

The leading lady's guide to conquering impostor syndrome

A cheat sheet for women ready to own their
success

by Pauline Findlay



You're not alone in this feeling

That voice in your head whispering "You don't belong here." or "They're going to find out you're a fraud." You're not imagining it, and you're certainly not alone.

You've likely achieved remarkable things, yet that nagging doubt persists. It's time to name it, understand it, and most importantly overcome it.

What exactly is impostor syndrome?

Impostor syndrome is the persistent feeling that you're not as competent as others perceive you to be, despite evidence of your accomplishments.

You attribute your success to luck, timing, or fooling others. Never to your actual abilities which are real.

The telltale signs:

- Downplaying your expertise ("I just got lucky")
- Fear of being found out as incompetent
- Attributing success to external factors
- Perfectionism that paralyses progress
- Reluctance to apply for roles or opportunities you're qualified for



Why women face this more than men

Research consistently shows that women experience impostor syndrome at higher rates than men. Here's why:

Societal Conditioning

From childhood, women are often praised for being "good" rather than "smart" or "capable," creating a foundation of external validation dependency.

The Confidence Gap

Studies show women typically need to feel 100% qualified for a role before applying, while men apply when they meet just 60% of requirements.

The "Prove It Again" Phenomenon

Women must repeatedly demonstrate their competence in ways men don't, leading to chronic self-doubt.

Intersectionality Impact

Women of colour, older women, and those in male-dominated fields face additional layers of scrutiny and doubt.



The groundbreaking discovery

The term "impostor phenomenon" was coined in 1978 by psychologists Dr. Pauline Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes after studying high-achieving women who couldn't internalise their success.

Why this matters: These weren't struggling individuals but were accomplished women who, despite external validation, felt like frauds. Sound familiar?

Their research revealed that this wasn't a character flaw or weakness, it was a common psychological pattern that could be understood and overcome.

Your 5-Step Quick Recovery Plan

Step 1: Reframe your inner narrative

Instead of "I don't know what I'm doing." → "I'm learning and growing."

Step 2: Document your wins

Keep a "success inventory". Write down compliments, achievements, and positive feedback immediately.

Step 3: Normalise the learning curve

Remember: Competence doesn't mean knowing everything. It means knowing how to figure things out.

Step 4: Share your story (selectively)

Find trusted allies who can remind you of your capabilities when self-doubt creeps in.

Step 5: Embrace "Good enough"

Perfect is the enemy of done. Your 80% is likely better than most people's 100%.

The story you're not telling yourself

Here's what impostor syndrome prevents you from seeing:

- You earned your place through skill, dedication, and perseverance.
- Your perspective matters because of your unique experiences.
- Your age is an advantage. You have wisdom, resilience, and clarity that younger professionals lack.
- You're not behind. You're exactly where you need to be, at any age.

Why your story matters now more than ever

You've lived through enough plot twists to write a bestseller. You've navigated career changes, relationship dynamics, family challenges, and personal growth.

The world needs your story because:

- Other women need to see what's possible
- Your peers need to feel less alone in their struggles
- Your experiences can light the path for others
- Your unique perspective adds value that no one else can provide

The next chapter starts here...

Overcoming impostor syndrome isn't about eliminating self-doubt entirely, it's about changing your relationship with it. When that voice whispers "Who are you to...?" you'll be ready to answer: "I'm exactly who I need to be."

Your story of struggle, growth, and triumph is your superpower. Nobody is better qualified to tell that story than you.



Ready to transform your story?

This cheat sheet is just the beginning. If you're ready to dive deeper into crafting and confidently sharing your most powerful story and discover how successful women are turning their experiences into their greatest advantage, join **The Leading Ladies Course**.

Pauline will teach you how to tell your best story, to live your best life and leave impostor syndrome behind you where it belongs.

For more information: [The Leading Ladies Course](#)

Because the world is waiting for the story only you can tell.



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Be the leading lady of your life