



5 Different Types of Imposter Syndrome (and 5 Ways to Battle Each One)

A) Warm up

1. To what extent do you think it is natural to have doubts about your own ability?
2. What steps do you believe that someone should take if they are having doubts about their own ability?

B) Adapted Text - 5 Different Types of Imposter Syndrome (and 5 Ways to Battle Each One)

5 Different Types of Imposter Syndrome (and 5 Ways to Battle Each One)

Adapted from an article published in 2022 by Melody J. Wilding in The Muse

Many high achievers share a shocking secret: Deep down they feel like complete frauds, constantly **plagued** by thoughts that their achievements are a result of complete luck rather than talent or hard-work.

Does this sound familiar? Do you ever feel that you are not really good enough to be in your job position, but you have survived because no-one has realised it yet?

This feeling is commonly known as **imposter syndrome**, and it can take various forms depending on a person's background, personality, and circumstances. Based on decades of research, a leading expert on the subject named Dr. Valerie Young has categorized it into 5 subgroups: the Perfectionist, the Superwoman/man, the Natural Genius, the Soloist, and the Expert. Identifying which of the 5 subgroups you potentially belong to could be helpful in identifying habits that may be holding you back from your full potential. If you have ever felt imposter syndrome, you may recognise yourself in one of the categories below:

1. The Perfectionist

Perfectionism and imposter syndrome often **go hand-in-hand**. Think about it: Perfectionists set excessively high goals for themselves, and when they fail to reach a goal, they experience major self-doubt and worry about **measuring up**. Whether they realize it or not, this group can also be control freaks, feeling like if they want something done right, they have to do it themselves.

- When you fall short of an (insanely high) level on something, do you accuse yourself of "not being good enough" for your job and think about it for days?
- Do you feel like your work must be 100% perfect, 100% of the time?

For these people, success is rarely satisfying because they believe they could have done even better, but that is neither productive nor healthy. Owning and celebrating achievements is essential if you want to avoid burnout, find contentment, and **cultivate** self-confidence. Learn **to take your mistakes in your stride**, viewing them as a natural part of the process. In addition, push yourself to act before you're ready. Force yourself to start the project you've been planning for months. Truth is, there will never be the "perfect time" and your work will never be without **flaws**. The sooner you're able to accept that, the **better off** you'll be.

2. The Superwoman/man

People who experience this phenomenon are convinced that they are frauds and that their colleagues are not. Consequently, they push themselves to work harder and harder to **measure up**. But this is just a false cover-up for their insecurities, and the work overload may harm not only their own mental health, but also relationships with others.

- 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?

Imposter workaholics are actually addicted to the validation that comes from working, not to the work itself. Start training yourself not to need external validation. No one should have more power to make you feel good about yourself than you - not even your boss!

As you become more used to internal validation and **cultivating** your inner confidence, you'll be able to **take your foot off the gas** a little as you **gauge** how much work is reasonable.

3. The Natural Genius

Young says people with this competence type believe they need to be a natural "genius" to succeed. As such, they judge their competence based ease and speed at which they are able to master something, as opposed to the effort that it takes.

These types of imposters **set their internal bar impossibly high**, just like perfectionists. But natural genius types don't just judge themselves based on ridiculous expectations, they also judge themselves based on getting things right on the first try.

- Were you often told as a child that you were the "smart one" in your family?
- Do you dislike the idea of having a mentor, because you can handle things on your own?

To move past this, try seeing yourself as a work in progress. Accomplishing great things involves lifelong learning and skill-building—for everyone, even the most confident people. Rather than **beating yourself up** when you fall short of your impossibly high standards, identify specific, changeable behaviors that you can improve over time.

4. The Soloist

Some feel that asking for assistance can reveal themselves as being a fraud. It's OK to be independent, but not to the extent that you refuse assistance just to prove your worth.

Realize that there is no shame in seeking help when you need it. If you don't know how to do something, ask a co-worker, a friend, or even a career coach.

5. The Expert

Experts measure their competence based on "what" and "how much" they know or can do. Believing they will never know enough, they fear being exposed as inexperienced or lacking in knowledge.

- Are you constantly seeking out trainings or certifications because you think you need to improve your skills in order to succeed?

It is true that there is always more to learn. Striving to add to your skill set can certainly help you **make strides** professionally and keep you competitive in the job market. But taken too far, the tendency to endlessly seek out more information can actually be a form of **procrastination**.

No matter which of these you may belong to, if you struggle with confidence, you're far from alone. Studies suggest that nearly 70% of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their career. Take today as your opportunity to start embracing your capabilities!

The original article can be found in the link below:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-different-types-of-imposter-syndrome-and-5-ways-to-battle-each-one>

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

imposter syndrome	to be plagued by something	to go hand in hand
to measure up	to cultivate	to take something in your stride
to be better off	to take your foot off the gas	to gauge
a flaw	to set the bar high	to make strides in something
to beat yourself up about	Procrastination	

1. A feeling, especially among successful people, that they doubt their own skills and talents, and fear that they will be exposed as not being worthy of their achievements:

"I have suffered from _____ throughout my career."

2. A fundamental weakness in something: _____

"There was one major _____ in our strategy, which caused the project to fail."

"He has a few _____, which I believe are holding him back in his career."

3. To be very closely connected to something: _____

"Hard work and success _____."

4. To deal with failure or setbacks in a calm and accepting way: _____

"We didn't secure the contract, but we need to _____ and learn from our mistakes so that we will be more successful next time."

5. To blame or criticize yourself unfairly and excessively after a failure or setback:

"You can't _____ about failing the job interview. "

6. To do something with less determination and effort, to slow down:

"We are posting to often on our social media account, and I believe that it is harming the growth of our channel. Maybe we should _____ and monitor engagement."

7. To fix high standards for yourself or for others: _____

"The University really _____ for potential students to be accepted onto their courses."

8. The act of voluntarily delaying something even though you know that there will be negative consequences for doing so. This is often done by deliberately distracting yourself with something else: _____

"_____ is a big problem among heavy users of social media."

"I find that when I work from home, I am much more prone to _____, because there are so many distractions."

9. To be as good as something or someone else: _____

"In comparison with the iPhone, many believe that Android phones don't quite _____."

"When I first joined the company, I was worried that I wouldn't _____."

10. To have intense worries, pain or difficulty caused by something over a period of time:

"Throughout my career, I was always _____ feelings of doubt about my abilities."

"The department has always been _____ disagreements and infighting."

11. To make significant progress in something: _____

"I am really _____ in my English."

12. To estimate or determine the level, amount or volume of something:

"We need to _____ the level of risk before we make a final decision on whether to go ahead with the project.."

13. To be in a better situation or a more advantageous position: _____

"If we follow the instructions closely then we will be _____."

(we can also use this followed with an 'ing' form, which is a great way to make a suggestion in a meeting)

"In my opinion, we would be _____ focusing on a younger audience if we want to sell more products."

14. To develop and improve something, such as an attitude, image or skill:

"We aim to _____ a more sophisticated image for our luxury brand."

"We have _____ a strong sense of togetherness within the team."

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. Based on context in the first paragraph, what do you think is meant by the phrase *"They feel like complete frauds"*?

2. According to the author, what are 2 main flaws of perfectionists?

3. What does the article suggest that perfectionists tend to get wrong in relation to projects?

4. What is the real underlying reason as to why superwomen and supermen work so hard?

5. What do workaholics like about working so hard, and how can they change this?

6. According to the author, what is the difference between the mindsets of a natural genius and a perfectionist?

7. What does the article suggest is a possible drawback of learning more and more?

8. What do you think the phrase 'you are far from alone' means in the final paragraph?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to be plagued by	to gauge (x2)	to measure up	to cultivate
better off	to take it in your stride	to make strides	flaws

Chief Executive Anna Sheldon Talks about her Imposter Syndrome

Looking back at my career, and indeed my life in general, I have always been _____ imposter syndrome. I remember walking into my first tutorial at University. I felt so out of place on that first day. Despite achieving excellent grades and comfortably landing a place at the university, I took a look around the class and assumed that everyone there was far more intelligent than myself, and far more deserving of a position at the university than I was. I looked around the room and tried to _____ the intelligence of each student in the class, looking at the way they dressed, the way they spoke, and I just assumed that I wouldn't _____. In that first seminar, I didn't contribute anything to the discussion. I thought I would be _____ keeping quiet in order not to embarrass myself.

After a few months, I realised that the other members of my class also had _____, and in many cases I knew more than they did. The feelings of being a 'fraud' eventually wore off as I was able to prove myself in my results.

Nowadays, I generally manage to keep imposter syndrome at bay, but it sometimes creeps in when I have to give an important presentation to the board. I have _____ in my presentation skills over the years, and therefore I feel much more confident than those early days at university when I was barely able to contribute to a discussion. However, I sometimes find myself analysing the facial expressions of all members of the audience, _____ their level of enthusiasm or interest to every single point that I make. Sometimes it is necessary to accept that not everyone will like what you have to say, and that certainly doesn't mean that you are an imposter or inadequate. You just have to _____ and _____ an inner-resilience over time. Imposter syndrome can creep back into your mindset when you least expect it, but the key is to embrace that feeling, label the feeling and move forward as normal.