

Learn Braver, Stronger, Smarter

Recognising and
overcoming the
Impostor
Phenomenon

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So, you secretly feel
like you shouldn't be
here...

The impostor phenomenon:

An intense feeling of intellectual
phoniness, despite successes.

(Clance, 1985)



“I got lucky”

“They were just being kind”

“They’ve made a mistake”

“I’m just doing my job”

“Anyone could have...”

“Oh, it was nothing!”

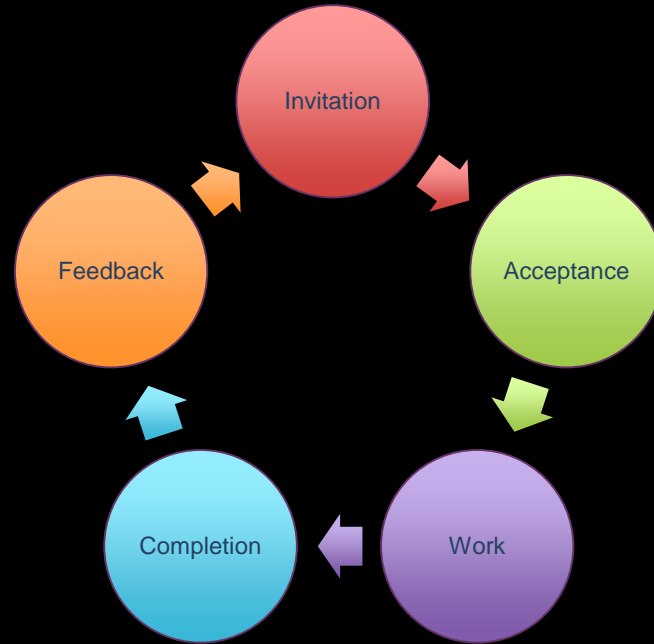
70%

68% - 89%



The Impostor Cycle

- Invitation
- Acceptance
- Work
- Completion
- Feedback



Adapted from Clance (1985)

Where does it come
from?

Social Learning

(Bandura, 1977)



Sensemaking:

Making sense of the world and
our place in it (Weick, 1995)

Implicit learning
Unconscious bias
Stereotyping
Behaviour

Impacts on career decision making

(Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994)



4%

12%

25%

9%

45%

80%

217 years

Plausibility

eats accuracy for
breakfast

“...stories are a parasitical life form, warping lives in the service only of the story itself.

It takes a special kind of person to fight back...”

(Pratchett, Lords and Ladies: 9)

What stories have you
created?

Individually?

In the workplace?

As a community?



“...I think of how far I could have gone if I hadn't had all these internal dialogues...

Thinking about it I've been successful... my great determination and individual talents got me there.”

Confidence v Self Efficacy

Calling it out



Counter Stories

Externalise 'problems' and internalise
'successes'

“Narrative acts of insubordination”

(Nelson, 2001 in McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2014)

Re-author preferred identities

Revise understanding (Nelson, 2001)

Explores how the story came into being

Homework!!

Consider what counter stories
you can start to replace your
'old' stories with.



Consider this...

Change your language

Get a mentor

Stop with the '...buts'

Just say 'thank you'

Note your achievements and
add to your 'new' story



*ULTIMATELY, WE BELIEVE OUR
DECISIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH
OUR CONSCIOUS BELIEFS, WHEN
IN FACT, **OUR UNCONSCIOUS IS
RUNNING THE SHOW***

(Staats, 2014)


BRAVER
STRONGER
SMARTER

Questions & Comments



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Further Reading

- “Daring Greatly” by Brene Brown
- “The Impostor Phenomenon” by Dr Pauline Rose Clance
- “The Pursuit of Perfect” by Tal Ben-Shahar
- “Lean Out” by Dawn Foster
- “The Invention of Difference” by Binna Kandola & Jo Kandola
- “Inferior” by Angela Saini
- Amy Cuddy’s TED talk & research on body language