

'the experience of fraudulent thoughts and feelings and the inability to attribute and internalize personal achievement'

Hutchins (2015)

Do you have it?

How does it work?

Consequences

Dealing with it

Are these true for you?

The Impostor Phenomenon: When Success Makes You Feel Like A Fake (1985)

I have often succeeded on a test or task even though I was afraid that I would not do well before I undertook the task

I can give the impression that I'm more competent than I really am
Other people's praise can seem over the top, to me I'm normal. Once I know something it seems obvious and easy

I avoid evaluations if possible and have a dread of others evaluating me

When people praise me for something I've accomplished, I'm afraid I won't be able to live up to their expectations of me in the future

I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people
Got job at REA after making a good impression with the CIO

I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am

I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best
Remembering when I cause production incidents

I rarely do a project or task as well as I'd like to do it

Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error

It's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments
mind goes back to when I've internalised compliments and been rejected for those displays of confidence

At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck
Different from just being aware of your priveleges and that they help, attributing it too much to luck

I'm disappointed at times in my present accomplishments and think I should have accomplished much more
Pick outliers that have excellent accomplishments that are older than me to compare myself to

Sometimes I'm afraid others will discover how much knowledge or ability I really lack

I'm often afraid that I may fail at a new assignment or undertaking even though I generally do well at what I attempt Public speaking! Nervous about speaking even though I've done both of these talks before.

When I've succeeded at something and received recognition for my accomplishments, I have doubts that I can keep repeating that success

If I receive a great deal of praise and recognition for something I've accomplished, I tend to discount the importance of what I've done Once I understand something it seems obvious and easy

I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am again, picking the bad points of comparison

I often worry about not succeeding with a project or examination, even though others around me have considerable confidence that I will do well

If I'm going to receive a promotion or gain recognition of some kind, I hesitate to tell others until it is an accomplished fact

I feel bad and discouraged if I'm not 'the best' or at least 'very special' in situations that involve achievement

Who has it?

Clance and Imes (1978)

Ted Thompson (1998)

Trotman (2009) initially discovered in high achieving women studying and in academia later found in to be in other populations too Maybe higher in women, research goes both ways Maybe higher in some ethnic groups, studied in African Americans

Minorities

Weir (2013)

New endeavour

Weir (2013) neighbourhood organiser and suggesting I be a council candidate

What are the characteristics?

Sakulku and Alexander (2011)

How does it work? attribute successes to outside factors - luck, colleagues

attribute failures to themselves

found to be far more common in women than men

women viewing ourselves as phony is consistent with societal view that we aren't competent

worse for African American women

easier to not internalize success than go against the views of society!

often believe that intelligence is fixed rather than malleable

motivated by performance goals, try to prove intelligence

when fail - react 'helpless' way, blame selves, withdraw from task, anxiety, shame

overriding concern with others' impressions, idealised self image

self worth unusually dependent on others - external validation goes away, fall apart

Hutchins (2015)

Langford and Clance (1993)

Trotman (2009)

Success does not fix it

Clance and Imes (1978)

Sakulku and Alexander (2011) because they dismiss the success disregard if there is any gap between their expectations and performance repetitions of success show dif between actual and ideal standards, make it worse deny our competence, discount praise

Desire to be the best will be the biggest fish in a small pond (school) then go to uni - lots of bright people, not the best anymore conclude that they are stupid because they aren't the best anymore

Sakulku and Alexander (2011)

"The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel." Steve Furtick

Fear and guilt about success

Sakulku and Alexander (2011)

Mistrusting others

Langford and Clance (1993)

Low affiliation



Langford and Clance (1993) in women. enjoyable involvement with other people

Low play

Langford and Clance (1993) don't do things for fun

Low impulsivity



Langford and Clance (1993) low in women, high in men

High impulsivity



Langford and Clance (1993) low in women, high in men

Low need for change



Langford and Clance (1993) low in women, high in men

High need for change



Langford and Clance (1993) low in women, high in men
Low need for order



Langford and Clance (1993) in men
What childhood circumstances create it?

Sakulku and Alexander (2011)
Langford and Clance (1993) Generally either has a sibling or close relative that was the designated 'intelligent' family member
the woman is then told that she is the 'sensitive' or socially adept one, not the smart one or, told that they are superior in every way and success will come easily
Then they can't cope with when it doesn't
Family valueing success with little effort
discrepancy between feedback and actual success
lack of positive reinforcement - "nothing you do is ever good enough"
IP higher when family cohesion and expressiveness are low, family conflict and control high. Accounted for 12 of variation
if not supported or approved may feel achievements are dismissed, unimpressive, unimportant.
shame, humiliation and inauthenticity common with lack of +ve reinforcement
IP highly correlated with need to please others in family
try to live up to idealised image to win approval

Personality traits "common among individuals with particular personality traits (e.g. neuroticism, achievement-orientation), have perfectionist expectations over work"
Hutchins (2015)

Sakulku and Alexander (2011)
Work circumstances that contribute highly competitive, stressful occupations
what about peer review?

higher in untenured faculty - probably maps to staff on fixed term contracts
not studied in tech, but higher in systems librarians than other librarians
high tech knowledge requirements, constant technical change, feel out of date
translate to devs - expectation to keep up with emerging tech
tendency to focus on what peers know that we don't
going back to the talk about picking what to learn - we can't learn everything!
how many new js frameworks should we learn per week?

Hutchins (2015)
Melanie Clark and Barba (2014)
Racial issues

Trotman (2009) studied in African Americans
people's presumed incompetence in African American women

vital for them to establish self worth and self reliance - others assessment will be unfairly negative

Group counselling with other African American women is very effective
more comfortable with people like them, see the ridiculousness of others IP
similar situation - share strategies

Self presentation

Sakulku and Alexander (2011) Do not want to appear imperfect, but actually openly disclose their imperfection.

Is it an interpersonal strategy rather than self evaluation?

could be to avoid negative interpersonal implications of future failures

only express lower performance expectations when they know others see it

correlated with other favourable impression management strategies

makes *lots* of sense for women in tech, since being seen as competent makes you less likeable

Behaviours that preserve it Intellectual Inauthenticity

Clance and Imes (1978) chose not to reveal ideas or opinions

tell people what they want to hear

intellectual flattery - writing according to their teachers' biases

or for a developer - implementing it how colleagues would want, not what you think is best

remaining silent in face of opposing view points

prevents them from finding out what people would think of their authentic views

maintains imposter syndrome

Charm

Clance and Imes (1978) aim to be liked as well as recognised intellectually

finds a candidate she respects, then tries to impress to gain approval

studies them, figures out how to impress them, sets about winning them over

may pick up their hobbies listens with understanding and concern

usually gains approval, but doesn't work

will never believe the praise because it's based on liking her

if she was really that bright, would she need the outside approval?

Avoiding displays of confidence

Clance and Imes (1978) Many women have a motive to avoid success, a well justified fear of rejection or being seen as less feminine

denying their success allows them to live out achievement orientation while allaying some fears about being a successful women

What are the consequences?

Poor mental health

Sakulku and Alexander (2011) For more about this, watch ducky's talk from Saturday

Bouts of depression and anxiety

Hutchins (2015)

Emotional exhaustion

Hutchins (2015) stress part of burnout - fatigue, depression, emotional and cognitive distancing - low work satisfaction and performance

Psychological distress

Hutchins (2015)

Low self confidence

Hutchins (2015)

Lower job well-being, satisfaction and performance

Hutchins (2015)

Low self-efficacy

Julie A. Lyden (2002) attribute initial success to ability - higher self efficacy

higher self efficacy related to higher performance

performance analysis in early life super important - provides anchor, influencing later attribution

Ways to cope

Mentoring

Hutchins (2015) They can normalise the feelings

emotional support

instrumental support (tangible help with specific problems)

challenge to accept praise

even helpful if they don't discuss IP

mentors can be the target of unfair comparisons - 67 don't directly discuss with mentor

Positive reinforcement

Hutchins (2015)

covering different contributions from organising to office quiz contributions

Identify feelings

Caltech Counselling Centre (n.d.) awareness is first step to change

Reality check

Caltech Counselling Centre (n.d.) question the thoughts

Differentiate between feelings and reality

Caltech Counselling Centre (n.d.)

Humor

Hutchins (2015)

Distracting thoughts or activities

Hutchins (2015)

Social support

Caltech Counselling Centre (n.d.) discuss feelings, get perspective

Reduce dependency

Langford and Clance (1993) on external validation for self esteem internalise self worth

What to do?

Talk about it discuss it with your peers, like the group therapy sessions

Be aware when people show it yourself and others

I had such bad IP I thought 'they have IP, but I'm right!'

Challenge people to accept positive feedback

Get perspective from people that will evaluate you fairly

don't charm them

Pat on the ear for paying attention at the end of the conference, and remember you're

all pawesome!

Questions? github.com/biancag/imposter-syndrome bianca.rachel.gibson@gmail.com

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