

# **‘That Inner Critic & Imposter Syndrome’**

**Mary Horgan**  
**Friday, 10 December 2021**

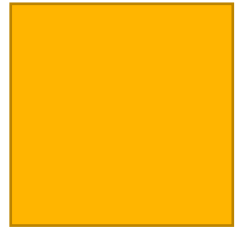
**A TRADITION OF  
INDEPENDENT  
THINKING**



**UCC**

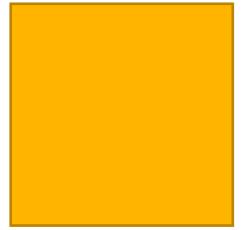
**University College Cork, Ireland**  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

# Lets get the most out of this morning



- **Email:** Switch it off & be present
- **Microphone:** When not speaking, please keep it on mute
- **Camera:** If possible, do have your camera on
- **Participate:** Just use the 'raise hand' function if you have a question or wish to comment & click to take it down afterwards. The more interactive, the better!
- **Confidentiality:** Everything we discuss is confidential

# Happy Friday .....!



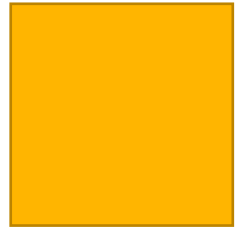
- How are you?
- Who you are?
- Where do you work?
- What triggered your interest in coming along today.

# Workshop Objectives



- What is Imposter Syndrome?
- Some symptoms
- Role of Self-Belief
- Growth V. Fixed Mind-set
- Triggers
- Strategies to deal with it

# Can you answer YES to below?



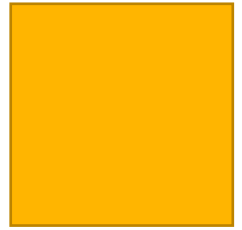
Have you lied or fabricated your

- previous exam results or qualifications?
- experience?
- abilities?

An Imposter = Person who pretends to be somebody else in order to trick people

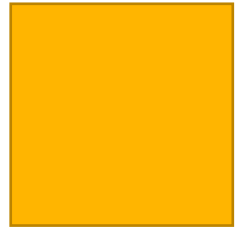
Oxford English Dictionary

# Any sound familiar?



1. You won't let go the email/paper/dissertation, you need to keep fixing, redrafting, re-reading it....
2. You are dreading a forthcoming presentation. What if you cannot answer a question or just go blank?
3. You see a job advertised you would love but do not apply. Why not? Wouldn't get it, too many others far better.
4. You have just been promoted. You are now terrified. What if you are "found out" as being incompetent?

# What is Imposter Syndrome?



“That feeling of being a fraud despite **evidence** that you are not.” Hugh Kearns

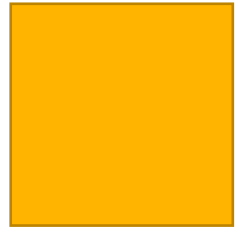
- Up to 70% of people have suffered from the syndrome at some point. Forbes, 2014
- Between 30-50% of people = consistent imposter feelings that affect what they think, feel & do.
- Usually associated with high performers.
- Affects each of us differently

“In life the closest we get to  
perfection is when we are  
writing our CV.”

Anonymous

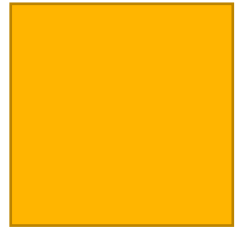


# Some common symptoms & feelings



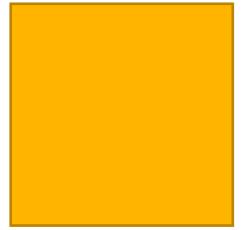
- Feelings of self-doubt
- Fear of failure (consciously or unconsciously)
- Over-preparation for tasks
- A tendency to discount praise
- Feeling like a fraud
- Feeling like you need to be the very best

# Knowing what it is & is not.....



1. Identify an experience, a situation, a time you have felt like an imposter.
2. What symptoms did you feel?
3. Where was the evidence to back up your feelings?

# Critical Role of Self-Beliefs



**"Our beliefs control our bodies, our minds, and thus our lives..."**

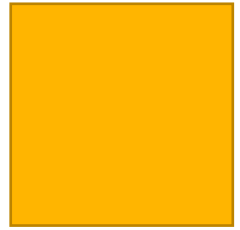
(Bruce Lipton, Biology of Belief)

Opponent in our head is much stronger than the opponent opposite.

Now ask yourself.....

*"Do my attitudes and beliefs serve me positively? "*

## Critical Role of Self-Beliefs (2)

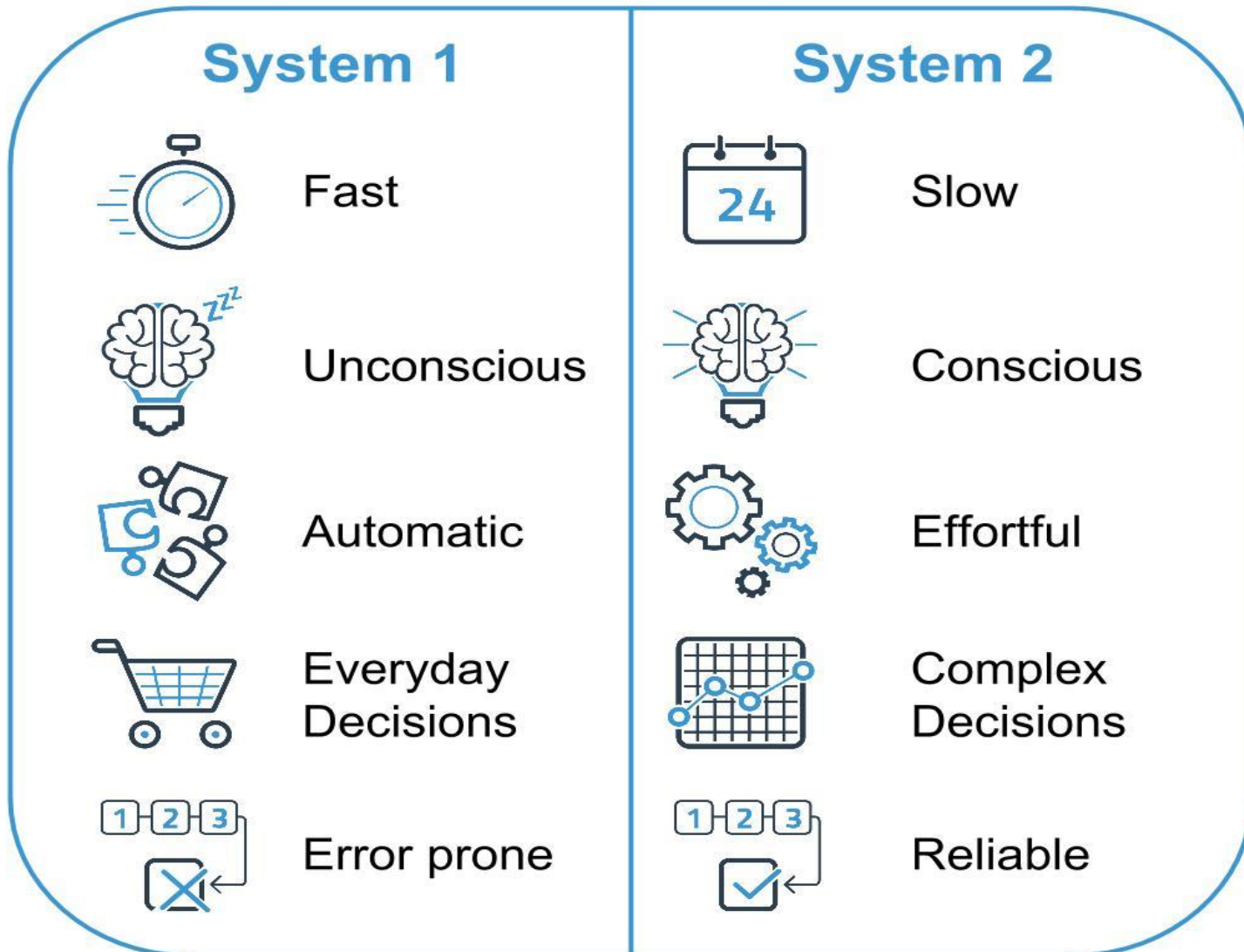


“Greatest revolution of our generation = the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.” William James (Philosopher)

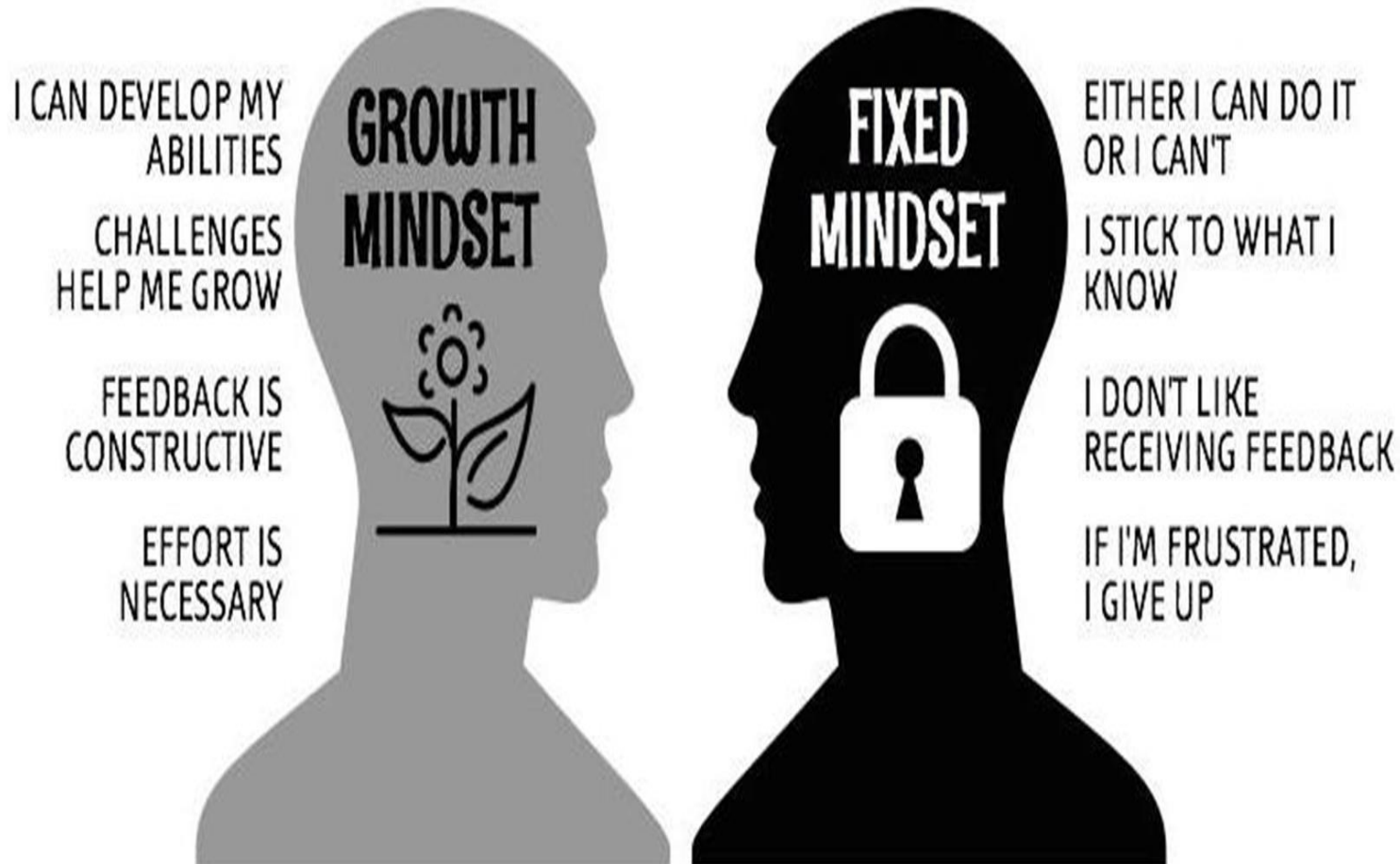
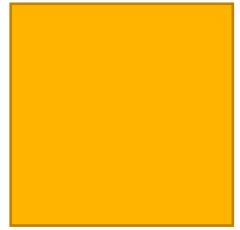
\*\* It takes **practice** but you can teach yourself to think more accurately. \*\*

Challenge your assumptions, your black and white thinking, your mental filters and your tendencies **to jump to conclusions**

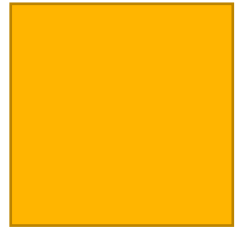
# Machine for jumping to conclusions!



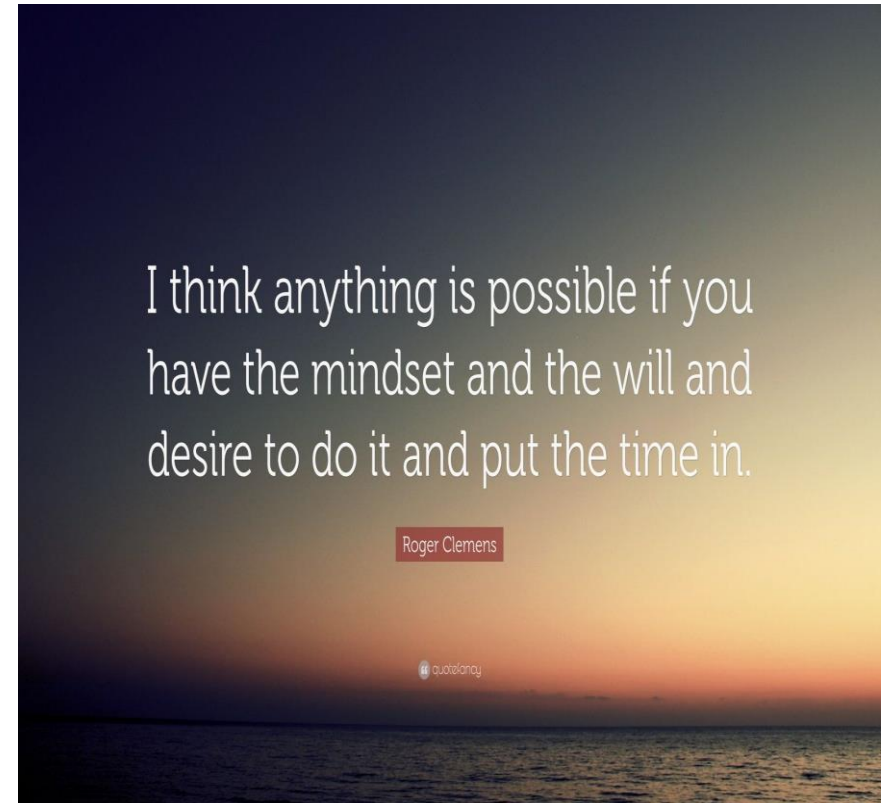
# Growth v Fixed Mind-set



# The 'As if' Frame

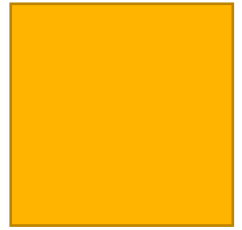


- Act "as if" you were.....What would it be like?"
- Act as though something were already true - the positive outcome has already been achieved and the senses experience it.
- "What would you be thinking, doing and believing differently?"



*"We see the world not as it is, but as we are."* William Shakespeare

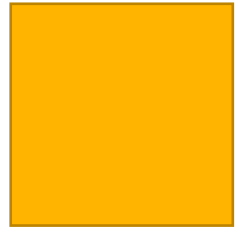
# Use of Language



Whenever I am tempted to say,  
"I can't" or "I haven't,"  
I will say  
"I can't YET..." or "I haven't YET..."



# How is your language creating your world?



It is hard to get up in the morning.

I just can't stop smoking.

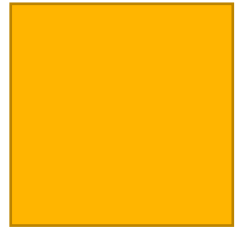
I made four mistakes in that MCQ.

I should have mentioned 'x & y' in the interview.

I would never have managed to do that on my own.

How are you speaking to yourself?

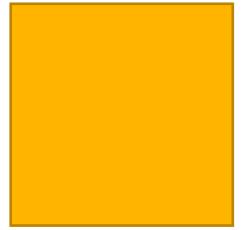
# The 'As if' Frame..... For You



Think of a situation where you have felt / do feel like an imposter

- Act “as if” you were.....What would it be like?”
- Act as though something were already true - the outcome has already been achieved and the senses experience it.
- “What would you be thinking, doing and believing differently? How would you be speaking to yourself?”

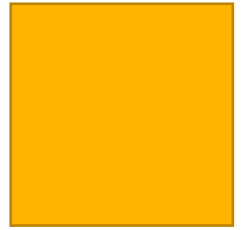
# Identify your triggers



Do I self-sabotage?

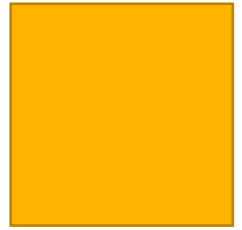
- Perfectionism (high achievers)
  - Giving your best is not the same as 'being the best'
  - Perfectionism is the enemy of the good or just 'good enough'
- Procrastination
- Overcommit

# Some Strategies (1)



- Identify your triggers
- Be objective / set realistic goals & standards
- Be prepared to make mistakes
- Watch your language - Is it positive or negative, fact or fiction?
- Keep a written note of positive feedback, achievements.
- Be brave – what is the worst that can happen?  
F.A.I.L

# Some Strategies (2)

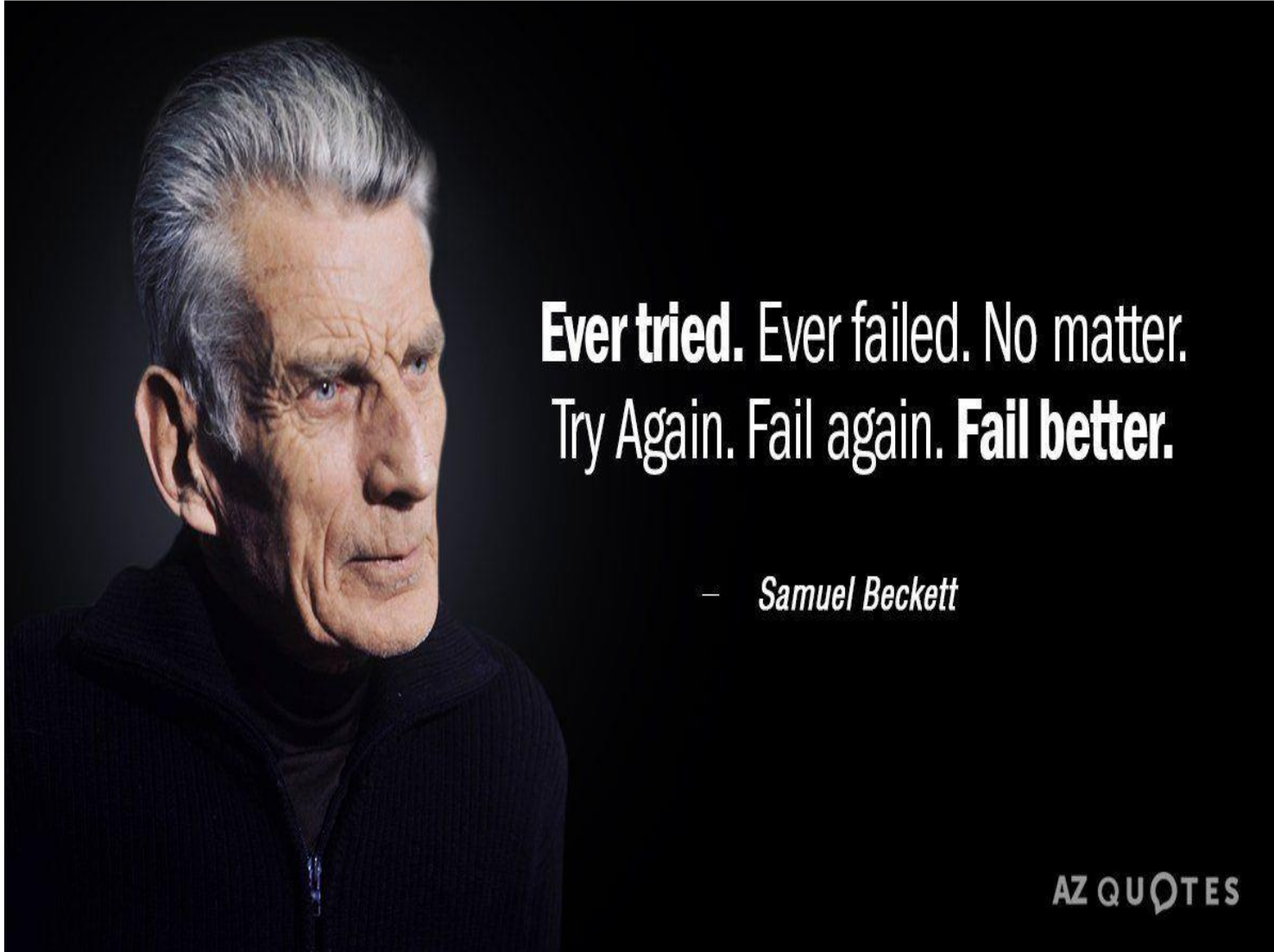
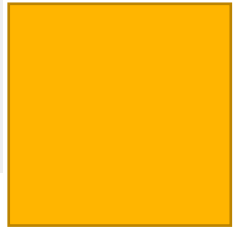


- Recalibrate who you compare yourself to
- Look for support from people outside your circle
- If you're performing, remind yourself of it
- Adjust your definition of competence
- Focus on your strengths
- Accept your accomplishments
- \*\* Ask yourself – might COACHING help? \*\*

# To conclude....

1. Acknowledge your feelings as a first step
2. Break your thinking pattern & reframe your beliefs about your accomplishments & how others see them
3. Watch your language
4. Remind yourself of your achievements
5. Focus on your strengths

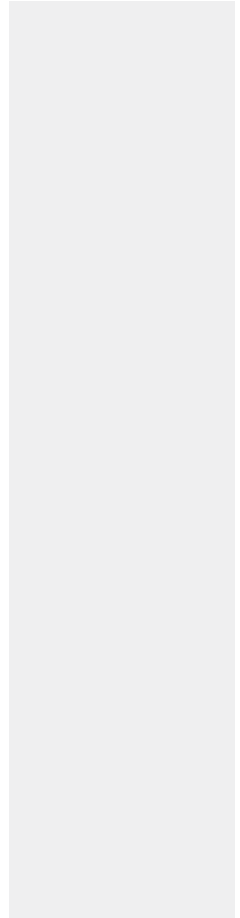
# Be Brave



**Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.  
Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.**

— *Samuel Beckett*

AZ QUOTES



# Additional....

- [What is imposter syndrome and how can you combat it? - Elizabeth Cox \(4 mins.\)](#)
- The Time Ferriss Show (14 July '21) - [Anne Lamott on Taming your Inner Critic](#)
- All in the Mind BBC 4 (7 January '20) – [Imposter Syndrome \(10:22 – 17:48 mins.\)](#)
- Amy Cuddy Ted Talk – [Fake it till you make it](#)
- Mike Cannon-Brookes Ted Talk (21 Dec. '19) - [How you can use Imposter Syndrome to your benefit](#)



# A key takeaway for you?

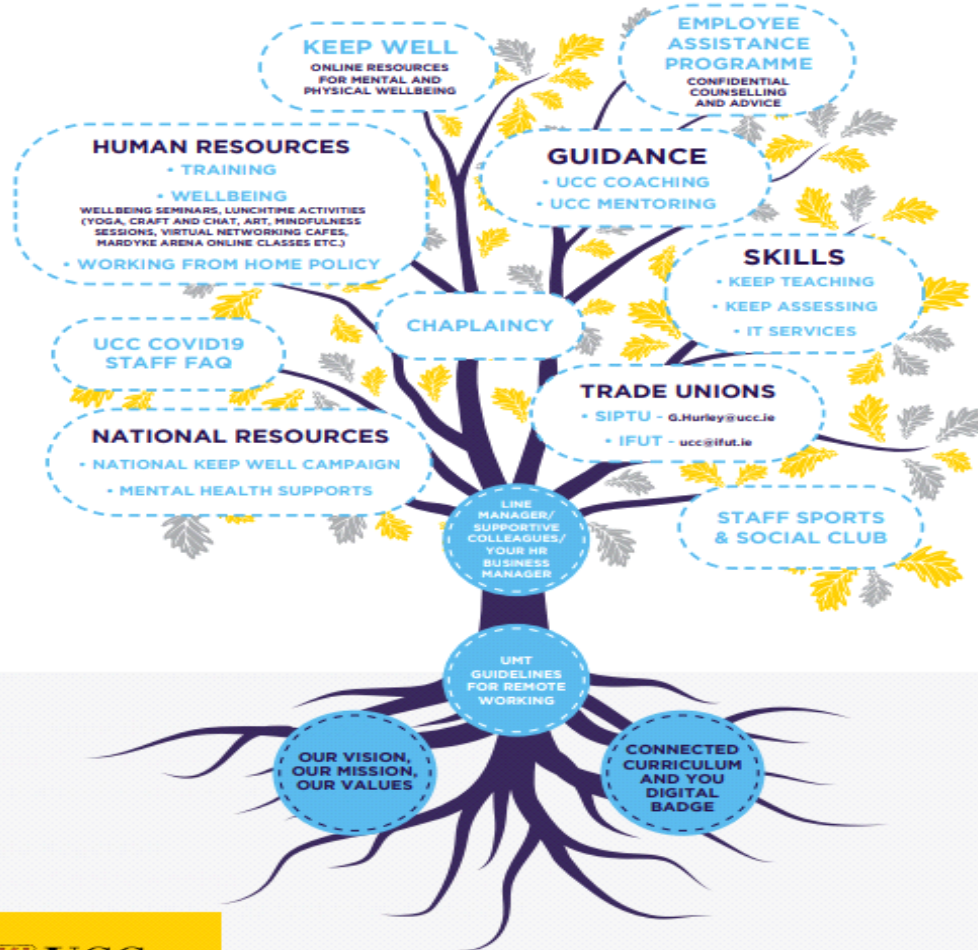


# SUPPORTING UCC STAFF IN 2020/21

## RESOURCE TREE SHOWING STAFF RESOURCES

The "Acorn to Mighty Oak" has come to symbolise students' academic and professional development journey throughout their time at UCC. We believe this is also true for our staff. In alignment with this rich metaphor, the support services available to our staff are presented in the form of a [Resource Tree](#).

This tree depicts the support services and resources available to staff and provide links to further information about each service.



# Meet the Team



Anne Gannon  
Staff Wellbeing & Development Manager



Mary Horgan  
Staff Development Advisor



Grace Conway  
Staff Development Co-Ordinator



Susan O'Mahony  
Staff Wellbeing & Development Advisor



Anna McKenna  
Senior Executive Assistant