**Impostor Syndrome**

**What is it?**
A psychological pattern in which people doubt their accomplishments and have a persistent fear of the "failure police" showing up and being exposed as a fraud.

**Does it apply in my life?**
- Have the following justifications for your promotions, recognition, awards, good grades: I don't deserve it. I was in the right place at the right time. They're just being nice. If I can do it, anyone can. I had a lot of help. Someone must have made a mistake. They must not have noticed.
- Have an intense feeling that the "failure police" will show up anytime and realize your accomplishments were all a fluke.
- Have trouble internalizing your achievements.
- Discount positive feedback and maintain unrealistically high standards for self-evaluation.
- Tend to overgeneralize a single failure experience to your whole life.

**Where does it come from?**
- Early messages, when growing up about achievement, success, and failure.
- Certain kinds of personality traits:
  - Maladaptive Perfectionism
    - We feel the need to do everything perfectly, then feel disillusioned when we can't achieve this impossible standard.
    - Low Confidence, Low Self-Efficacy
      - We think our achievements are a fluke, believe we're incapable of awesome things, and are likely to fail if people like us play small.
    - Anxiety
      - We're prone to worrying more in general, then we're more often prone to impostor feelings.

**The Impostor Cycle**
- Receive an achievement-related talk (e.g., leading a new project hereafter).
- Another new task is assigned, and we feel self-doubt and anxiety, because we know we'll have to perform perfectly again.
- Plagued with worry, self-doubt, and anxiety.
- To deal with these feelings, we either second-guess our prep, or artificially procrastinate and then follow up with frenzied preparation (read: exhaust ourselves).

**The Realities**
- The only difference between us and someone who doesn't feel like an impostor is how we think.
- Feelings are not facts. The inner critic holds a head and compelling but you have a choice to listen what it's saying, or not. Acknowledge the thoughts and then politely decline automatic thoughts and conversations, you're too busy to think of that anymore.

**Top 5 Ways to "Remix" Impostor Feelings**

1. **Remix to**
   - I feel like an impostor, therefore, I am an impostor.
   - I am incompetent if I make mistakes. Can't take anything, can't achieve to a high standard on my own.

2. **Remix to**
   - Feelings are not facts. The inner critic holds a head and compelling, but you have a choice to listen what it's saying, or not. Acknowledge the thoughts and then politely decline automatic thoughts and conversations, you're too busy to think of that anymore.

**Remix Your Competence Beliefs**

**Perfectionists => Competence is not about perfection because you don’t exist. Competence is about being an excellent vector and adding value.**

**Rugged Individualists => Competence doesn’t mean knowing how to do everything yourself, Compeience means knowing how to find the resources needed to get big jobs done.**

**Superhero => Competence doesn’t mean doing it all. Competence means cutting out unnecessary tasks so you can do an even better job of the tasks that really matter to you.**

**Bex’s top 5 ways to "Remix" Impostor Feelings**

- To stop feeling like an impostor, we need to stop thinking like an impostor. But how do we think?
- Feelings are always the last thing to change. But how can we change the thinking that feeds the feeling?
Reflecting on your own experiences

Current state of play:

- Whenever I'm in a situation where....
- I usually experience feelings of...
- The negative voices in my head start saying....
- And what I typically do is...

Where I'd like to go next:

- What self-affirming things would I rather feel?
- What would I like the new positive voices in my head to say?
- What would I rather do in this situation?

What good is knowledge without action:

★ What is one "aha" moment you have had?
★ What is one action you will commit to taking as a result?