

# Women in Engineering Conference 2025

## Impostor Syndrome

### References:

'Why Everyone Feels Like They're Faking It' by Leslie James Feb 6, 2023 The New Yorker

'How to Overcome Impostor Phenomenon' by Ashley Abramson, June 1, 2021 American Psychological Association



# Coaching Circle Leaders



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## Agenda – Impostor Syndrome

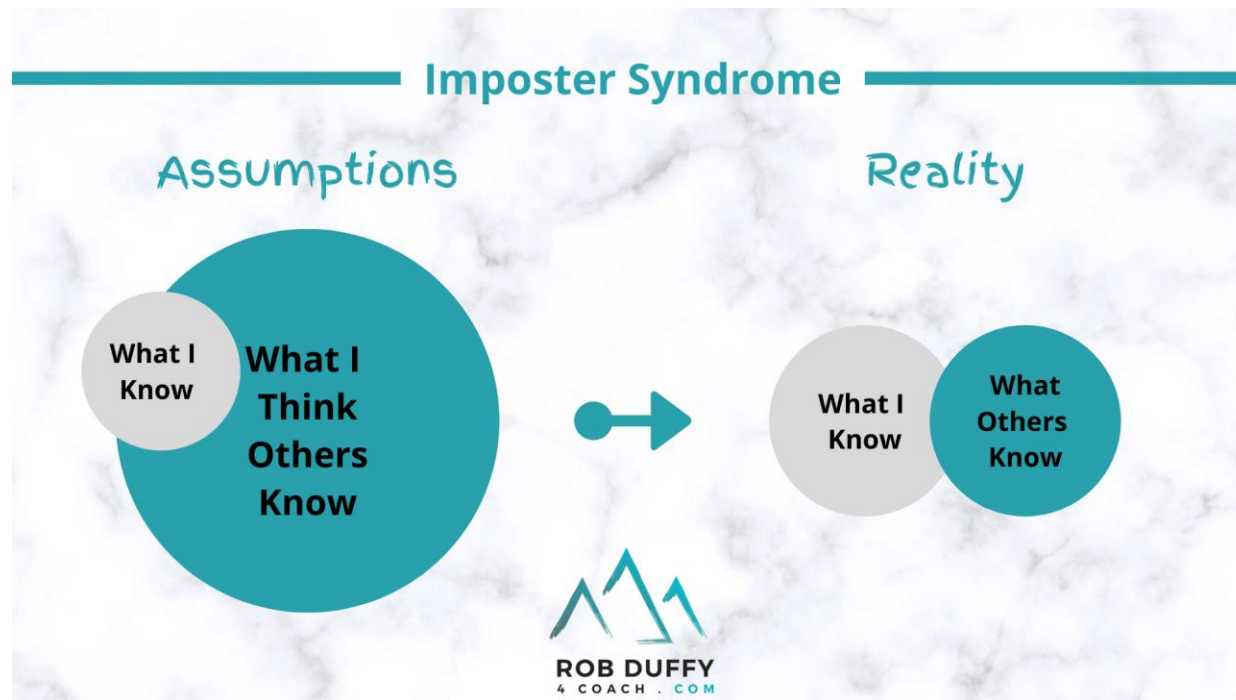
- \* **What is it? What it's not?**
- \* **Why Does it Occur?**
- \* **How Does it Manifest Itself?**
- \* **When Does it Occur?**
- \* **What Can I Do?**
- \* **So ...Now What?**
- \* **Examples of Real Impostors**



# Impostor Syndrome

- What is it?
- Better defined as **Imposter Phenomenon**
- Lacking confidence in your own success
- Fear of intellectual phoniness
- Fear of being busted by the “fraud police”
- What it's not
- A pathological problem
- Competence or intelligence is being underestimated

# Why Does Impostor Phenomenon Occur?



# How Does Impostor Phenomenon Manifest Itself?

## How Does it Impact Your career?



Self-doubt



Reluctance to participate in groups



Lack of confidence – feelings of not being worthy



Forces you to hide your opinions fearing they will be seen as stupid



Inhibits your ability to realize your full potential – missed opportunities

# When Does Impostor Phenomenon Occur?

- Arises when crossing thresholds:
  - Moving from college into a work setting
  - Promotions or advancement into more senior roles
  - Stepping into the leadership space or being lauded for your expertise

# What can I do?

1. Focus on your accomplishments as proof of your success – stop unhealthy self-talk
2. Get feedback from others; develop a mentor
3. Let go of perfectionism – don't lower the bar, focus on progress, define 'success' in each situation
4. It's alright not to be the smartest person in the room
5. Celebrate your successes – take pride in yourself
6. Cultivate self-compassion – be mindful of your feelings when they arise, may go in waves
7. Embrace the uncertainty and redefine it as 'growth'





# So ... Now What?

- Engineers like 'facts and data' with concrete problems to solve
- Imposter Syndrome falls under the heading of soft skills
- Own the various parts of yourself – accept them instead of trying to get rid of them
- There is value in embracing mild Imposter Syndrome
- When you think about it, more people might benefit from a little Impostor Syndrome – you tend to be a good listener and a thoughtful contributor

# Some True Impostors

- Anna Delvey (aka Anna Soroken)

Masqueraded as an heiress to infiltrate the wealthy world of NY socialites



- Elizabeth Holmes

Built a \$9 Billion company based on fraudulent claims that a variety of diseases could be diagnosed by a single blood drop.





*100+ Women Strong want to thank you for attending!*

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**Coaching Circle Slide Decks**

<https://www.csulb.edu/college-of-engineering/coaching-circles-2025>

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*The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.* Lao Tzu