

Do I have Imposter Syndrome?

Adapted from Dr. Valerie Young

Answer the questions below 1-5. 1 being not true at all, 3 being sometimes true, and 5 being very true.

1. I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am.
2. It's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments.
3. At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck.
4. I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am.
5. 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.
6. 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
7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best.
8. 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.
9. Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error.

Total you scores

If your total is 9-18 you do not have imposter syndrome.

Total 19-35 means you have moderate imposter syndrome.

Total 36-45 means you have serious imposter syndrome.

What type of imposter syndrome do you have?

Read the questions. Answer the questions below 1-5. 1 being not true at all, 3 being sometimes true, and 5 being very true.

1. Do you firmly feel that you need to accomplish things on your own?
2. Have you ever been accused of being a micromanager?
3. Do you stay later at the office than the rest of your team, even past the point that you've completed that day's necessary work?
4. Were you told frequently as a child that you were the "smart one" in your family or peer group?
5. Do you shy away from applying to job postings unless you meet every single educational requirement?
6. When you miss the (insanely high) mark on something, do you accuse yourself of "not being cut out" for your job and ruminate on it for days?
7. When you're faced with a setback, does your confidence tumble because not performing well provokes a feeling of shame?
8. Do you frame requests in terms of the requirements of the project, rather than your needs as a person?
9. Do you feel like your work must be 100% perfect, 100% of the time?
10. Are you constantly seeking out trainings or certifications because you think you need to improve your skills in order to succeed?
11. Do you get stressed when you're not working and find downtime completely wasteful?
12. Do you often avoid challenges because it's so uncomfortable to try something you're not great at?

13. Do you shudder when someone says you're an expert?

14. Have you left your hobbies and passions fall by the wayside, sacrificed to work?

15. Do you avoid group projects whenever possible and have trouble delegating work when you do?

16. Do you have great difficulty delegating? Even when you're able to do so, do you feel frustrated and disappointed in the results?

17. Do you feel like you haven't truly earned your title (despite numerous degrees and achievements), so you feel pressed to work harder and longer than those around you to prove your worth?

18. Do you have a track record of getting "straight A's" or "gold stars" in everything you do?

19. "I don't need anyone's help." Does that sound like you?

20. Even if you've been in your role for some time, can you relate to feeling like you still don't know "enough?"

Total your scores for each color.

Yellow	Green	Aqua	Pink	Grey

Whichever color with the highest total indicates your "imposter persona".

Yellow, Perfectionist: For this type, success is rarely satisfying because they believe they could've done even better. But that's neither productive nor healthy. Owning and celebrating achievements is essential if you want to avoid burnout, find contentment, and cultivate self-confidence. Learn to take your mistakes in stride, viewing them as a natural part of the process. In addition, push yourself to act before you're ready. Force yourself to start the project you've been planning for months. Truth is, there will never be the "perfect time" and your work will never be 100% flawless. The sooner you're able to accept that, the better off you'll be.

Green, Super-person: Imposter workaholics are actually addicted to the validation that comes from working, not to the work itself. Start training yourself to veer away from external validation. No one should have more power to make you feel good about yourself than you—even your boss when they give your project the stamp of approval. On the flip side, learn to take constructive criticism seriously, not personally. As you become more attuned to internal validation and able to nurture your inner confidence that states you're competent and skilled, you'll be able to ease off the gas as you gauge how much work is reasonable.

Aqua, Natural genius: To move past this, try seeing yourself as a work in progress. Accomplishing great things involves lifelong learning and skill-building—for everyone, even the most confident people. Rather than beating yourself up when you don't reach your impossibly high standards, identify specific, changeable behaviors that you can improve over time. For example, if you want to have more impact at the office, it's much more productive to focus on honing your presentation skills than swearing off speaking up in meetings as something you're "just not good at."

Pink, Soloist: Asking for or accepting help does not have to be a sign of weakness or incompetence. In fact you should consider it a strength, and many others would as well. Fearing failure is natural, so acknowledge that your best work cannot be done without help and help will only improve your chance for success.

Grey, Expert: It's true that there's always more to learn. Striving to bulk up your skill set can certainly help you make strides professionally and keep you competitive in the job market. But taken too far, the tendency to endlessly seek out more information can actually be a form of procrastination. Start practicing just-in-time learning. This means acquiring a skill when you need it—for example, if your responsibilities change—rather than hoarding knowledge for (false) comfort. Realize there's no shame in asking for help when you need it. If you don't know how to do something, ask a co-worker. If you can't figure out how to solve a problem, seek advice from a supportive supervisor, or even a career coach. Mentoring junior colleagues or volunteering can be a great way to discover your inner expert. When you share what you know it not only benefits others, but also helps you heal your fraudulent feelings.

