

Addressing Imposter Syndrome

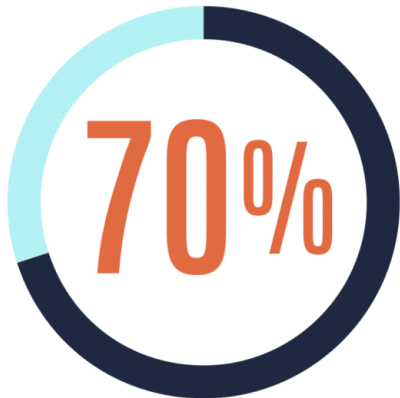
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Do You Have Imposter Syndrome?

1. I believe the success I've had has been a fluke.
2. Even when I do well, I don't think I really deserve it.
3. I worry people will find out I'm not as smart as they think I am.
4. I downplay my achievements.
5. It's hard for me to accept compliments.
6. I feel uncomfortable with praise.
7. I compare myself with others.
8. I feel like failing is not an option.
9. I feel like things are more of a struggle for me.
10. I feel like I'm making it up as I go along.

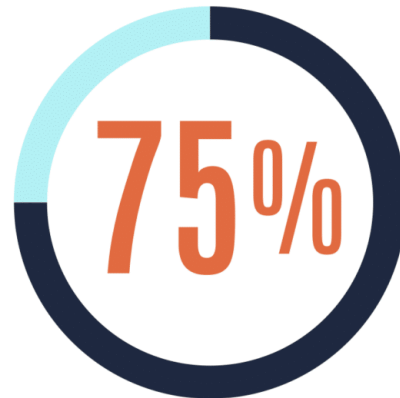
[Source](#)

YOU'RE NOT ALONE!



of successful people reported experiencing impostor feelings at some point in their life.

(Gail Matthews)



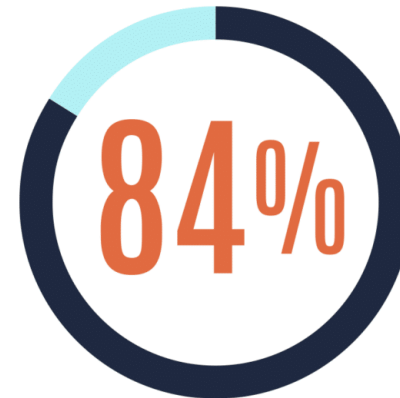
of executive women say they've experienced impostor syndrome.

(KPMG, 2020)



of CEOs feel out of their depth in their role.

(Dropbox & School of Life Study, 2017)



of entrepreneurs and small business owners report experiencing impostor syndrome.

(Kajabi, 2020)

Imposter Phenomenon

“very real and specific form of self-doubt” (APA)

“an internal experience of intellectual phoniness” (Clance & Imes 1978)

“psychological syndrome based on intense, secret feelings of fraudulence in the face of success and achievement” (Harvey 1984)

Common Features of Imposter Syndrome

1. Feelings of phoniness and self-doubt
2. Fear of being found out
3. Difficulty taking credit for one's accomplishments
4. Frustration with inability to meet self-set standards
5. Lack of confidence
6. Fear of making mistakes

[Source](#)

THE 5 TYPES OF IMPOSTORS

People who feel like impostors hold themselves to unrealistic, unsustainable standards of competence. In Dr. Valerie Young's research with hundreds of thousands of people from a wide range of occupations and at all phases of their careers, five different types emerged — each with its own unique focus:



THE PERFECTIONIST

- Primary focus on “how” something is done, how the work is conducted and how it turns out.
- One minor flaw in an otherwise stellar performance or 99 out of 100 equals failure, shame.



THE EXPERT

- The knowledge version of the Perfectionist, the primary concern is on “what” and “how much” you know or can do.
- Because you expect to know everything, even a minor lack of knowledge brings failure and shame.



THE SOLOIST

- Cares mostly about “who” completes the task.
- Because you think you should be able to do it all on your own, needing help, tutoring, or coaching is a sign of failure that evokes shame.



THE NATURAL GENIUS

- The Natural Genius also cares about “how” and “when” accomplishments happen. But for you, competence is measured in terms of ease and speed.
- The fact that you have to struggle to master a subject or skill or that you're not able to bang out your masterpiece on the first try equals failure which evokes shame.



THE SUPERHUMAN

- The SuperHuman measures competence based on “how many” roles you can both juggle and excel in.
- Falling short in any role — as a parent, partner, on the home-front, friend, volunteer — all evoke shame because you feel you should be able to handle it all — perfectly and easily.

Causes of Imposter Syndrome

An identity based on
high achievement

Normal feelings
of self-doubt

Comparison culture

Systemic oppression of
women and
minoritized groups

Possible Consequences of Imposter Syndrome

Poor mental health,
especially depression
and anxiety

Isolation

Limited risk-taking and
opportunity-seeking

Limited ability to work
with joy or fulfillment

Some Tips

for changing your mindset

Changing Your Mindset

- Recognize it's normal to doubt yourself or feel fraudulent
- Address cognitive distortions (all or nothing thinking, jumping to conclusions, overgeneralization, disqualifying the positive)
- Pay attention to your self-talk and self-compassion
- Compare like to like or to the mean
- Separate feelings from facts
- Break the silence with a friend, colleague, mentor
- Create your own definition of success to assess yourself against
- Separate your worth from accomplishments by remembering where you flourish

“Imposter syndrome took a fairly universal feeling of discomfort, second-guessing, and mild anxiety in the workplace and pathologized it...The answer to overcoming imposter syndrome is not to fix individuals but to create an environment that fosters a variety of leadership styles and in which diverse racial, ethnic, and gender identities are seen as just as professional as the current [hetero white male] model...”

[Tulshyan & Burey, 2021](#)

**Imposter Syndrome is an
understandable response
to exclusion.**

[Murray, 2022](#)

Further Reading

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