



Celebrate each other with a full and open heart...

HOOD has brought us so many stories already of amazing women. From the women who have shared their journey to motherhood to Ashley Davies sharing her funny stories, we have been moved and inspired by those we read about. And although they have been very ourselves comparing their lives to ours, and ours falling short. It is hard sometimes not to worry that they are funnier/cleverer/prettier/skinnier...

Modern life is competitive – both in the workplace and at home. We are constantly bombarded with images of being the perfect leader, perfect wife, perfect mother. If we are constantly measuring ourselves against others, albeit perhaps not a real-life version, this can make us feel like we are failing.

Let's look closely at comparison and what it does. Comparison has been called **'the thief of joy'** and it truly is. When we compare ourselves and fall short, two things can happen. First, the feeling of failure gives our self-regard a powerful knock and second, we are stopping ourselves from celebrating both theirs, and our achievements and experiencing joy fully.

Rather than being able to fully celebrate someone else, we can be hijacked by our own feelings of failure. This stops our feeling of joy for them and also when we have our own success, can affect our own feeling of personal joy.

In athletics, sprinters are coached not to race the person in the next lane but to race the clock, to gain a personal best. When they fixate on the next lane, they lose focus, which affects their performance. They can appreciate, admire and respect the next lane, but cannot let it control them.

Comparison can lead to feelings of being a fraud - this is called Imposter Syndrome.

Imposter syndrome has been around since 1978, with an article called 'the Imposter Phenomenon in High Achieving Women'. It cites reasons

such as the lack of internal acknowledgment of their achievements. In the January edition we encouraged you to list your top ten achievements and we followed this up by speaking about your inner voice, and how positive internal acknowledgement can boost your self-regard.

As a HOOD community, I am keen for us to find out more. What does this look like in Scotland for women now? Research has shown that 70% of us have felt imposter syndrome at some point, with further research is now showing that men are more affected than women.

There are many ways to work through imposter syndrome and working on your self-regard is a great start, but another way to move it forward is to talk about it – believe me you are not alone! We would love to hear from you, do you experience it and if so, how does it affect you? Head over to our facebook poll and share your experiences. You could be helping others who've felt the same.

The more we talk about it, the easier it will be to tackle. If 70% of the population are experiencing it, perhaps it is time to step out of our own shadows.

If comparison is the thief of joy, celebrating with an open heart must be the originator of joy – and I know I could do with a little more joy

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