

# *Types of Imposter Syndrome*

BY DR. VALERIE YOUNG

Dr. Valerie Young describes five main types of imposters in her 2011 book "The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It."

## **The perfectionist**

"You focus primarily on how you do things, often to the point where you demand perfection of yourself in every aspect of life.

"Yet, since perfection isn't always a realistic goal, you can't meet these standards. Instead of acknowledging the hard work you've put in after completing a task, you might criticize yourself for small mistakes and feel ashamed of your "failure."

"You might even avoid trying new things if you believe you can't do them perfectly the first time."

## **The natural genius**

"You've spent your life picking up new skills with little effort and believe you should understand new material and processes right away.

"Your belief that competent people can handle anything with little difficulty leads you to feel like a fraud when you have a hard time.

"If something doesn't come easily to you, or you fail to succeed on your first try, you might feel ashamed and embarrassed."



# *Types of Imposter Syndrome*

BY DR. VALERIE YOUNG

## **The rugged individualist (or soloist)**

"You believe you should be able to handle everything solo. If you can't achieve success independently, you consider yourself unworthy.

"Asking someone for help, or accepting support when it's offered, doesn't just mean failing your own high standards. It also means admitting your inadequacies and showing yourself as a failure."

## **The expert**

"Before you can consider your work a success, you want to learn everything there is to know on the topic. You might spend so much time pursuing your quest for more information that you end up having to devote more time to your main task.

"Since you believe you should have all the answers, you might consider yourself a fraud or failure when you can't answer a question or encounter some knowledge you previously missed."

## **The superhero**

"You link competence to your ability to succeed in every role you hold: student, friend, employee, or parent. Failing to successfully navigate the demands of these roles simply proves, in your opinion, your inadequacy.

"To succeed, then, you push yourself to the limit, expending as much energy as possible in every role.

"Still, even this maximum effort may not resolve your imposter feelings. You might think, "I should be able to do more," or "This should be easier.""