

## **How to go from Self-Critical Over-Achiever to 100% Career Confident & a Fearless Leader**

### **Tracy Forsyth, Executive Coach**

When I got a promotion at the BBC from VP, Original Commissioning to Divisional Director of Factual Entertainment, I was over the moon. BUT beneath the noise of the celebration, I could hear a voice in my head asking – ‘How on earth did you get here? I’m not sure you can do this job. Surely there is someone more qualified? You’re totally going to be found out.’ Classic Imposter Syndrome! Hello Inner Critic!

Of course, like with any job, there were bits I knew and bits I didn’t and for those, it was a steep learning curve. But at the beginning, I was focusing on what I didn’t know rather than what I did. What qualities I didn’t have instead of what I did. I’m happy to say that within a few months that voice faded as I found my footing and grew in confidence. Leading that team was one of the most productive and joyful times in my corporate career.

Cut to now and I have my own coaching and consultancy firm, am a board advisor to other companies and the Director of Mentoring at Women in Film & Television and time and time again, the people I meet – clients, mentees, MDs, often confide that they have that same feeling. So much so that I’ve identified a tribe: I call them the Self-Critical Over-Achievers. Of course, a true Self-Critical Over-Achiever won’t actually self-identify as one because they won’t believe they over-achieve!

### **How do you know if you are a Self-Critical Over-Achiever?**

Here are my criteria:

1. You are simultaneously excited and terrified by big challenges, thinking, ‘I’m never going to be able to do that’ but when you’ve achieved said ‘big challenges’ you throw them over your shoulder never to be looked at again. You take it for granted that you did it. You don’t even see it as an achievement.
2. You compare yourself negatively to others and find yourself wanting. ‘Why aren’t I like X?’ ‘If only I were more Y’ ‘I wish I had Z’s qualities’ whilst being blind to all the things you yourself are amazing at.
3. You look at what you haven’t done instead of what you have done, what you haven’t achieved instead of what you have, where you still have to get to instead of how far you’ve come.
4. Despite having experience and expertise in your field you find it very hard to sell yourself without feeling either that you are boasting or fearing you are an imposter.
5. When things go wrong, you treat yourself in a way you’d never treat a friend: you berate yourself, are mortified by your behaviour and kick yourself.

I have experienced all of the above because I was a Self-Critical Over Achiever! Is this you too?

Well, the good news is that we can change that. Nowadays I like to think I’m an over-achiever without the self-criticism.

I love what I do, I know what I want.

I am able whole-heartedly to champion others (including competitors in my field) and celebrate others successes without feeling rubbish about myself.

I understand and am proud of my assets and abilities and able to sell myself fearlessly without feeling like an imposter.

I understand that when things go wrong, I will inevitably go through a process until I feel okay about it all. It's still painful but it will pass.

I know I'm not perfect and that's okay.

### **How did I get here?**

Age and experience, certainly. I'm proud to be 51 and think the best is yet to come.

I took serious note of what energises me and what drains me and have adjusted my life accordingly.

I decided that I wasn't going to be modest for society's sake. That I was going to celebrate my assets and not worry so much about the things I'm not.

I spent time getting 100% clarity on what moves and drives me AND what impact I want to have in life.

I decided to act on what I wanted, not wait for permission or approval from others.

Now, when I coach or mentor others, I take them on a process to do all of that. My mission is to empower people with 100% career confidence and to become fearless leaders in their own right.

I want to make my coaching accessible to all so my news is that I'm setting up a virtual academy called [fasttracktofearless.com](https://fasttracktofearless.com). There are lots of resources, courses, videocasts with inspirational leaders and articles with top tips to help you find confidence and become FEARLESSLY YOU. I hope you find it inspiring.

**Plus, if you head there now, I am offering a FREE mini-series on Facing Imposter Syndrome Fearlessly.**

To all my Self-Critical Over-Achievers out there: I see you, I champion you, you are AMAZING. Don't be so hard on yourselves and ENJOY what you have.