



The 5-5-5 Technique

In episode 9 of The Agile Skills Library podcast Geoff Watts and Paul Goddard introduced The 5-5-5 Technique from Geoff's book The Coach's Casebook.

People with Impostor Syndrome have a tendency to dilute or not accept compliments. They will put their successes down to luck or other factors rather than internalise them.

One technique to use with 'impostors' is the '5-5-5' technique. This is a short form of 360° appraisal and, as with all the best techniques, is very simple.

Give your team or colleague the following instructions:

1. Think of five people whose opinions you respect and trust and give them a short form with five questions to complete. The questions should only take five minutes to answer. [See template below]
2. Ask each of the five people to read out their answers to you. (Many people do this exercise over email, which is still beneficial but not as powerful as having that person in the room actually saying the words).
3. Ask them to pause after reading out each of their answers.
4. During that pause, repeat what they have said in the first person in your head. For example if the person says, 'I think your greatest strength is your creativity because you always see options that others would never even consider', you would say to yourself: 'My greatest strength is creativity because I always see options that others would never consider'.
5. Thank them unreservedly for the feedback.

Template for the 5-5-5 questionnaire

Below are five questions that I would like you to answer based on your perception of me. I have chosen you as one of five people whose opinions I trust, value and respect.

I hope and expect you to be honest.

This will probably take about five minutes of your time and I would like you to write down your answers first.

Then, when you are ready, I would like you to tell me what you have written, one answer at a time.

Thank you

What words or phrases come to mind when you think about me?
What impact do I consistently have on other people?
What do you think I underestimate about myself?
What achievements do you associate with me?
What do you see as my greatest strengths?