

# Wellness that Works

**Own Your Worth**  
*imposter syndrome & comparison*



“ ————— ”  
No one can make you feel  
inferior without your consent.  
~Eleanor Roosevelt  
————— ”



# Imposter Syndrome Phenomenon

PSYCHOTHERAPY: THEORY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE  
VOLUME 15, #3, FALL, 1978

## THE IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON IN HIGH ACHIEVING WOMEN: DYNAMICS AND THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT: The term...  
to designate an int...  
phoniness which app...  
and intense among a...  
women. Certain early...  
introjection of societal sex-role stereotyping...  
to contribute significantly to the development of the...  
impostor phenomenon. Despite outstanding...  
academic and profess...  
who experience th...  
believing that th...  
fooled anyone...  
achievements, v...  
ample objective...  
functioning, do...  
belief. Four fac...  
nance of impos...  
Therapeutic ap...  
helping women ch...  
described.

In the past five years we have worked in individual psychotherapy, theme-centered interactional groups, and college classes with over 150 highly successful women—women who have earned Ph.D.'s in various specialties, who are respected professionals in their fields.

Self-declared impostors...  
Some significant person will discover that they are indeed intellectual impostors. One woman stated, "I was convinced that I would be discovered as a phony when I took my com-

**"Internal experience of intellectual phoniness..."<sup>1</sup>**

**"...subjective feeling of intellectual fraudulence and self-doubt experienced by individuals in goal-orientated high-achieving professions."<sup>2</sup>**



Suzanne Ament Imes

# Characteristics



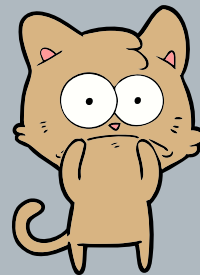
Accomplishments due to luck not ability



Fear of being found out



Overwork to compensate for “not enoughness”



Nervous to speak up spontaneously  
Nervous to accept promotion



Procrastination

# Associations

generalized anxiety<sup>1,3,4</sup>

depression<sup>1,3,4</sup>

lack of self-confidence<sup>1</sup>

low self-esteem<sup>3</sup>

social dysfunction<sup>3</sup>

*MISSED*

*POTENTIAL*



# Who?



+/- Women<sup>1,3,5,6</sup>

Underrepresented groups<sup>6</sup>

Perfectionists<sup>5</sup>

People in competitive fields<sup>5</sup>

Successful people<sup>5</sup>



# Genetic Counselors



2 NSGC presidential addresses

(Austin, 2016; Hooker, 2020)

3 NSGC Perspectives Pieces

(Díaz, 2021; Lawrence, 2022; Murphy, 2024)



Jehannine Austin, 2016 NSGC president

“

When I first learned about imposter syndrome, I recognized it in myself immediately, and from my interactions with many fabulous, accomplished genetic counselors over the years, I am convinced that a substantial proportion of you have imposter syndrome too.

The first step to overcoming it so that you can reach your full potential is recognizing it.<sup>7</sup>



Is it blocking you from success  
and the contentment you desire and deserve?



# CLANCE IP SCALE<sup>8</sup>

For each question, please select the number that best indicates how true the statement is of you. It is best to give the first response that enters your mind rather than dwelling on each statement and thinking about it over and over.

1 (not at all true)      2 (rarely)      3 (sometimes)      4 (often)      5 (very true)

- 1. I have often succeeded on a test or task even though I was afraid that I would not do well before I undertook the task. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. I can give the impression that I'm more competent than I really am. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. I avoid evaluations if possible and have a dread of others evaluating me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. When people praise me for something I've accomplished, I'm afraid I won't be able to live up to their expectations of me in the future. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. I rarely do a project or task as well as I'd like to do it. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. It's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments. \_\_\_\_\_

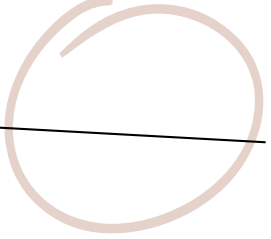
Total from page 1: \_\_\_\_\_


The Impostor Phenomenon: When Success Makes You Feel Like A Fake (pp. 20-22),  
by P.R. Clance, 1985, Toronto: Bantam Books.

- 1. At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. I'm disappointed at times in my present accomplishments and think I should have accomplished much more. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Sometimes I'm afraid others will discover how much knowledge or ability I really lack. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. I'm often afraid that I may fail at a new assignment or undertaking even though I generally do well at what I attempt. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. When I've succeeded at something and received recognition for my accomplishments, I have doubts that I can keep repeating that success. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. If I receive a great deal of praise and recognition for something I've accomplished, I tend to discount the importance of what I've done. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. I often worry about not succeeding with a project or examination, even though others around me have considerable confidence that I will do well. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. If I'm going to receive a promotion or gain recognition of some kind, I hesitate to tell others until it is an accomplished fact. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. I feel bad and discouraged if I'm not "the best" or at least "very special" in situations that involve achievement. \_\_\_\_\_

Total from page 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Total (pages 1 & 2):





**SCALE:**

|          |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|
| <41:     | few IP characteristics     |
| 41 - 60: | moderate IP experiences    |
| 61-80:   | frequent Impostor feelings |
| >80:     | intense IP experiences     |

# Tools

**NAME & NORMALIZE**



**REFRAME**  
**IMPOSTER VOICE**



# IMPOSTER VOICE

*reframed*

MY IMPOSTER VOICE SAYS:

"I don't belong here"

"I just got lucky"

"Soon they'll figure me out"

REFRAME BASED  
ON REALITY & SELF-COMPASSION:

*"I was invited here because of my skills and potential."*

*"Preparation positioned me to take advantage of opportunities."*

*"I have nothing to hide. I am okay being the authentic me."*



*my imposter voice reframed:*





**Adam Grant, PhD**

Source: BigThink

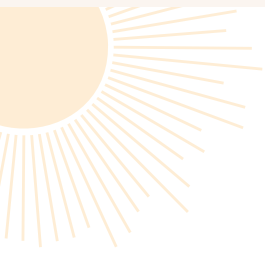
“ Impostor syndrome is a paradox:

- Others believe in you
- You don't believe in yourself
- Yet you believe yourself instead of them

If you doubt yourself, shouldn't you also doubt your judgment of yourself?

When multiple people believe in you, it might be time to believe them.

# EVIDENCE



Compliments I often brush off:

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A time I surprised myself by handling something better than I thought I could:

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My Ripple Effects: Who benefited from my work, kindness or generosity? What difference did it make for them? How did this make me feel?

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“Impostor syndrome is a paradox: Others believe in you. You don't believe in yourself. Yet you believe yourself instead of them. If you doubt yourself, shouldn't you also doubt your judgment of yourself? When multiple people believe in you, it might be time to believe them.” ~Adam Grant

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*reframed*

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*my imposter voice reframed:*



# references & recommendations

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