

# Understanding Imposter Phenomenon



# What is imposter phenomenon?

Enter your thoughts above

# What is imposter phenomenon?

Collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success

- Pauline Clance, PHD and Suzanne Imes PhD coined the term in 1978
- **70%** of people experience at least once in their careers
- Early research originally indicated women were more impacted than men but recent studies debunk that belief
- More common within minority groups and with people who received mixed messages with their families.

# What does it look like?

**You can feel like a fraud or that your success came from luck instead of from your hard work and skills**

In the beginning, Clance and Imes studied HIPO (high potential) women and they thought IP was limited to women. In the late 80s they expanded their research to include men and realized that this was a bigger phenomenon. Men experience IP at roughly the same rate as women, but are less likely to talk about it.

## Take the Imposter Phenomenon Assessment and score yourself

- Did anything surprise you?
- How have your results impacted you personally?
- How have your results impacted you professionally?

<http://paulinroseclance.com/pdf/IPTestandscoring.pdf>



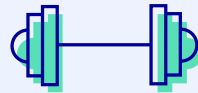
# Subtypes of Imposter Phenomenon



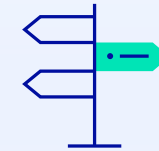
Through her research, Dr. Valerie Young has identified five subtypes of imposter phenomenon. We'll walk through each subtype across the next few slides. Please look at the questions listed for each subtype and keep a tally of the questions you identify with.



**The Perfectionist**



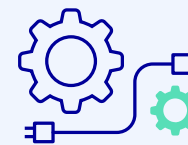
**The Superman/  
Superwoman**



**The Rugged  
Individualist**



**The Expert**



**The Natural  
Genius**



# The Perfectionist

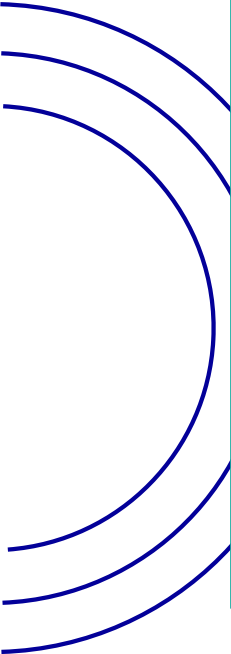
Set high goals for themselves and if they are not meeting goals they can experience self doubt. Perfectionists also tend not to delegate as they feel if they want something do right they must do it themselves.

- Have you ever been accused of being a micromanager?
- Do you have great difficulty delegating? Even when you're able to do so, do you feel frustrated and disappointed in the results?
- When you miss the (insanely high) mark on something, do you accuse yourself of "not being cut out" for your job and ruminate on it for days?
- Do you feel like your work must be 100% perfect, 100% of the time?

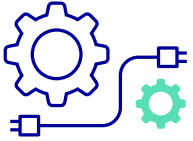


# The Superman / Superwoman

Push themselves to work harder and harder to measure up to cover up their insecurities and are prone to work overload.

- 
- Do you stay later at the office than the rest of your team, even past the point that you've completed that day's necessary work?
  - Do you get stressed when you're not working and find downtime completely wasteful?
  - Have you let your hobbies and passions fall by the wayside, sacrificed to work?
  - Do you feel like you haven't truly earned your title (despite numerous degrees and achievements), so you feel pressed to work harder and longer than those around you to prove your worth?

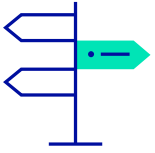




# The Natural Genius

Judge success based on their abilities not efforts. For example, if you work hard at something you must not be talented. They judge themselves based on realistic expectations and getting it right the first time

- Do you have a track record of getting “straight A’s” or “gold stars” in everything you do?
- Were you told frequently as a child that you were the “smart one” in your family or peer group?
- Do you dislike the idea of having a mentor, because you can handle things on your own?
- When you’re faced with a setback, does your confidence tumble because not performing well provokes a feeling of shame?
- Do you often avoid challenges because it’s so uncomfortable to try something you’re not great at?



# The Rugged Individualist

Feel as though asking for help makes them an imposter. They see accepting assistance as proof of being an imposter.

- Do you firmly feel that you need to accomplish things on your own?
- “I don’t need anyone’s help.” Does that sound like you?
- Do you frame requests in terms of the requirements of the project, rather than your needs as a person?




# The Expert

They fear they might be exposed as inexperienced or unknowledgeable. May feel as though they tricked an employer into hiring them.

- ❑ Do you shy away from applying to job postings unless you meet every single educational requirement?
- ❑ Are you constantly seeking out trainings or certifications because you think you need to improve your skills in order to succeed?
- ❑ Even if you've been in your role for some time, can you relate to feeling like you still don't know "enough"?




# How Can We Overcome Imposter Phenomenon?



**Acknowledge it** - recognize and call out these disruptive thoughts and feelings when they emerge. Once you know what it feels like and can recognize the “impostor” within you, you’ll have an easier time overcoming it. Make a mental note or better yet, write your thoughts down as they occur.

**Reframe your thoughts** - Reframe your thoughts and realize that what you’re feeling isn’t founded on anything real. Feelings of inadequacy and fear are all in your head, so imagine how you’d feel if you could turn these thoughts into something positive. Instead of thinking something like “I don’t know *anything*” why not try reframing it to “I don’t know *everything*...yet. I’m still learning”?



**Progress not perfection** - In fact, no one is. Perfectionism and impostor syndrome tend to go hand-in-hand, so cut yourself some slack. Try finishing a project before you “think” it’s ready for completion. Start that business plan, and ask for help if you need it.

**Recognize your achievements** - While you may not be perfect, you certainly are great at many things. Make a list of your strengths, and take note of everything you’re good at. Then, make a list of your weaknesses or areas you’d like to improve on, and focus on developing those areas. Personal development is healthy

**Remember you are not alone** - You aren’t the only one who struggles with feelings of inadequacy. Find someone you can talk to, whether it be a coach, friend, or therapist. You don’t need to tackle this alone.



# Thank You

