If you recognize yourself in the description of the impostor phenomenon, take heart. There are ways to overcome the belief that you don't measure up:

Talk to your mentors

Somerville is now in his fifth year of graduate school and says he no longer feels like he doesn't belong. "The thing that made so much difference was supportive, encouraging supervision," he says. Hives, too, says he's benefited from sharing his feelings with a mentor who has helped him recognize that his impostor feelings are both normal and irrational. Though he still struggles with the feelings, he says, "I am now able to recognize my personal progress and growth instead of comparing myself to other students and professionals."

Recognize your expertise

Don't just look to those who are more experienced for help, however. Tutoring or working with younger students, for instance, can help you realize how far you've come and how much knowledge you have to impart.

Remember what you do well

Imes encourages her clients to make a realistic assessment of their abilities. "Most high achievers are pretty smart people, and many really smart people wish they were geniuses. But most of us aren't," she says. "We have areas where we're quite smart and areas where we're not so smart." She suggests writing down the things you're truly good at, and the areas that might need work. That can help you recognize where you're doing well, and where there's legitimate room for improvement.

Realize no one is perfect

Clance urges people with impostor feelings to stop focusing on perfection. "Do a task ‘well enough,'" she says. It's also important to take time to appreciate the fruits of your hard work. "Develop and implement rewards for success — learn to celebrate," she adds.

Change your thinking

People with impostor feelings have to reframe the way they think about their achievements, says Imes. She helps her clients gradually chip away at the superstitious thinking that fuels the impostor cycle. That's best done incrementally, she says. For instance, rather than spending 10 hours on an assignment, you might cut yourself off at eight. Or you may let a friend read a draft that you haven't yet perfectly polished. "Superstitions need to be changed very gradually because they are so strong," she says.

Talk to someone who can help

For many people with impostor feelings, individual therapy can be extremely helpful. A psychologist or other therapist can give you tools to help you break the cycle of impostor thinking, says Imes.

The impostor phenomenon is still an experience that tends to fly under the radar. Somerville learned the phenomenon existed only after he'd successfully dealt with the feelings on his own. Often the people affected by impostor feelings don't realize they could be living some other way. "They don't have any idea it's possible not to feel so anxious and fearful all the time," Imes says.

Luckily, it is possible.

https://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2013/11/fraud