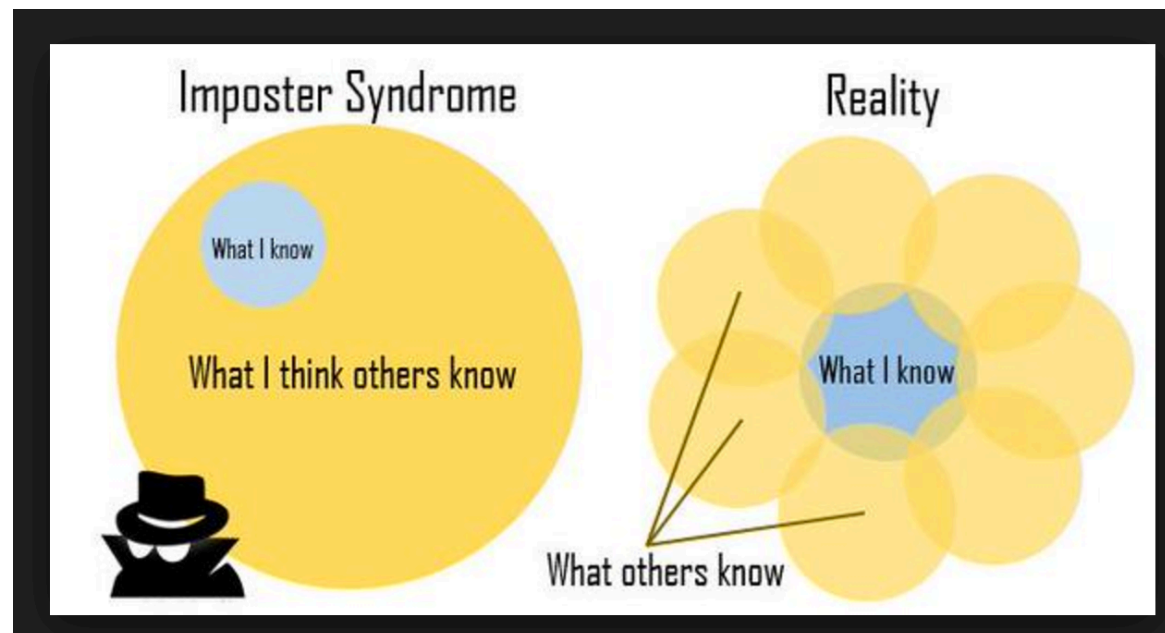


Impostor Syndrome

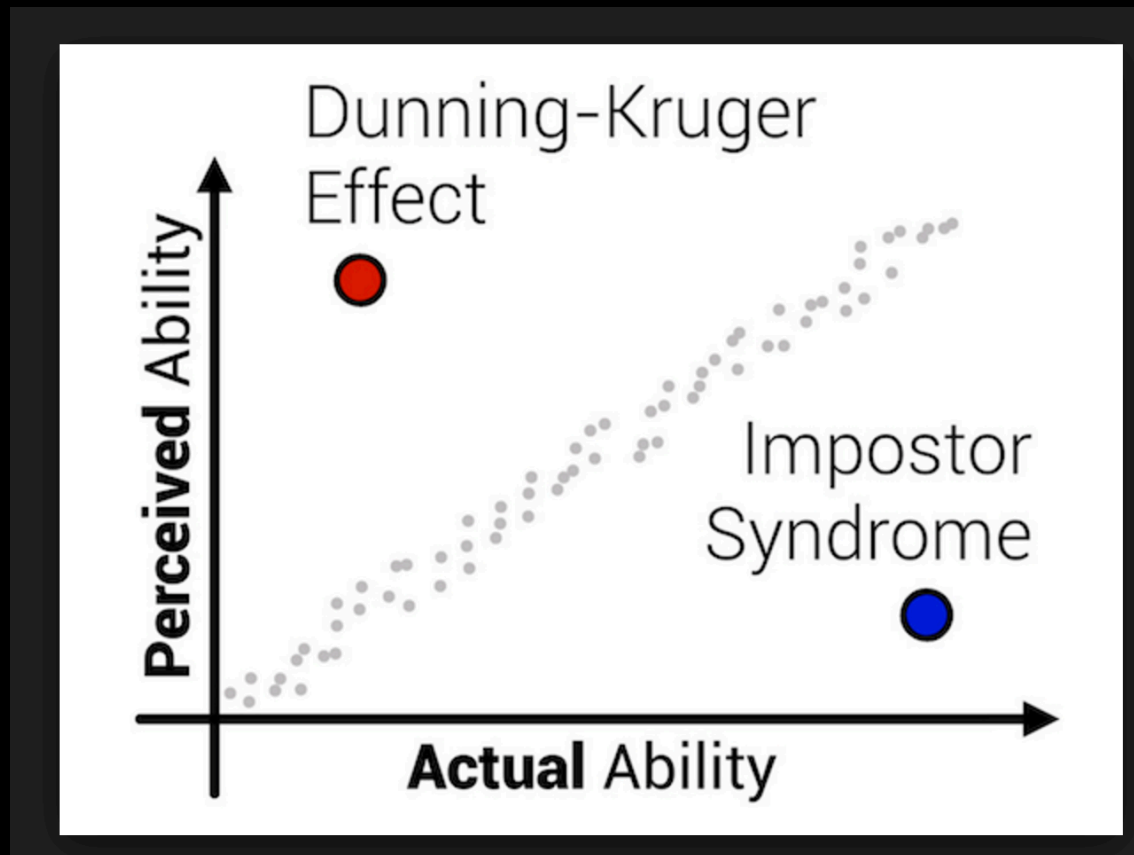
“...a psychological phenomenon in which people are unable to internalize their accomplishments. Despite external evidence of their competence, those with the syndrome remain convinced they are frauds and do not deserve the success they have achieved. Proof of success is dismissed as luck, timing, or as a result of deceiving others into thinking they are more intelligent and competent than they believe themselves to be.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impostor_syndrome



In the 1970's, researchers Pauline Clance PhD, and Suzanne Imes PhD came up with the term "impostor phenomenon" to describe the behavior that the former observed in some of her students.

- Many highly successful people refuse to take ownership of their success, and instead feel like frauds - like they are not worthy of their success, no matter how many trophies, certificates, or accolades they've received.
- They diminish the significance of their achievements and attribute them to luck or other forces outside their control, rather than their own effort, dedication, and even intelligence.
- For people with impostor syndrome, their biggest fear is that people will soon discover that they are frauds and not as skilled, intelligent, or competent as they make themselves out to be.
- Research has linked the imposter syndrome to self-esteem issues, overachievement, and unhealthy levels of perfectionism.



Imposter syndrome is very common (more common than the reverse), and is not considered a psychological disorder

But, if unexamined and unchecked, the feelings it triggers can lead to psychological problems

Are **You** an Imposter?

Find out with imposter syndrome bingo!

Feel like a fraud? You're not alone.

American Psychological Association, gradPSYCH magazine, Nov. 2013

<http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2013/11/fraud.aspx>



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Home // gradPSYCH Magazine // November 2013 gradPSYCH // Feel like a fraud?

COVER STORY

Feel like a fraud?

You're not alone. Many graduate students question whether they are prepared to do the work they do. Here's how to overcome that feeling and recognize your strengths.

By Kirsten Weir



“Faking It: Women, Academia, and the Imposter Syndrome”

Kate Bahn, PhD in Economics at LadyEconomist.com

<https://chroniclevitae.com/news/412-faking-it-women-academia-and-impostor-syndrome>



Kate Bahn
PhD in Economics at LadyEconomist.com

Faking It: Women, Academia, and Impostor Syndrome



March 27, 2014

“Walk Like a Duck” – Inside Higher Ed

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2012/08/20/essay-how-new-faculty-members-can-deal-impostor-syndrome>

Walk Like a Duck

| If you are a new faculty member and don't feel like you belong, act like you do, writes Nate Kreuter.

By **Nate Kreuter** // August 20, 2012

5 COMMENTS

The Professor is In blog – “The Imposter Syndrome, or, as my Mother told me: ‘Just Because Everyone Else is an Asshole, it Doesn’t Make you a Fraud.’”

<http://theprofessorisin.com/2012/12/11/the-imposter-syndrome-or-as-my-mother-told-me-just-because-everyone-else-is-an-asshole-it-doesnt-make-you-a-fraud-a-guest-post/>

guest blog by an Associate Professor with tenure describing her experiences with Imposter Syndrome

Science CAREERS

“No, you’re not an imposter”

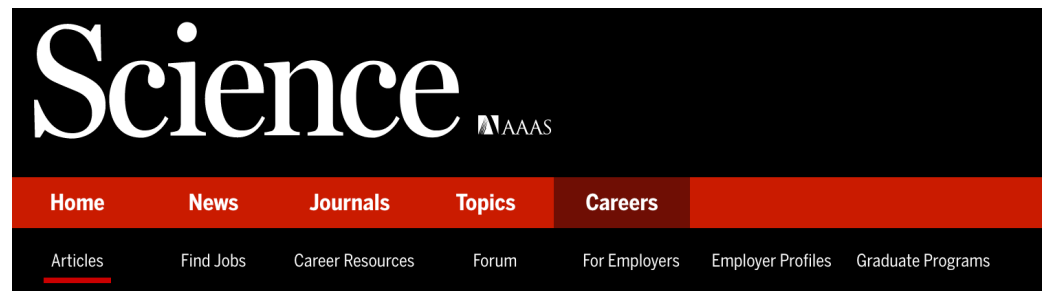
by Lucas Laursen, 2/15/08

<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2008/02/no-youre-not-impostor>

Self-assessment Quiz:

Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale:

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



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288



58



Credit: imageBROKER / Alamy

No, You're Not an Impostor

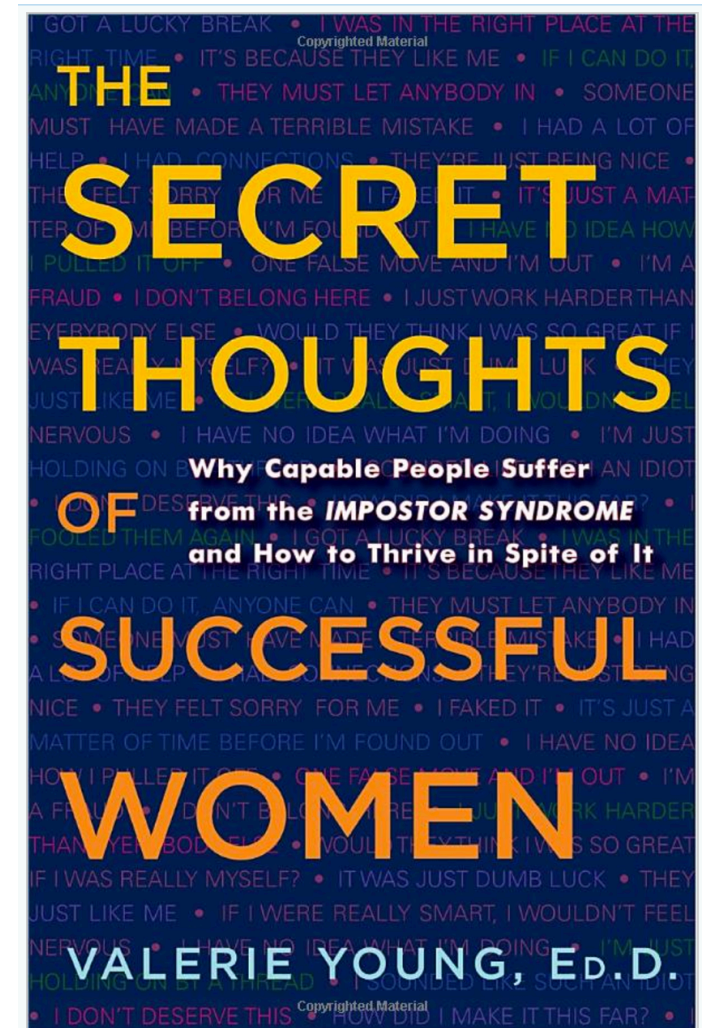
By Lucas Laursen | Feb. 15, 2008 , 10:00 AM

Valerie Young - “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

Your book is about women--do men feel like impostors or is this a female issue?

Initially psychologists suspected it was something experienced primarily by women. That has proven not to be the case. Men are attending my seminars in increasing numbers, and among graduate students the male-female ratio is roughly fifty-fifty. I’ve heard from or worked with countless men who suffer terribly from their fraud fears, including a member of the Canadian mounted police and an attorney who argued before the Supreme Court.

In the end, I decided there were more reasons than not to focus on women. For starters my early doctoral research looked specifically at women. Second, 80 percent of my speaking engagements come at the request of women for their female employees or students. More importantly, I aimed the book at women of because chronic self-doubt tends to hold them back more.



Valerie Young - “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

What's one mistake that you've seen even the most experienced women make?

Men generally don't hold onto their failures and mistakes the way women do--at least not with the same intensity or longevity.

Unfortunately it's easy for women to take a man being less rattled to mean he's more competent--or at least more confident--which to the untrained eye is often mistaken as one and the same.

What is one easy thing we can do to overcome that voice inside our heads?

Separate feelings from fact.

For example everyone feels stupid from time to time. In these moments you need to remember, just because you feel stupid, does not mean you are stupid.

What do Luck, Timing, Connections, and Personality *Really* Have to do with Success?

The Bottom Line:

In order to feel fully deserving of your success you must learn to claim your accomplishments on a gut, visceral level. This begins with understanding that external factors such as luck, timing, connections, and personality play a valid role in everyone's success – including yours.

What You Can Do:

- Create a list of all your achievements large and small
- Next to each one, note the role that luck, timing, connections, or your own personality may have played in your ultimate success
- Then write down the specific actions you took to take full advantage of these contributors.
- Make an agreement with yourself that the next time someone compliments your work you will say “Thank you.” Then zip it.

Valerie Young - “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

What would be one piece of advice from you to women entering the workforce (or academics) at any stage, with regards to impostor syndrome?

Impostors, and women especially, have seriously misguided notions about what it takes to be competent.

Bar none the fastest way to kick the impostor feeling is to adopt what I’ve dubbed the *Competence Rulebook for Mere Mortals* which has as its cardinal rule, competence doesn’t mean you need to know everything, to do it all yourself, or to do everything perfectly or effortlessly.

Instead competence is being able to identify the resources it takes to get the job done.

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

What's your Competence Type?

I'll know I'm competent at _____ when _____.

If I were really smart, _____.

I should always _____.

If I were really qualified, I would _____.

The Five Competence Types:

1. The Perfectionist
2. The Natural Genius
3. The Expert
4. The Rugged Individualist
5. The Superwoman/Man

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

- 1. The Perfectionist** – “I should deliver an unblemished performance 100 percent of the time. Every aspect of my work must be exemplary. Nothing short of perfect is acceptable.”

New Competence Rules for the Perfectionist:

- Perfectionism inhibits success
- Sometimes good is good enough
- Not everything deserves 100 percent
- Your perfectionism impacts others
- Non-perfection is to be embraced

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

2. **The Natural Genius** – “If I were really smart, I would be able to understand everything the first time I hear it.” “If I were a real writer, it wouldn’t be this hard.”

New Competence Rules for the Natural Genius:

- Effort trumps ability
- Challenges are often opportunities in disguise
- Real success always takes time

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

3. **The Expert** – “If I were really competent, I would know everything there is to know.” “If I were really smart, I would understand and remember everything I read. “ “Before I can put myself out there, I need in-depth education, training, and experience.”

New Competence Rules for the Expert:

- There are many paths to expertise
- There is no end to knowledge
- Competence means respecting your limitations
- You don't need to know everything, you just need to be smart enough to find someone who does
- Even when you don't know something you can still project confidence

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

4. **The Rugged Individualist** – “If I were really competent, I could do everything myself.”

New Competence Rules for the Rugged Individualist:

- To get the job done, you need to first identify the resources required.
- Competent people know how to ask for what they need.
- Smart people seek out people who know more than they do.
- When seeking advice, it's important to ask the right people.
- Your work does not have to be groundbreaking to be good.
- Competent people know it's okay to build on the work of other competent people.

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

5. **The Superwoman/Man** – “If I were really competent, I would be able to do it all.”

New Competence Rules for the Superwoman/Man:

- It's okay to say no.
- Delegating frees you and gives others the chance to participate.
- When you slow down and cut out unnecessary tasks, you get to focus on activities that really matter.
- Being a Superwoman/man sends an unhealthy message to your daughters and sons.

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

The Bottom Line:

Everyone has a personal definition of competence. The extreme and unrealistic notions of what it takes to be competent only perpetuate the lie that you are an imposter.

Fortunately, there is a solution. Lower your internal bar by adopting healthier competence rules.

What You Can Do:

- Identify your primary competence type
- Pick one of the new realistic rules for your competence type, ideally the one that would give your confidence the biggest boost, and start there.
- Spend the next few weeks consciously looking for opportunities to put your new rule into action.

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

Right the Rules

One thing that keeps people stuck in the imposter syndrome is the belief that they are not entitled to feel, think, or act in certain ways. Below is a list of 20 rights that we're perfectly entitled to but sometimes act as if we are not.

➔ Check off any rights that you've had trouble always granting yourself:

1. The right to say no without feeling guilty
2. The right to feel and express healthy competitiveness and achievement drive
3. The right to make mistakes or be wrong
4. The right to express pride at my accomplishments
5. The right to occasionally have an off day or not perform up to par
6. The right to fail and learn from the experience
7. The right to be treated fairly without discrimination due to my sex, race, age, class, sexual orientation, religion, culture, or disability
8. The right to achieve at a level I am comfortable with
9. The right to say, "I don't understand"
10. The right to have things explained to me – even when the person is busy

Right the Rules (continued)

One thing that keeps people stuck in the imposter syndrome is the belief that they are not entitled to feel, think, or act in certain ways. Below is a list of 20 rights that we're perfectly entitled to but sometimes act as if we are not.

➔ Check off any rights that you've had trouble always granting yourself:

11. The right to be treated as a competent adult
12. The right to work in nontraditional realms without penalty
13. The right to not be the spokesperson for my entire gender, race, cultural group..
14. The right to work and raise children at the same time
15. The right to achieve above – or below – family expectations
16. The right to not know all of the answers
17. The right to be treated with dignity and not be patronized
18. The right to have my input considered as valuable as the next person's
19. The right to ask for additional compensation for additional work
20. The right to be in the midst of a learning curve

Right the Rules (continued)

➔ Next, identify the situation that is most likely to trigger imposter feelings in you. For example, is it whenever you are in a situation where you...

- have to defend your work or your ideas?
- are being tested, evaluated, or judged in some way?
- take on a new and unfamiliar assignment?
- are in a classroom or meeting?
- have to present in front of a group?
- show your work to others?
- interact with a person or group of people who are more successful or better educated than you?
- are presented with an opportunity to “play big”?
- other....

➔ Now put a star next to the right that is at the core of the imposter scenario you just identified above (i.e., “Which right are you denying yourself?”).

➔ What would you do differently if you really believed you were entitled to this right?

Creating Your “After” Picture

- Whenever I’m in a situation where _____
- I usually experience feelings of _____
- The negative voices in my head start saying _____
- And what I typically do is _____

Creating Your “After” Picture

Now think about how you would like the new, confident non-imposter to behave in the same situation by answering these questions:

- What self-affirming things would I *rather feel*?
- What would I like the new *positive voices* in my head to say?
- What would I *rather do* in this situation?

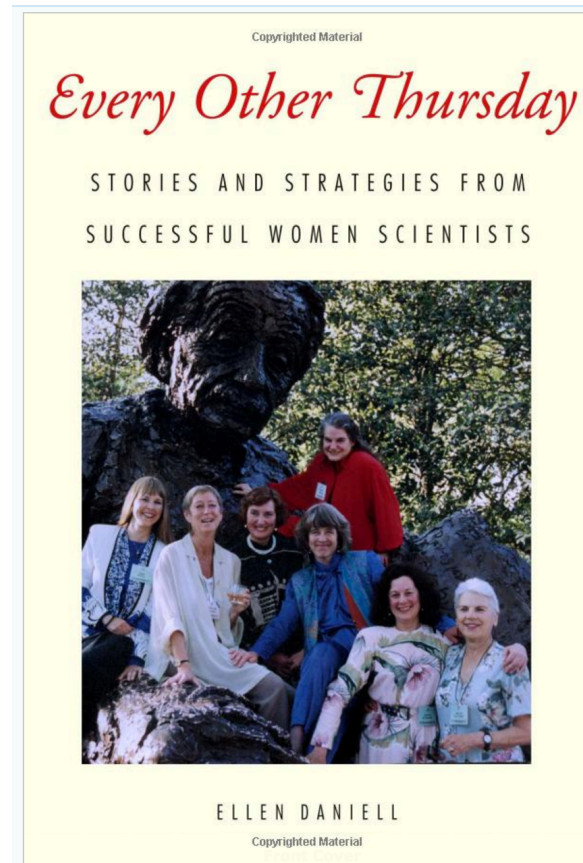
How about feeling powerful, clearheaded, confident, excited, secure, proud, optimistic, eager, curious, capable, or entitled?

What if you could relax and enjoy the moment? Ask lots of questions so you learn more? Trust that the words will come? Be less concerned with what others think? Wing it a little? Take time to acknowledge and celebrate when you accomplish something?

Forming professional support and problem-solving groups:
“Every Other Thursday: Stories and strategies from successful women scientists”

Ellen Daniell

<https://www.amazon.com/Every-Other-Thursday-Strategies-Successful/dp/0300510845>



Hiding Out – Trying to avoid the “No-Talent Police”

Seven Ways Imposters Try to Stay One Step Ahead of the “No-Talent Police”

1. Overpreparing and hard work
2. Holding back
3. Maintaining a low or ever-changing profile
4. Use of charm or perceptiveness to win approval
5. Procrastination
6. Never finishing
7. Self-sabotage

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”

The Competence Rule Book for Mere Mortals

If you feel resistant to “lowering your standards” (re-writing your competence rulebook), keep in mind that you don’t have to ditch it entirely:

- As the Perfectionist you are welcome to hold on to your pursuit of high standards, but shed the shame you feel when you fall short.
- As the Natural Genius you can keep your desire for mastery, as long as you recognize the time and effort that’s required to get there.
- As the Expert you can still value the importance of knowledge, but ditch the unrealistic expectation that you should know it all.
- As the Rugged Individualist you can take pride in the knowledge that you can go it alone if you have to, just stop thinking that you must.
- As the Superwoman/Man you can honor your desire to be the best you can be on multiple fronts, but abandon the idea that you have to do it all.

Valerie Young, “The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women”