. I'd love to hear from you, and maybe discuss your thoughts on a future episode.