

## Chapter 3

# The Original Imposter: Differentiating Between Being an Imposter and Being an Original

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### ABSTRACT

*When it comes to the workplace, millennials yearn for a work-life balance and to be in a learning environment where they can develop more than professional life skills. Anyone born between 1981 to 1996 is considered a “millennial.” Millennials are also known as “Gen Y,” and are relatively well aware of the digital presence in the society they grew up in since they grew up with the growth of the digital era. Millennials face different challenges as they enter the workforce since many of the workforce leaders are a generation or two ahead. Due to their career interest and degrees advancement, millennial leaders are known to enter the workforce earlier than other generations. This generation is known to turn down any career opportunity or job offer that does not align with their life values. Of all the challenges this generation faces in their lives, the “imposter syndrome” has become a blaring feeling that makes them feel invalid about the spaces they exist in.*

### INTRODUCTION

As people, we can often be our own worst critics. When we receive a compliment, we can begin to consider everything that goes against the given compliment. We can begin to feel out of place. After all, we are human. These contradictive feelings can sometimes make people consider that they are imposters. Imposter syndrome

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is the faulty feeling of not measuring up, or [that] you do not deserve a compliment or accomplishment” (Brawbaw, 2021). The millennial generation faces several challenges but primarily experiences feelings of imposter syndrome. Millennials experience imposter syndrome in relationships, friendships, personal projects, and the workplace. Millennials consume the current workforce, and in the year 2022, are millennials truly imposters, or are they establishing a new norm as originals for the next generation?

Anyone born between 1981 to 1996 is considered a “Millennial.” Millennials are known as “Gen Y” and are relatively well aware of the digital presence in the society they grew up in since they grew up with the growth of the digital era. Millennials face different challenges as they enter the workforce since many of the workforce leaders are a generation or two ahead. When it comes to the workplace, millennials yearn for a work-life balance and being in a learning environment where they can develop more than professional life skills. Due to their career interest and degrees advancement, millennial leaders are known to enter the workforce earlier than other generations. This generation is known to turn down any career opportunity or job offer that does not align with their life values. Of all the challenges this generation faces in their lives, the “imposter syndrome” has become a blaring feeling that makes them feel invalid about the spaces they exist in.

## **THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME**

One of the biggest challenges millennial leaders face is “imposter syndrome.” The imposter syndrome is a social phenomenon of doubt in hard-won success and often feeling fraudulent in specific spaces. About 70% of young millennials are high achievers and feel a level of imposter syndrome. Millennial leaders who experience imposter syndrome have a fear of failure or success. Bencie & Khadim (2022) shared a recent survey in Forbes magazine that people’s biggest issue in leadership is the feeling of inadequacy whereas in a \$366 Billion global industry, 77% of people felt leadership was their biggest concern. For example, college students who experience symptoms of imposter syndrome feel a deep insecurity about not being able to sufficiently complete tasks. “Millennial students either study too hard to prove their ability to themselves and others or become paralyzed by inadequacy, refusing to take risks”, (McAllum, 2016). As cited by Brawbaw (2021), Dr. Young, a long-time imposter syndrome researcher, believes there are five different types and associated symptoms:

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