

THE SECRET SIGNS OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

*How to tell if you're sabotaging your own success
(and what to do if you are)*



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INTRODUCTION

What do you know about Imposter Syndrome?

7 years ago, when I delivered my first talk on Imposter Syndrome, most people had barely heard the term, let alone knew what it was. Today we hear it all the time. When Michelle Obama openly admitted that, despite her success, there are times she still feels like a fraud, that clinched it. Imposter Syndrome wasn't just real. It went all the way to the top.

7 out of 10 people you know, meet or work with are going through life feeling like a fraud.

Depending on which piece of research you read, Imposter Syndrome affects anywhere between 60% and 90% of us. That's an average of 7 out of every 10 people you know, meet or work with who are going through life feeling like a fraud and struggling to live up to their potential. Now that you're reading this guide, you're about to discover if you are one of them.

So how do you know whether your anxiety is just a normal (and some would say healthy) form of self doubt, or a real condition that is holding you back?

THE CLASSIC SIGNS OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

There are three key features of Imposter Syndrome that make answering that question seem easy. These come from the original studies by American psychologists Dr Pauline Chance and Suzanne Imes who first coined the term "Imposter Phenomenon" in 1978 (it came

to be referred to as Imposter Syndrome shortly afterwards). I call these key features the Classic Signs of Imposter Syndrome because they are easily recognised and well known. I've listed them below. How many can you relate to? Tick the relevant boxes below.

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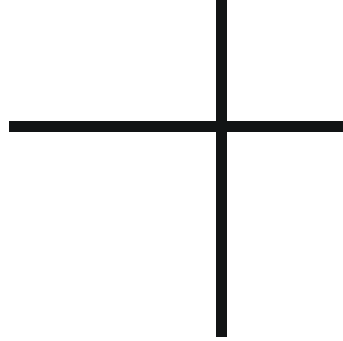
*An inner feeling of intellectual phoniness -
Clance & Imes*

- 1. I feel like a fraud!
- 2. I think my success is down to luck
- 3. Any minute now, I'll be found out

If you ticked even one of these boxes, the chances are you have Imposter Syndrome. But it doesn't end there. Even if none of these feelings strike a cord with you, you could still be suffering from this unique form of self doubt.

Thanks to years of experience living and working with Imposter Syndrome I've discovered that there's more to Imposter Syndrome than thinking "I'm a fraud". As well as the classic signs I describe above, there's a stack of other more subtle signs that are screaming for recognition.

*There's more to
Imposter Syndrome
than feeling like a
fraud*



THE SECRET SIGNS OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

I call these the Secret Signs of Imposter Syndrome because they are, well, secret! You may not know about them. You'll recognise the behaviour, but you might not know it's linked to Imposter Syndrome. Thankfully, this guide is here to change that. These Secret Signs are listed on the following pages. How many of these resonate with you?

Compulsive checker

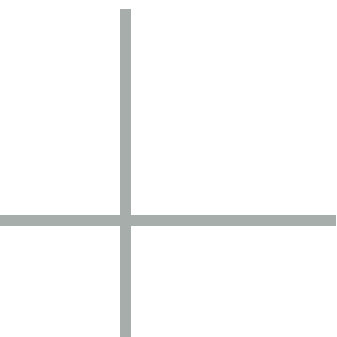
- 1. *It takes you longer than it should to complete a work task*
- 2. *You labour over the simplest email*
- 3. *You check emails you have already sent*
- 4. *You check, double check and triple check your work*
- 5. *You check, double check and triple check work you have delegated*
- 6. *You record fewer hours on your timesheet than you actually worked*

Checking score:.....

Perfectionist

- 7. *You try to make every thing you do worthy of an A**
- 8. *You beat yourself up over one mistake*
- 9. *You have the FONK - the fear of not knowing the answer*
- 10. *You expect perfection from others*
- 11. *You need to feel 100% qualified before you seize an opportunity*

Perfectionist score:.....



Worrier

- 12. You constantly worry about what others think of you
- 13. You worry that others will think less of you
- 14. You worry that others think you don't know what you're doing
- 15. You worry about disappointing others
- 16. You worry that those who believe in you are wrong about you
- 17. You worry about being struck off
- 18. You worry about losing your job
- 19. You worry about getting it wrong

Worry score:.....

All or Nothing-er

- 20. You believe work is either feast or famine
- 21. Your approach to working is all or nothing
- 22. You think you're only as good as your last deal
- 23. You never say no

All or Nothing score:.....

Miscommunicator

- 24. You don't speak up in meetings when you know you have something to say
- 25. You don't speak up in meetings because you think you have nothing to say
- 26. You think you're a poor communicator
- 27. You criticise what you say and the way you say it, as you are saying it
- 28. You let your fear of being "that person" dictate what you do and don't do

Miscommunication score:.....

Silent Worker

- 29. No one knows you
- 30. No one knows you, and you want it to stay that way
- 31. You avoid the limelight
- 32. You let others take credit for your work
- 33. You would rather keep your head down and work unnoticed, than lift your head up and risk being seen

Silent Worker score:.....

Procrastinator

- 34. You put things off until the last minute
- 35. You think you work well under pressure
- 36. You spend more time worrying about your work than you actually spend doing the work
- 37. You think "the buck stops with me"
- 38. You let the thought "the buck stops with me" dictate how long things take
- 39. You keep going back to the same piece of work, because you're afraid to say it's finished

Procrastination score:.....

Validation Seeker

- 40. You need others to tell you you've done a good job
- 41. You are surprised when others tell you you've done a great job
- 42. You don't evaluate your own work
- 43. When someone compliments you, you disagree or undermine the compliment
- 44. You think your time sheet determines your value

Validation score:.....

Promotion Avoider

- 45. You think your latest promotion doesn't count
- 46. After being promoted, your euphoria quickly turns to anxiety
- 47. You compare yourself to your peers and feel they are cleverer or more likeable or more effective than you
- 48. You compare yourself to your boss and feel you'll never be as clever or likeable or effective as them
- 49. You think you're not interested in being promoted
- 50. You think you don't care about the money
- 51. You say you don't want to be a partner

Promotion score:.....

Self Doubter

- 52. You resist new behaviours because you think they are not who you are
- 53. You think you are less of an achiever than you used to be
- 54. Your self concept is out of date
- 55. You beat yourself up for past failures
- 56. You know you're good at what you do, but you don't believe it

Self Doubt score:.....

Feedback Fighter

- 57. You think negative feedback is a negative
- 58. You ignore or discount positive feedback
- 59. You use negative feedback against yourself
- 60. You struggle to give others negative feedback

Feedback score:.....

TOTAL SCORE:/60

READING THE SIGNS

Yes, it's a thing!

How many of the Secret Signs of Imposter Syndrome do you recognise in yourself? Are you a Compulsive Checker? A Feedback Fighter? A Worrier? Or is there a little of all of these Imposter traits hidden inside of you?

It's important to note that not all of these signs, individually, are a guarantee that you have Imposter Syndrome. But, the more of these signs that resonate with you, or the stronger your reaction to them when you read them, the greater the likelihood that Imposter Syndrome is what you have.

That cluster of messy feelings you are navigating each day have a name: Imposter Syndrome

So yes, it's a thing! That cluster of messy feelings and behaviours which you are navigating each day are real and they are recognised and they have a name: Imposter Syndrome.

You're Not Alone

If this is you, the first thing I want you to know is that you're not alone. Imposter Syndrome affects between 60% and 90% of us, remember. I know that seems hard to believe when you look around you. But it's true.

Your male colleague who always seems so cocky, may be struggling with an acute sense that he doesn't deserve to be where he is. Your female boss may seem like she has it all worked out, but behind her calm exterior she may be fighting a relentless battle against self-judgement. And look at me! If you watch my online videos or see me speak on a stage, I may not look like someone who feels like a fraud. But beneath it all, that's exactly who I am.

Why you should care about your Imposter Syndrome

One of the fascinating things about Imposter Syndrome is how prevalent it is in high achievers. This begs the question - if Imposter Syndrome doesn't stop you from achieving, then why should you care?

You overthink and overwork and you don't get the recognition you deserve

If you suffer from acute levels of Imposter Syndrome, you already know why. You know the stress it causes when you're trying to perform a task; the anxiety it produces when you're asked to step up or speak out; and the fear it induces when you're presented with an opportunity that deep down you know you should go for.

Left unchecked, this cocktail of negative emotions can take its toll on not just your wellbeing, but your long term mental health. But it doesn't end there. The fear, anxiety and stress drives you to overthink and overwork, which affects your performance and stops you getting the recognition you deserve.

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

Your Imposter Syndrome is not a problem you need to fix

If you've been battling the anxiety and stress of Imposter Syndrome your first thought may be "tell me how to get rid of it!" But I'm here to tell you that Imposter Syndrome isn't the problem you think it is. It's just the puzzle of who you are. You don't need to fix it to progress your career. You just need to solve it.

Forget tricks, tips and quick fixes

Perhaps you've tried power-posing. Faking it 'til you make it. Telling yourself you *do* deserve to be here and that your success *isn't* down to luck. But none of this really works. Not in a transformative way.

Tips, tricks and quick fixes like these may give you a boost, but the results never last. You always end up back where you started - compensating for the feeling of "not-enoughness" by behaving in the same old ways that have been holding you back:

- Overworking.
- Overthinking.
- Playing small.
- Sabotaging your success.

There's a better way.

***Imposter Syndrome is
puzzle of who you are.***

***You don't need to fix it
to progress your
career. You just need
to solve it.***

IMPOSTER SPEECH COACHING

Solve your Imposter Syndrome, progress your career

I've discovered a simple doable strategy for solving the puzzle of your Imposter Syndrome and progressing your career. It's a practical strategy that will work for you now, and will continue to work for you 1 year from now, 5 years from now, and beyond:

1. Normalise your Imposter Syndrome
2. Know who you are
3. Trust you are enough
4. Follow your Imposter Syndrome all the way to your goal.

Free to perform at your highest level

This is the strategy that gives you the confidence to succeed. You will no longer be held back by Imposter Syndrome because solving it will free you to perform at your highest level and that is how you progress.

Once you've learned how to progress your career to one level, you know how to do it for life. And you're not just progressing your career. You're progressing who you are.

Imposter Syndrome Coaching

This strategy is practical and doable and you can get started on it today. But if the thought of leaning into your Imposter Syndrome alone feels you with fear, then you must check out Imposter Syndrome Coaching. This is my group coaching programme exclusively for lawyers with Imposter Syndrome where I give you the tools you need to succeed and I walk you through every step. Visit <https://carolineflanagan.com/imposter-syndrome-coaching/> to learn more.



Hi, I'm Caroline

I am the Coach for lawyers with Imposter Syndrome who want to progress their career and get more of the recognition they deserve.

I hope you enjoyed this free guide and found some useful advice to reflect on. Of course, reflecting on advice is just the beginning! The next step is to do something with what you've learned.

That's where I come in.

If you're a lawyer with Imposter Syndrome and you're ready to start progressing your career, I can help you with that.

Visit <https://carolineflanagan.com/imposter-syndrome-coaching/>

This is just the beginning

This guide is just a drop in the ocean of the valuable, practical content I share for FREE each week. It's the beginning of a conversation that I'd love to keep going. Let's keep talking!

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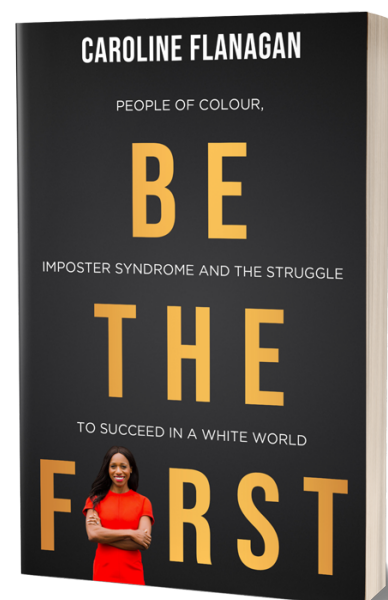
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[The Caroline Flanagan Podcast \(iTunes\)](#)

P.S. Have you read the book?

I've always been an imposter. I know what it's like to feel like a fraud, think your success is down to luck and fear being exposed. From being the only black girl at an all white school, through to being the only one in meetings at a top City law firm and beyond, I've faced bias in all its forms. But I've learned how to win.

[Read it now on Amazon.](#)



CAROLINE FLANAGAN

About Caroline

Caroline is the Coach for Lawyers with Imposter Syndrome.

Caroline is CEO of C Flanagan Ltd, author of Be The First: People of Colour, Imposter Syndrome and the Struggle to Succeed in a White World; and creator of the Imposter Speech™.

She is the host of the Caroline Flanagan Podcast for lawyers with Imposter Syndrome. She is also the proud mother of 4 boys.

Caroline is a magic circle trained ex-City lawyer on a mission to empower imposters to defy the odds and triumph over adversity so they can fulfil their highest potential. She is a recognised expert on Imposter Syndrome.

Caroline has worked with lawyers from some of the most recognised global law firms, including Dentons US, Latham & Watkins, White & Case, Allen & Overy, Kirkland & Ellis and Weil, Gotshal & Manges

Discover more about Caroline

To learn more about Caroline visit carolineflanagan.com