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SIGNS You're on the Road to Experiencing the IMPOSTER PHENOMENON

High achievers radiate confidence. But lurking behind that self-assurance can be a feeling of inadequacy. Why? Because when you hold yourself to unrealistic or unsustainable standards, you leave yourself open to feeling like a fraud, or an imposter.

The first step to avoid feeling like an imposter is to recognize what behaviors trigger those feelings. If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you may be on the road to experiencing the imposter phenomenon.

Everything must be perfect

Perfectionists set ridiculously high goals for themselves, which leads to self-doubt when not attained.

- » *Do you feel less than 100% success is a failure?*
- » *Do you have difficulty delegating?*

Work comes first

Workaholics are addicted to the validation they get from working, not necessarily the work itself. By pushing themselves to work harder, mental health and relationships suffer.

- » *Have you sacrificed hobbies in favor of work?*
- » *Do you feel pressured to work longer to prove your worth to peers?*

You have to be an expert at everything

While you need to be knowledgeable at your job, basing your confidence on how much you know or can do is unhealthy.

- » *Do you portray you always know what you're doing, no matter the situation?*
- » *Does not having the answer leave you depressed?*

You alone can do something

While the fast pace of health care requires independence, failing to ask for assistance just to prove how skillful you are is detrimental.

- » *Do you need to accomplish everything on your own?*
- » *Is it difficult to ask for advice or constructive feedback?*

You are naturally great

Natural geniuses believe they must get everything right on the first attempt. If they take too long to master a skill, they feel humiliated.

- » *Do you avoid doing things you aren't great at?*
- » *Does your confidence suffer if something doesn't come easily?*

» Imposter phenomenon can feel crippling, but mentorship and reflection can help you manage.

Additional Resources

Houseknecht, V. E., Roman, B., Stolfi, A., & Borges, N. J. (2019). A Longitudinal Assessment of Professional Identity, Wellness, Imposter Phenomenon, and Calling to Medicine Among Medical Students. *Medical Science Educator*, 1-5.

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STEVEN P. WENGEL, MD
UNMC Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Wellness