

Imposter syndrome: a self-awareness guide for high achievers

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7 patterns that keep imposter syndrome alive

1 **Attributing success to luck, not ability**

The defining feature: you explain your achievements as flukes while attributing others' success to genuine competence.

2 **Fear of being exposed as a fraud**

A persistent anxiety that others will eventually see through you, regardless of your track record.

3 **Discounting praise and positive feedback**

When someone compliments your work, your first instinct is to find reasons why they are wrong or being kind.

4 **Overworking to compensate**

Working significantly harder than necessary to make sure your perceived inadequacy never surfaces. This tends to increase anxiety, not reduce it.

5 **Avoiding challenges to avoid exposure**

Turning down opportunities, not applying for roles you want, or staying quiet in meetings to avoid drawing attention to your perceived incompetence.

6 **Comparing your inside to others' outside**

You see colleagues' confident external presentation and assume they feel the certainty you lack. They usually do not.

7 **What actually helps: externalizing and testing thoughts**

CBT techniques that surface and test the 'fraud' belief work better than reassurance or trying to think more positively.

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