

Ten Ways to Stop Feeling Like a Fraud



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By Dr. Valerie Young

1. Break the silence.

Shame keeps a lot of people from “fessing up” about their fraudulent feelings. Knowing there’s a name for these feelings and that you are not alone can be tremendously freeing.

2. Separate feelings from fact.

There are times you’ll feel stupid. It happens to everyone from time to time. Realize that just because you may feel stupid, doesn’t mean you are.

3. Recognize when you should feel fraudulent.

If you’re one of the first or the few women or minorities in your field or work place it’s only natural you’d sometimes feel like you don’t totally fit in. Instead of taking your self-doubt as a sign of your ineptness, recognize that it might be a normal response to being an outsider.

4. Accentuate the positive.

Perfectionism can indicate a healthy drive to excel. The trick is to not obsess over everything being just so. Do a great job when it matters most. Don’t persevere over routine tasks. Forgive yourself when the inevitable mistake happens.

5. Develop a new response to failure and mistake making.

Henry Ford once said, “Failure is only the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.” Instead of beating yourself up for being human for blowing the big project, do what professional athletes do and glean the learning value from the mistake and move on.

6. Right the rules.

If you’ve been operating under misguided rules like, “I should always know the answer,” or “Never ask for help” start asserting your rights. Recognize that you have just as much right as the next person to be wrong, have an off-day, or ask for assistance.

7. Develop a new script.

Your script is that automatic mental tapes that starts playing in situations that trigger your Impostor feelings. When you start a new job or project for example, instead of thinking for example, “Wait till they find out I have no idea what I’m doing,” try thinking, “Everyone who starts something new feels off-base in the beginning. I may not know all the answers but I’m smart enough to find them out.”

8. Visualize success.

Do what professional athletes do. Spend time beforehand picturing yourself making a successful presentation or calmly posing your question in class. It sure beats picturing impending disaster and will help with performance-related stress.

9. Reward yourself.

Break the cycle of continually seeking - and then dismissing - validation outside of yourself by learning to pat yourself on the back.

10. Fake it ‘til you make it.

Now and then we all have to fly by the seat of our pants. Instead of considering “winging it” as proof of your ineptness learn to do what many high achievers do and view it as a skill. Don’t wait until you feel confident to start putting yourself out there. Courage comes from taking risks. Change your behavior first and allow your confidence to build.

To learn more about how you can own the **How to Feel as Bright and Capable as Everyone Seems to Think You Are** presentation on CD, click here:

<http://ImpostorSyndrome.com/handbook.htm>

*Dr. Valerie Young is an internationally known speaker and expert on the **Impostor Syndrome** and other internal roadblocks keeping women from reaching their full potential. Over 30,000 people have heard her speak on **How to Feel as Capable as Everyone Seems to Think You Are**. A short list of past clients include Intel, Boeing, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Chrysler, American Women in Radio and Television, Society of Women Engineers, Harvard, MIT, and Stanford.*

Valerie’s career change tips have been featured in the Wall Street Journal, USA Weekend magazine, Women’s Day, Glamour (UK), Self, Inc. magazine, The Chicago Tribune, The Boston Globe, The Sydney Morning Herald, the Toronto Globe & Mail, and elsewhere. Valerie is the author of a forthcoming book on the Impostor Syndrome with Crown Publishing. In addition to her work on the Impostor Syndrome, Valerie is the Dreamer in Residence at <http://ChangingCourse.com> where she helps people to create more balanced and satisfying lives working at what they love... when, where, and how they want.