

Impostor syndrome: do you sometimes feel like a fraud

The feeling of being a *fraud* isn't new, nor is our *preoccupation* with it. "All the world's a stage... And one man in his time plays many parts," wrote William Shakespeare. The principle of "fake it till you make it" has long propelled incompetents to greatness. The success of *phoney*s is endlessly fascinating.

fraud 欺骗; 骗子

preoccupation 全神贯注; 入神

phony 假的; 伪造的

strain 拉紧; 竭力; 负担

But recently we have become fixated on a particular aspect of *fraudulence* — *impostor* syndrome — the sense that we are always posturing, that our accomplishments are in some way undeserved, no matter how consistent the evidence to the contrary.

fraudulence 欺骗; 欺诈

impostor 骗子; 冒充者

In the past most people were employed to make things — and it's fairly easy to distinguish an expert chairmaker or bricklayer from a *novice*. Many more of us now work in the service economy: our lives are spent creating impressions rather than *tangible* items. At every level of every field, the number of roles where achievement is neither entirely measurable nor objective has grown.

novice 初学者; 新手

tangible 有形的; 实在的

Professional life today leaves us *straining* to redefine ourselves. We no longer have "a job for life", but instead search endlessly for promotion and variety, which leads us to promise things we don't yet know how to do. "Pitch culture" has created an environment in which each of us is almost required to be an impostor in order to succeed.

For many of us, technological change has increased our sense of being an impostor, particularly in our private lives. We can constantly compare our experiences to those of others online. We can also hide behind our online selves, creating an outward persona that we know to be untrue. Though no doctor would recognise impostor syndrome as a genuine medical condition, ever more of us seem to experience it, either in our private or professional lives.