

THE 5 TYPES OF IMPOSTORS

People who feel like impostors hold themselves to unrealistic, unsustainable standards of competence. In Dr. Valerie Young's research with hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life and at all phases of their careers, five different types emerged — each with its own unique focus:



THE PERFECTIONIST

The Perfectionist's primary focus is on "how" something is done. This includes how the work is conducted and how it turns out. One minor flaw in an otherwise stellar performance or 99 out of 100 equals failure and thus shame.



THE EXPERT

The Expert is the knowledge version of the Perfectionist. Here, the primary concern is on "what" and "how much" you know or can do. Because you expect to know everything, even a minor lack of knowledge denotes failure and shame.



THE SOLOIST

The Soloist cares mostly about "who" completes the task. To make it on the achievement list, it has to be you and you alone. Because you think you need to do and figure out everything on your own, needing help is a sign of failure that evokes shame.



THE NATURAL GENIUS

The Natural Genius also cares about "how" and "when" accomplishments happen. But for you, competence is measured in terms of ease and speed. The fact that you have to struggle to master a subject or skill or that you're not able to bang out your masterpiece on the first try equals failure which evokes shame.



THE SUPERHUMAN

The SuperHuman measures competence based on "how many" roles you can both juggle and excel in. Falling short in any role — as a parent, partner, on the home-front, friend, volunteer — all evoke shame because you feel you should be able to handle it all — perfectly and easily.