

## Imposter Syndrome: The Secret Many High-Achieving Women Keep



---

---

---

---

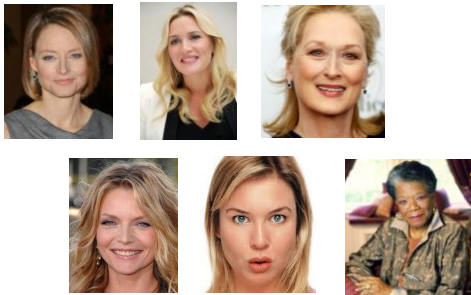
---

---

---

---

### What Do These Famous People Have in Common?



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Jodie Foster**

*"I always feel like something of an impostor. I don't know what I'm doing."*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Kate Winslet**

*"Sometimes I wake up in the morning before going off to a shoot, and I think, I can't do this. I'm a fraud."*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Meryl Streep**

*"You think, 'Why would anyone want to see me again in a movie? And I don't know how to act anyway, so why am I doing this?'"*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Michelle Pfeiffer**

*"I still think people will find out that I'm really not very talented. I'm really not very good. It's all been a big sham."*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**Renee Zellweger**

*"Here we go again! What were they thinking? They gave me this role; don't they know I'm faking it?"*




---

---

---


---

---

---


---

---



**Maya Angelou**

*"I have written 11 books, but each time I think, 'uh oh, they're going to find out now. I've run a game on everybody, and they're going to find me out.'"*




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


**What is "Imposter Syndrome?"**

**Definition**

"...a psychological phenomenon in which people are unable to internalize their accomplishments. Despite external evidence of their competence, those with the syndrome remain **convinced that 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.

Notably, impostor syndrome is particularly common among **high-achieving women.**" ~Wikipedia




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Agenda

At the end of this session, you will know:

- What the "Imposter Syndrome" is (definition)
- Whether you suffer from it or not (signs & symptoms)
- Why some people have it and others don't (causes)
- How you can overcome it despite the odds (strategies)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Statistics

- 2 out of 5 successful people consider themselves frauds
  - 70% of all people... at one time or another
- 3 out of 4 of Harvard Business School students
  - Common among high-achievers
  - Graduate students and scientists beginning tenure track positions
  - Women ("affirmative action") – doubt their abilities



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What is Imposter Syndrome? – cont'd

3 sub-categories:

1. Feeling Like a Fake
2. Attributing Success to Luck
3. Discounting Success



-Caltech



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Sheryl Sandberg

*"...many people, but especially women, feel fraudulent when they are praised for their accomplishments.*

*Instead of feeling worthy of recognition, they feel undeserving and guilty, as if a mistake has been made.*

*Despite being high achievers, even experts in their fields, women can't seem to shake the sense that it is only a matter of time until they are found out for who they really are- impostors with limited skills or abilities."*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Signs & Symptoms

### Thoughts

- Fooling Everyone, Phony, Faking It
- Timing, Luck or Error
- Charm



### Actions

- Overly Modest
- Discount or Deflect Compliments
- Diligence
- Dwell on Mistakes or Failures
- Procrastinate or Over-prepare



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Do You Suffer From Imposter Syndrome?

### Quick Quiz

#### Sometimes you...

1. Give the impression that you're more competent than you really are.
2. Are afraid people will soon realize that you're not as smart as you make yourself out to be.
3. Secretly think "I've fooled them again" when others praise your skills / talents.
4. Fear others will find out how much knowledge or ability you really lack.
5. Feel like you don't deserve the success you've achieved (including awards, promotions, etc.).
6. Think your success has been due to luck.
7. Believe peers with the same responsibilities are more mature.
8. Have doubts about whether you can keep repeating success.
9. Worry that others will begin to realize your shortcomings.
10. Dread having others evaluate you.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Why Some People Have It & Others Don't

### Causes

- 1. Family**
  - Achievement focus
  - Unrealistic standards ("not good enough")
  - Messages (over-praise, criticism, superiority)
  - Family labels
  - Paternal over-protection or lack of paternal care
  - Conflict and anger
- 2. Friends**
  - Non-supportive "Frenemies"
- 3. New Endeavours**
  - Work promotion
  - Graduate studies
- 4. Being First / Alone**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> at something (e.g., to go to university, white collar pro)
  - Work by yourself (e.g., "solopreneur")
- 5. Different Than Peers**
  - Visible Minority / Immigrant
  - Gender (women in male-dominated workplaces)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How to Overcome Imposter Syndrome

### Strategies

- Recognize & acknowledge
- Balance facts vs. feelings
- Rewrite mental script  
(*Reframe internal dialogue*)
- Talk about it
- Sense of humour
- Just say, "**Thank You**"  
(*when complimented*)



Adapted from *Forbes* & the *Shriver Report*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## For More Strategies

### Amy Cuddy – TED Talk



[http://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Questions

---



19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Thank You!

**Julianna Cantwell**, CACE, CPHR

Website: [www.junaconsulting.com](http://www.junaconsulting.com)

Email: [julianna@junaconsulting.com](mailto:julianna@junaconsulting.com)

Phone: (780) 619-6363 - cell

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---