Overcoming The Imposter Syndrome

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What Is It?

The imposter syndrome is a psychological phenomenon in which people remain convinced that they are frauds and do not deserve the success they have achieved, despite external evidence of their competence.
WHAT I KNOW

WHAT I THINK
OTHER PEOPLE KNOW

WHAT I KNOW
WHAT OTHER PEOPLE KNOW
Presentation Plan

1. Who Suffers From The Imposter Syndrome?
2. Do You Suffer From It?
3. So What?
4. Origins of The Imposter Syndrome
5. Overcoming The Imposter Syndrome
Who Suffers From It?

• Two-in-five successful women think they are frauds.

• 70% of successful women have felt this way at one point.

• Women of color, and women from lower SES backgrounds more likely to suffer.
Imposter Syndrome Quiz

1. Do you secretly worry that others will find out that you're not as bright and capable as they think you are?

2. Do you sometimes shy away from challenges because of nagging self-doubt?

3. Do you tend to chalk your accomplishments up to being a "fluke," "no big deal," or the fact that people just "like" you?

4. Do you hate making a mistake, being less than fully prepared or not doing things perfectly?

5. Do you tend to feel crushed by even constructive criticism, seeing it as evidence of your "ineptness?"

6. When you do succeed, do you think, "Phew, I fooled 'em this time but I may not be so lucky next time."

7. Do you believe that other people (students, colleagues, competitors) are smarter and more capable than you are?

8. Do you live in fear of being found out, discovered, unmasked?
So What?

Confidence Gap ➔ Ambition Gap ➔ Leadership Gap
The Confidence Gap

• Men overestimate their abilities and performance, and women underestimate both (Ehrlinger, 2012).

• Men apply for jobs when they meet 60% of qualifications; women when they meet 100% (HP, 2009).

• Men initiate salary negotiations 4 times as often as women do, and that when women do negotiate, they ask for 30% less money than men (Babcock, 2010).

• Male business students think they deserve $80,000 on average compared to women who think they deserve $64,000 (Davidson, 2012).
The Ambition Gap

- College men are twice as likely to have thought a lot about running for office than college women (Lawless & Fox, 2013).

- Men and women place the same value on a successful career, but women are not rewarded the same for their ambition through promotions and pay (Catalyst, 2013).
The Leadership Gap: Business

Sources
Catalyst Research (2013).
Progress Is Not Linear

• Female CEOs increased 2% in 15 years.

• Corporate board positions flat for 7 years.

• Corporate officer positions flat for 4 years.

• Women are not ascending into top leadership, despite being 47% of labor force and outpacing men in earning degrees since 1982.
The Leadership Gap: Politics

Table 1
Women Office Holders in the United States Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Percent Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senators</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the U.S. House of Representatives</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Governors</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Elected Officials</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Legislators</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayors of the 100 Largest Cities</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Women & Politics Institute, American University; and Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University.
Why Is The Imposter Syndrome Gendered?

- Societal Attitudes
- Faulty Feedback
- Biased Actions
- Ideas About Knowledge
- The Great Set-Up
Societal Attitudes

• Lack of social and familial support for female ambition (Fox, 2010).

• In stereotypically male domains, everyone rates boys higher on competence than the girls (Correll, 2006).

• People expect women to act modestly, even if they are already highly accomplished (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
Faulty Feedback

- Employees prefer male over female bosses by more than a 2:1 ratio (Elsesser, 2011).
- Men still seen as default leaders in the U.S. and Europe (Catalyst, 2010).
- People view female CEOs as significantly less competent and less suited to leadership when they talk the same amount of time as male CEOs (Brescoll, 2012).
- Male college students are more likely to evaluate female leaders as submissive than a decade ago (Duehr and Bono, 2009).
- Women leaders are perceived as competent or liked, but rarely both (Catalyst, 2007).
- Female employees receive harsher evaluations (Snyder, 2014).
FEEDBACK RECEIVED IN CRITICAL REVIEWS

- WOMEN
  - Has Negative Feedback: 71
  - Has Only Constructive Feedback: 23

- MEN
  - Has Negative Feedback: 2
  - Has Only Constructive Feedback: 81

REVIEWS INCLUDING CRITICAL FEEDBACK

- WOMEN
  - With Criticism: 94
  - Without Criticism: 13

- MEN
  - With Criticism: 83
  - Without Criticism: 58
Biased Actions

• Female managers are held to higher standards for promotion than male managers (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

• Women use the same career strategies as men, but the advance less (Catalyst, 2013).

• Men are twice as likely to be hired for jobs involving mathematics than women, despite the same skills (Reuben et al., 2014).

• Science faculty favor male students over female students with the same skills (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

• Men report higher job satisfaction than women at all levels of their career (Catalyst, 2013).
Knowledgeable v. Decorative

[Images of two sets of books: one set for baby boys and girls, the other set on being gorgeous and clever]
The Great Set-Up
The Imposter Syndrome reveals a fundamental incompatibility with being female and successful in a society that denies women full humanity.
Overcoming the Imposter Syndrome

• Individual Actions
  – Recognize
  – Interrogate
  – Reject

• Societal Actions
  – Value Shift
We are all making it up as we go along
Thank You!