



Have you ever felt like you're not good enough? Not creative enough? Well, there's a name for that. Imposter syndrome is at the root of these **self-doubts**, and can often leave people wondering: is this even good enough? What if they realize that I actually don't know anything? Do I even know what I am really doing? Am I smart enough to even be here? Let's talk about Imposter syndrome.

- a. Do you think you suffer from Imposter syndrome?
- b. How can we identify if we suffer from imposter syndrome?
- c. Does Imposter syndrome impact women more than men? Why?
- d. How can we overcome imposter syndrome?



**2. Let's find out if we have imposter syndrome!**

We will take an IP test, which was originally used by the psychologists who discovered and defined Imposter Syndrome. Discuss your answers with the group!



**3. Watch the following TEDEd video about Imposter syndrome and answer the questions that follow.**

*What is imposter syndrome and how can you combat it?*

<https://youtu.be/ZQUxL4Jm1Lo>

What is another name for imposter syndrome?

- a. Imposter Phenomenon
- b. Imposter Sensation
- c. Fraud Phenomenon
- d. Swindler Syndrome

d. Inadvertent fraud

Imposter syndrome is ALWAYS tied to which of the following?

- a. Depression
- b. Anxiety
- c. Self-esteem
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

What is the best way we know of to combat imposter syndrome?

- a. Ignore it
- b. Practice being confident
- c. Talk about it
- d. Read about it

Imposter syndrome may disproportionately affect which group of people?

- a. Underrepresented or disadvantaged people
- b. Children
- c. Men
- d. Confident people

How did Albert Einstein describe himself?

- a. Accidental success
- b. Involuntary swindler
- c. Unintentional trickster



- a. What are some strategies to overcome imposter syndrome?
- b. Great minds from Maya Angelou to Albert Einstein suffered from imposter syndrome. What does the video say about the phenomenon that even these experts in their field struggled with?
- c. What is “pluralistic ignorance”? Can you think of any situations where you may have encountered it?



**4. Now, take a look at this article by Time Magazine which revisits the discovery of Imposter syndrome and proposes ways of dealing with it.**

***Yes, Impostor Syndrome Is Real. Here's How to Deal With It.***

Impostor syndrome — the idea that you’ve only succeeded due to luck, and not because of your talent or qualifications — was first identified in 1978 by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes. In their paper, they theorized that women were uniquely affected by impostor syndrome. Since then, research has shown that both men and women experience impostor feelings, and Clance published a later paper acknowledging that impostor syndrome is not limited to women (she also created an impostor syndrome test). Today, impostor syndrome can apply to anyone “who isn’t able to internalize and own their successes,” says psychologist Audrey Ervin.

Impostor syndrome expert Valerie Young, who is the author of a book on the subject, *The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women*, has also found patterns in people who experience impostor feelings.

“Perfectionists” set extremely high expectations for themselves, and even if they meet 99% of their goals, they’re going to feel like failures. Any small mistake will make them question their own competence.

“Experts” feel the need to know every piece of information before they start a project and constantly look for new certifications or training to improve their skills. They won’t apply for a job if they don’t meet all the criteria in the posting, and they might be hesitant to ask a question in class or speak up in a meeting at work because they’re afraid of looking stupid if they don’t already know the answer.



When the “natural genius” has to struggle or work hard to accomplish something, he or she thinks this means they aren’t good enough. They are used to skills coming easily, and when they have to put in effort, their brain tells them that’s proof they’re an impostor.

“Soloists” feel they have to accomplish tasks on their own, and if they need to ask for help, they think that means they are a failure or a fraud.

“Supermen” or “superwomen” push themselves to work harder than those around them to prove that they’re not impostors. They feel the need to succeed in all aspects of life—at work, as parents, as partners—and may feel stressed when they are not accomplishing something.

**Why do people experience imposter syndrome?**

There's no single answer. Some experts believe it has to do with personality traits —like anxiety or neuroticism — while others focus on family or behavioral causes, Ervin explains. Sometimes childhood memories, such as feeling that your grades were never good enough for your parents or that your siblings outshone you in certain areas, can leave a lasting impact. "People often internalize these ideas: that in order to be loved or be lovable, 'I need to achieve,'" says Ervin. "It becomes a self-perpetuating cycle."

Factors outside of a person, such as their environment or institutionalized discrimination, can also play a major role in **spurring** impostor feelings. "A sense of belonging fosters confidence," says Young. "The more people who look or sound like you, the more confident you feel. And **conversely**, the fewer people who look or sound like you, it can and does for many people impact their confidence." This is especially true "whenever you belong to a group for whom there are stereotypes about competence," Young adds, including racial or ethnic minorities, women in STEM fields, or even international students at American universities.

### **How to deal with impostor syndrome**

One of the first steps to overcoming impostor feelings is to acknowledge the thoughts and put them in perspective. "Simply observing that thought as opposed to engaging it" can be helpful, says Ervin. "We can help teach people to let go and more critically question those thoughts. I encourage clients to ask, 'Does that thought help or **hinder** me?'"

You can also reframe your thoughts. Young says she reminds people that the only difference between someone who experiences impostor syndrome and someone who does not is how they respond to challenges. "People who don't feel like impostors are no more intelligent or competent or capable than the rest of us," Young says. "It's very good news, because it means we just have to learn to think like

non-impostors.” Learning to value constructive criticism, understanding that you’re actually slowing your team down when you don’t ask for help, or remembering that the more you practice a skill, the better you will get at it can all help.



It can also be helpful to share what you’re feeling with trusted friends or mentors. People who have more experience can reassure you that what you’re feeling is normal, and knowing others have been in your position can make it seem less scary. If you want to delve more deeply into these feelings, Ervin recommends seeking out a professional psychologist.

Most people experience moments of doubt, and that’s normal. The important part is not to let that doubt control your actions, says Young. “The goal is not to never feel like an impostor. The goal for me is to give [people] the tools and the insight and information to talk themselves down faster,” she says. “They can still have an impostor moment, but not an impostor life.

Source: <https://time.com/5312483/how-to-deal-with-impostor-syndrome/>

- a. What is Impostor syndrome, according to the text?
- b. What are the five types of personalities mentioned in the text and why do they feel that they are impostors?
- c. Why do people experience Impostor syndrome?
- d. How can we actually deal with Impostor syndrome?



**5. Let's analyze some statements extracted from the text above.**

- These feelings are known as impostor syndrome, **or** what psychologists often call impostor feelings.
- [...] they might be hesitant to ask a question in class or speak up in a meeting at work **because** they're afraid of looking stupid if they don't already know the answer.
- Most people experience moments of doubt, **and** that's normal.
- "They can still have an impostor moment, **but** not an impostor life."

**What is the role of the highlighted expressions in these statements?**

**6. Complete the following statements with the coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).**

- a. Jaewon was cold, \_\_\_\_\_ he put on a coat.
- b. Maria tried to read a novel in French, \_\_\_\_\_ it was too difficult.
- c. To get from Vancouver to Victoria, you can fly, \_\_\_\_\_ you can ride the ferry.
- d. I bought a bottle of wine, \_\_\_\_\_ we drank it together.
- e. The waiter was not very nice, \_\_\_\_\_ the food was delicious.
- f. I went to buy a Rolling Stones CD, \_\_\_\_\_ the shop didn't have it.
- g. Anna needed some money, \_\_\_\_\_ she took a part-time job.
- h. There's been so much rain lately! Maybe it's because of El Nino, \_\_\_\_\_ maybe it's just coincidence.

- i. Julie has a guitar, \_\_\_\_\_ she plays it really well.
- j. The concert was canceled, \_\_\_\_\_ we went to a nightclub instead.

**7. Choose the best conjunction for each sentence.**

- a. **Whereas/Since** Mei Li doesn't speak English, she can't go to university in Canada.
- b. Jerry passed the exam the first time **as/while** I had to retake it three times.
- c. Jun couldn't buy any Christmas presents **even though/because** he didn't have any money.
- d. I will be late today **though/because** my car has broken down.
- e. **Whereas/ Since** my wife likes to travel abroad, I prefer to stay at home for my vacations.
- f. Paula got the job **as/even though** she had no experience.
- g. I don't drink coffee **as/although** it makes me nervous.
- h. **Although/Because** it was raining, I didn't get wet.

**8. Combine the sentences using the subordinating conjunction at the end of the sentence.**

*e.g. "I put my coat on. It was cold. (because)" -> "I put my coat on because it was cold."*

- a. The boat could not move. There was no wind. (since)
- b. Surfing is fun. It can be dangerous. (though)
- c. I took my umbrella. It was raining. (as)
- d. Deer are cute. They eat all your flowers. (although)
- e. Some apples are red. Others are green. (while)
- f. You should stay away from bears. They are dangerous. (because)





(EXTRA) Imposter syndrome has been widely discussed by many people. Some believe that this problem hits some groups harder than others. Do you agree that women are more likely to suffer from Imposter syndrome? Present causes for your answer.



ENGLISH  
**2EMPOWER**



**Some extra readings on the topic...**

1. In this amazing article, BBC explores why women and women of color suffer more with Imposter syndrome than other groups:

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200724-why-imposter-syndrome-hits-women-and-women-of-colour-harder>

2. In this TedTalk, Valerie Yung depicts the causes of Imposter Syndrome and how to think your way out of it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7v-GG3SEWQ>

3. In this literary chronicle, the writer describes his feelings of being an impostor after moving to a new place:

<https://www.theskinny.co.uk/sexuality/deviance/impostor-syndrome>

4. In this short article you can learn more about the Imposter syndrome and how to cope with it: <https://flatironschool.com/blog/how-to-get-over-imposter-syndrome>