



SELF-CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Defeating the voice inside your head



API Learner Agreement

Appreciate every opportunity to focus.

Chatham House
Rules

Put on curiosity
and empathy

Participate!

No empty cups

Small pebbles
still create
ripples



Sam Ragland

Vice President, Journalism Strategy,
The American Press Institute



sam.ragland@pressinstitute.org



[linkedin.com/in/samantharagland/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/samantharagland/)



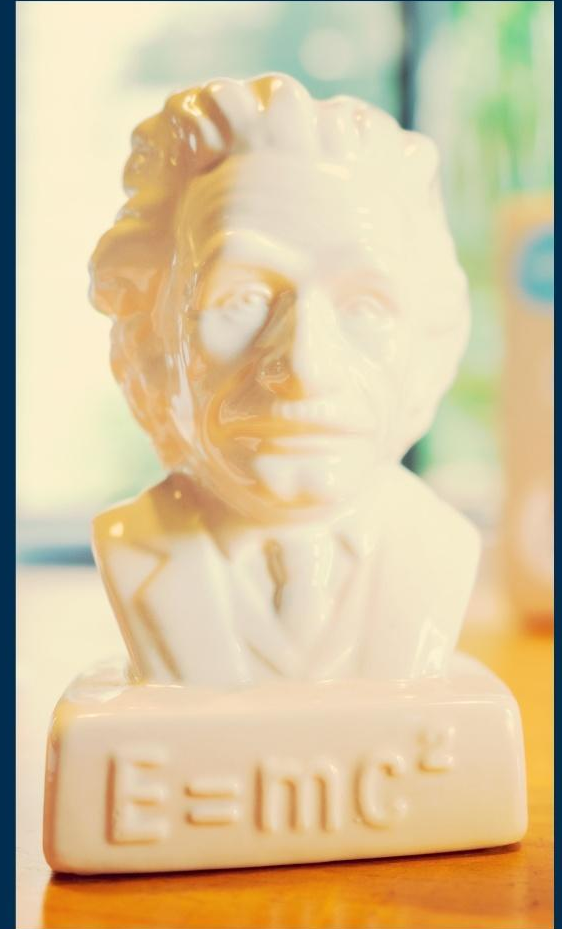
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“The exaggerated esteem in which my lifework is held makes me very ill at ease. I feel compelled to think of myself as an involuntary swindler.”

Albert Einstein



TODAY'S GOAL

To acknowledge imposter syndrome as a **systemic hurdle** and learn how to **deploy positive psychology to defeat it**

Where we're going



1 **Defining** imposter syndrome

2 **Defeating** your inner critic

- ✓ With your thoughts
 - Personal Reflection
- ✓ With your team
 - Personal Reflection

3 **Ask Me Anything**



A hand holding a magnifying glass over a blurred background. The magnifying glass is held in the foreground, and the background is out of focus, showing a person's face and a blue object. The text "What is imposter syndrome?" is overlaid on the image in white font.

What is imposter syndrome?

What does imposter syndrome feel like?

Insecurity

invisibility

Debilitating

overwhelming

inferiority

panic, defeat

What does imposter syndrome feel like?

Sheer terror

Overwhelming,
Insufficient,
Tense/heavy,
Self-doubting

hyper-awareness of your
mistakes

Directionless

Fear of letting people
down and squandering my
potential



What does imposter syndrome feel like?

feeling like you skated into the position you're in and spaces you're in rather than worked for it

Constant worry and pressure. An inability to relax or have peace.

What does imposter syndrome feel like?

inability to take action

not able to measure up to
veteran reporters and their
institutional knowledge



70%

General population



DEFINING IMPOSTER SYNDROME

It **disproportionately affects high-achieving people — specifically, women and people of color** who have not had their work or experience validated as often as their white male colleagues.

Defining Imposter Syndrome

Systemic racism and bias toward white men as leaders are put into sharp focus by inner criticism.



INCLUDES DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

SHARE INFORMATION
CREATIVE SELF-AWARE RELATIONAL
MISSION-FOCUSED INSPIRING CARE FOR OTHERS
CONNECTING ADVOCATE PARTICIPATORY
MISSION-FOCUSED RISK-TAKING SHARE INFORMATION COMMITTED
ANALYTICAL RISK-TAKER COLLABORATIVE SPONSOR CARING MISSION-DRIVEN
INCLUSIVE RISK-TAKER COLLABORATIVE SPONSOR INTELLECTUAL
INQUISITIVE EMPOWERING ENGAGING
CONNECTION INCLUSIVE CONVENER CREATIVE MOTIVATIONAL
CARE FOR COMMUNITY DEMOCRATIC ETHICAL COLLABORATION
TEAMWORK GIVE STRAIGHT FEEDBACK
CARE FOR CUSTOMERS





“The answer to overcoming imposter syndrome is to **create an environment that fosters different leadership styles** and where diversity of racial, ethnic, and gender identities are viewed as just as professional as the current model.”

Defining Imposter Syndrome

One of these is not
like the others.
And that's okay.



Today, **we'll focus on ourselves.**





Your inner critic can make you..

- ✓ Wait for others to give their opinions in a meeting before you speak up about something you're working on
- ✓ Not negotiate your salary because you're just grateful to have a job (or offer) in the first place
- ✓ Think the reason others are more "successful" than you is because they're inherently smarter or more qualified
- ✓ Play it safe and be afraid to take risks in your professional life, like proposing a new project, strategy or role
- ✓ Not ask for the support you need because you don't want to appear incompetent or needy





HEADLINE IT

Think of a time when you
experienced and overcame
your inner critic

Our Imposter Syndrome Headlines

Story reporter cried over for hours gets editor's pick spot on homepage

Cried in an airport bathroom after an interview because I thought I bombed - I got it!

No journalism degree, no problem. Baltimore-bred journalist lands spot at major newspaper

Applies despite feeling under-qualified

Had to get over myself to advocate for a source

Journalist drags himself to yet another immigration protest, gets nominated for statewide award for immigration coverage

Our Imposter Syndrome Headlines

Negotiated salary higher than expectations

Reporter concerned after yearlong investigative project receives praise from subject matter experts nationwide

From feeling insufficient to standing secure, how I quieted my inner critic and defeated imposter syndrome

Area journalist makes mistake, decides to learn from it instead of self-flagellating

Early career journalist interviews a high-profile industry leader despite anxiety and nervousness

Early career journalist sobs in toilet, finishes with community oriented story unlike other reports.

Our Imposter Syndrome Headlines

Reporter volunteers to cover protest despite feeling like a failure the last time they covered a protest

Reporting on a story that I have 0 experience with – felt like I was always battling an inner voice comparing myself to another experienced reporter

Reporter receives praise for 'putting in that work' on first election night

Copy editor tells reporter, "you're one of the best; you're not perfect, but your copy is close to it."

Our Imposter Syndrome Headlines

Co-workers praise work
when I thought nobody
was even watching

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Defeating your inner critic
with your thoughts

Defeat it with your thoughts

Real-time Resilience

challenges counter-productive thinking with actionable, in-the-moment resilience

*Chat 'em out: What kinds of things have you heard from your inner critic? (trigger warning)





LONDON



NEW YORK



TOKYO



MOSCOW

"Real-time resilience is used the moment that the adversity first strikes... It's an internal dialogue, and its goal is accuracy."

— Karen Reivich, P.h.D.; Andrew Shatte, P.h.D.



I am what I think

Defeat your inner critic with your thoughts



Evidence

Use data and facts to prove an unhelpful thought is untrue



Reframing

Reframe unhelpful thoughts with optimism to see a more positive outcome



Planning

Make contingency plans to feel prepared if negative outcomes happen

Using strategies like evidence, reframing and planning in real time can help counter unproductive thoughts and boost confidence.

Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

Your response here

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your response here

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here





Reflect

Think of a situation that matters to you but where you often fall into these counterproductive thoughts.

Make a list of 3 counterproductive thoughts you might have. Choose one of those thoughts to create a real-time resilience response by writing a productive thought with each of the sentence starters.

Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

Your response here

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your response here

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

I've done this time and time again. Proof in the pudding.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

This time is no different. You've been here plenty of times before.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If this happens again, I will remind myself that I was born for this and I deserve to be here. They need me, I don't need them.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: What are you even doing in this meeting?

Evidence: That's not true because...

You're here because people higher up in the chain added you; you didn't add yourself. Trust their judgment.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

This is an update to other collaborators about what's going on with you; it's not a performance. Give your update and move on.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

No matter what I say, they won't use it for grounds to fire you.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: I have not done enough to deserve this opportunity.

Evidence: That's not true because...

Every mentor/senior disagrees with the thought I have literally done what is required for the position

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

*The people I feel may be more qualified are examples I can learn from.
I only feel small because I am growing toward something larger.*

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

*If I feel inadequate I will think to past accomplishments.
I will remember how often that negative feeling is wrong.*



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: You don't know what you're doing

Evidence: That's not true because...

That's not true because you've seen your work be impactful and make people feel seen.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is: while I may be embarking on something unfamiliar, I will learn from this situation later and show up as my best now.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If I run into something I don't have the answer to, I will ask for the help I need until I know.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: I'm dispensable in my newsroom.

Evidence: That's not true because...

I write a daily newsletter that highlights reporting across the network and includes my own analysis, trend-spotting and occasional original reporting. I've grown this newsletter by thousands since Feb. 2023.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Even though there were previous newsletter writers, and my colleagues fill in for me when I'm away, my voice and writing tone is unique. My positionality and experience matters and is not duplicative.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If I am laid off or grant funding for the newsletter subsides, I will use the opportunity to gain a full-time reporting job, which is what I would like to be doing. I will also create a personal newsletter with my direction.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: I don't know enough, should let someone smarter do this story

Evidence: That's not true because...

The whole point of reporting is to find out the things you don't know...you're not supposed to know yet! Also you have done new things many times and it has worked out ok...

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

This is an opportunity to stretch myself, and broaden the kinds of stories I'm able to do/confident doing

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If I am overwhelmed, I will ask my mentors for advice and keep open communication with my editors



Real-Time Resilience Response

I don't deserve the raise for all of the work I've had to juggle.

Evidence: That's not true because...

The volume of work is not expected of others.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

*I do deserve the raise *because* I've had to take on more coverage and responsibilities.*

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If negotiations for the raise get shot down, I will keep an open mind and search for options on how to keep myself fulfilled elsewhere.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: You can't do this job.

Evidence: That's not true because...

You've done it so far!

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your hitting a new challenge and learning, which will make you even better in this role.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If I am criticized I will listen and think about it carefully, taking what is useful and fair and filtering out what is not.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: Any success was luck and support from other people and can't be recreated by myself

Evidence: That's not true because...

*-I've been able to make these stories/episodes/shows multiple times over the course of years.
-Other team members have said that it is easy on them to work with me*

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

-This is a chance to become more consistent with my work or be more dynamic when there is a challenge that comes up later.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

-If there's a story that becomes extremely challenging, I can ask for help always because I am not working by myself. But I can also use it as an opportunity to challenge myself in my work.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: I'm incompetent because it takes me forever to write a feature

Evidence: That's not true because...

You have written incredible features both for radio and web. In taking time, you have found more information that has better informed the feature. Your work has been praised by colleagues and listeners.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

I take my time with my features to make sure that the information is accurate, well-presented and engaging to the ear.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If I need more time to write the feature, I will have a conversation with my editor to explain why I need more time and how that will benefit the feature.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: You are not a creative storyteller and your ideas are poorly executed

Evidence: That's not true because...

I regularly produce one-of-a-kind, unique stories that educate and inform people about topics or situations they have never considered.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

I can always seek new pathways or formats for stories. If there is a type of story I have not tried to pursue, I can be more intentional about following it.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If an opportunity arises to tell a story I haven't told before, I will brainstorm a variety of different ways to tell it. I will analyze and read stories that I am inspired by.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

Your response here

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your response here

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: you are not doing enough

Evidence: That's not true because...

my colleagues and news director give me constant positive feedback for the work I do every week you find and write stories that help/inform the community you serve everyday

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

I am a few months in the field and the reporters I compare yourself to have more time/practice - I am showing up to do my best everyday

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

*if I do not finish something today, i will get done tomorrow
if I feel behind/overwhelmed I will ask for help*



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: You weren't ready anyway

Evidence: That's not true because...

You felt compelled to apply for the role in the first place. And you specifically mentioned being ready in the cover letter. The timing of what puts your current role at risk is beyond your control.

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

You were distracted and unprepared. You weren't looking for a job, but now you are.

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

If another opportunity comes up, I will prioritize time to update application materials, answer questions about myself and my work.



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

Your response here

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your response here

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought: I'm not a good enough reporter

Evidence: That's not true because...

I consistently produce work that informs the audience I'm writing for, I continue to produce under high-pressure despite balancing so many stories at once

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here



Real-Time Resilience Response

My Thought:

Evidence: That's not true because...

Your response here

Reframing: A more helpful or accurate way of seeing this is...

Your response here

Planning: If [X] happens, I will [Y]...

Your response here



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Defeating your inner
critic **with your team**

Defeat it with your team

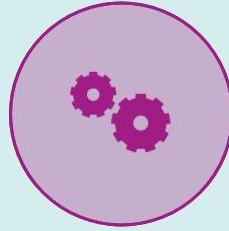
Let's write that our



The Supporters



The Naysayers



The Masterminds





Think aloud

How can we cultivate masterminds
in our professional lives?

*How can we be better masterminds for others?

Cultivating "masterminds" to defeat imposter syndrome



Cultivating "masterminds" to defeat imposter syndrome



Cultivating "masterminds" to defeat imposter syndrome



Cultivating "masterminds" to defeat imposter syndrome



Defeat your inner critic with your team

Cultivate masterminds

Surround yourself with people who give constructive feedback to help you grow.

Limit naysayers

Reduce contact with those who only criticize without offering solutions.

Appreciate supporters

Value those who cheer you on, but seek more developmental relationships.

Give what you get

Be a mastermind for others too - give thoughtful feedback and advice.

Talk it out

Discuss feelings of self-doubt with your masterminds for reassurance.

Trust your team

Rely on your masterminds' belief in you when your inner critic is loud.

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a blurred background. The magnifying glass is held in the lower right corner, and its lens is positioned over the text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with a gradient from dark blue to light yellow.

P.S. Defeat your inner
critic **by remembering**
these confidence killers



P.S. Know these confidence killers

- ✗ Playing the comparison game...
- ✓ **Don't compare yourself to other folk**





P.S. Know these confidence killers

- ✘ **Playing the comparison game...**
 - ✔ Don't compare yourself to other folk
- ✘ **Obsessing over perfection...**
- ✔ **Don't let perfect be the enemy of progress**





P.S. Know these confidence killers

- ✗ **Playing the comparison game...**
 - ✓ Don't compare yourself to other folk
- ✗ **Obsessing over perfection...**
 - ✓ Don't let perfect be the enemy of progress
- ✗ **Knowing/doing all the things...**
- ✓ **Don't give an all-access pass to you**



“Be yourself so the people looking for you can find you.”

Arlan Hamilton





Sam Ragland

Vice President, Journalism Strategy,
The American Institute

 sam.ragland@pressinstitute.org

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