

Beating Impostor Syndrome at its Own Game

The FatChix Guide to Conquering Inner Demons

Impostor syndrome:

(A.K.A. **impostor** phenomenon, impostorism, fraud **syndrome** or the **impostor** experience)

A psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud".

Hello. My name is Emilia, and I have Impostor Syndrome.

Wow. That felt gooooooooooooood.

You may remember me from a piece I wrote about DIY film production. "I'M A FUCKING GENIUS" ring any bells? (WARNING: buckle up for swear words, my soon-to-be sailor friends)

Now, would you have guessed I had mad Impostor Syndrome while I was writing that piece?

Luckily, I can't physically see your reaction to that statement, so I'm going to assume your jaw just dropped in wild disbelief. *WHAAAA? No wayyyyy? She seemed like she knew what she was talking about?!?!?*

Funny story— *I did know what I was talking about.*

I know what I am talking about.

I have years of experience notched into this production belt of mine and can say with confidence that I know my shit. But that doesn't mean I don't wake up some days, catch my reflection and think, "Do you actually know what the fuck you're doing, Emilia?"

Those days came frequently when Julia and I first formed our company in 2012. Back then, all we had was a script, a Canon Rebel t5i (that I purchased on my fresh new credit card) and our young, stubborn will. We knew the work we wanted to create and

we knew we wanted to create opportunities for the people we love and admire. What we were lacking, however, was skill, knowledge, and discipline.

The period from 2012-2015 was a wildfire of learning everything we could on our feet. Neither of us had gone to school for film or business. We were both actors who moved to NY with dreams of *The Broadway*™ and soon realized the ugly realities of the NYC Theater Race. We saw what little opportunity there was for young actors without connections and how that opportunity shrank further when it came to original ideas. We decided to be proactive about bringing Julia's script to life and took Molly Pearson's *Produce Your Own Work* workshop.

That class was the equivalent to our sexual awakening. I SHIT YOU NOT. We realized how much we loved doing the work. It was thrilling and new and challenging, but the biggest and SEXIEST breakthrough came from us realizing that, "HOLY SHIT, WE ARE ACTUALLY DOING IT."

We had the power all along.

That's the main lesson we're drilling into our (and your) skulls today.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SUCCEED IN THE FEILD YOU LOVE.

Easily said? Yes. Easily done? *Fuck no.*

Unless you have some crazy super power and can succeed immediately at whatever you try to do without failing about a million times first, then you're in for a bumpy and exhilarating ride.

Two things happen when you embark on a career path that also happens to be your passion:

1. *Shit gets real.* Your passion is now your business. You have to treat it as such. You have to plan not just for today or tomorrow, but for ten years down the line. Why? Because no one else is going to do that for you, and if you actually want to see your business grow, you have to **believe** it will grow. The best way to do that is to make a fucking plan. Even if your goals seem absurd and unachievable, the universe listens when you say you're ready. Trust the universe and trust yourself. It's mutual AF.
2. *Shit goes wrong.* For every success you have, there will be two failures. For every good idea, there were probably some pretty bad ones before it. For every dollar you earn, you'll be spending five to keep your shit afloat. And the first couple years in business, you're in a blow up raft with rocks ahead and nothing but scotch tape, baby.

You're going to get knocked down a ton and it's going to feel personal because your business IS personal. Are you going to stick it out? Or are you going to set that shit on fire and walk away?

Let's assume you stuck it out.

FUCK YES.

Let's assume you've been at it for a few years now and you're starting to see that light at the end of the tunnel. You have some reliable clients. You're making more than you're spending. You're crying yourself to sleep less and less (lol, maybe that's just me). Maybe you had a day job that you were able to quit and now you're putting all of your time and energy into your company/project/idea.

OMG YOU'RE FUCKIN' DOING ITTTTTT!!! AHHHH!!!! LET'S EAT CAKE ABOUT IT!!

Sure, you may not be making 6 figures... YET... but guess what you are? BRAVE. BADASS. THE ENVY OF ALL YOUR CORPORATE FRIENDS (they may not tell you to your face, but they wish they had your balls- FACT).

You may be wondering, "*What does any of this have to do with Imposter Syndrome?*" "*She's pivoting,*" you're thinking aloud.

Well sure- I love a good pivot, but here's the thing about Imposter Syndrome. It's sneaky. It creeps up and pulls your pants down when you're in the middle of a big pitch meeting. It's that annoying voice keeping you up at night before you start a new job. I

It can also be triggered by something completely trivial. My Imposter Syndrome manifests in direct response to the fact that I never went to school for film production. I always doubt my authority because I didn't get a \$50,000+ piece of paper with my name on it saying I graduated in that field.

Well guess who else didn't go to college?

Ellen DeGeneres, Russell Simmons, Anna Wintour, STEVE FUCKING JOBS.

And that's just a few.

So what do I do when I have a self-doubt-triggered panic attack?

The first thing I do is call or text Julia. She'll tell me exactly what I need to hear. Mainly something like, "*You cray. Stop.*" We used to give each other longer pep talks, but TBH we just don't have time for crippling self-doubt anymore and soon NEITHER WILL YOU, DARLIN'!

The second thing I do is my homework. *What knocked me off my horse?* Get specific about it and find the answer. Maybe it's not something I can just look up online. Maybe I have to light a scene tomorrow for a music video and I have no idea what equipment I need to set up the shot. *I'll ASK FOR FUCKING HELP.* There's no time for pride anymore, people. If you want to make something work and you're on a deadline, you **ask someone who knows more than you.** Even better - *YOU PAY THEM FOR THEIR OPINION.* Can't afford their service? You can probably afford to buy them lunch. Don't have a friend or mentor?

- A) That's super sad and you may need to reevaluate some 'You' stuff because you **NEED** a support system. Even if it's just someone with whom you can share your successes and failures.
- B) Call or go to your local camera rental spot and ask an employees opinion. *BOOM. Now you know shit!*

The third thing I do is something nice for myself.

You know what doesn't help your fragile brain when you're down? *BEING A DICK TO YOURSELF.* Whether it's taking myself for a walk by the water (instant happiness) or treating myself to something small or the simple act of tidying up my work space in my undies while jamming to some good tunes (sorry little piggies, a clean workspace is **THE ONLY WORKSPACE YOU SHOULD HAVE**) - small kindnesses go a long way. Trust me.

If any of the above doesn't work for you, I have one last sure fire way to beat your inner bastard. It's a guaranteed, albeit temporary solution to this chronic madness.

Go to your computer or smart TV. Pull up the URL bar on your browser or YouTube app.

Play this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmbmeOgWsqE>

Put on: *Your Inner Crown*

Memorize these:

I do my hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Woo child, tired of the bullshit
Go on dust your shoulders off, keep it moving
Yes Lord, tryna get some new shit
In there, swimwear, going to the pool shit

Come now, come dry your eyes
You know you a star, you can touch the sky
I know that it's hard but you have to try
If you need advice, let me simplify
If he don't love you anymore
Just walk your fine ass out the door
I do my hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Feeling good as hell
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Woo girl, need to kick off your shoes
Got to take a deep breath, time to focus on you All
the big fights, long nights that you been through I
got a bottle of Tequila I been saving for you Boss
up and change your life
You can have it all, no sacrifice
I know he did you wrong, we can make it right So
go and let it all hang out tonight
'Cause he don't love you anymore
So walk your fine ass out the door
And do your hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Listen, if he don't love you anymore
Then walk your fine ass out the door
And do your hair toss

Check my nails Baby
how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails Baby
how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails Baby
how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell
Hair toss
Check my nails Baby
how you feelin'
Feeling good as hell
Feeling good as hell
Baby how you feelin'?
Feeling good as hell

Feel better? Yeah, we do, too.

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FatChix, Inc.