



# Cheryl C. Jones



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## Emotional Self Mastery Podcast Episode 11 Impostor Syndrome Part 1

This week we are exploring the reality of imposter syndrome. It's a phenomenon that virtually everyone experiences at one time or another in their life. And affects men and women, medical students, marketing managers and celebrities. Even actress and singer Barbara Streisand has experienced it. Maybe you have too.

Kathi, can you tell me about a time when you felt like an impostor? If you'll share a story, so will I.

### Kathi's Story

A few years ago, I was asked to serve on the board of directors for a large health care related corporation. It was a paid position, so I took it very seriously. I didn't want to be paid to just sit there. I have never felt more like an impostor than I did in those board meetings. I was amongst some very high-powered professionals from attorneys to certified public accounts. I looked at their LinkedIn profiles and I shrank. What could I, a small business owner, possibly contribute to this organization? Why was I here? What am I supposed to do? I'm a fraud.

### Cheryl's Story

I've experience impostor syndrome off and on throughout my professional career. One of the most recent times was right after I released my book, Emotional Self-Mastery.

I had worked hard for months to get it written and published. And as I stood at front of a room of over 120 people for the book launch party, I felt butt naked. Like I was standing there undressed, wanting to hide. I just knew that everyone could see right through my façade to see that I was a fraud.

Of course, I wasn't a fraud. I was the one who identified a need, did the research, and wrote the book. I was also the reason so many people showed up that evening. I tried to tell myself that they were all there because they wanted to see the inside of the country club where I was holding the event. I realize now that that little voice was my imposter.

Are you wondering if you have impostor syndrome?

Let me define it for you and then you can decide if you are struggling with it.

Impostor Syndrome is defined as a psychological pattern in which an individual questions their skills, abilities, talents, or accomplishments causing the person to have self-doubt and to internalize the fear of "being found out" or exposed as a "fraud". Some people describe it as feeling like they "don't belong" in a certain position, group, or even the income bracket they are in. Ultimately, Impostor Syndrome is tied to false fears that we may not be valuable or loveable.



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Those who research this phenomenon say that there are five different type of impostor. See if any of these behaviors resonates with you.

1. **The Perfectionist** – someone who strives to deliver perfect work and is not satisfied until they do.
2. **The Expert** – thinks that they should already know how to do everything. And when they don't know, they think they need to learn it. (I tend to do that. Brandi, my assistant, consistently reminds me that the “How” is not my job.)
3. **The Soloist** – thinks that they must do it all on their own without assistance from other for the achievement to be valid.
4. **The Super Woman** – Thinks they should be able to do it all, easily and with perfection.
5. **The Great Mind** – Judges themselves on their intellect, thinking that if they were really competent everything would come easily and quickly.

The crazy thing is I think that I have a little bit of every one of these types. Oh no! What am I to do? 😊

But let's simplify it a little bit more. Let me read you some of the common characteristics and you can decide if any of these sounds familiar to you.

- Self-doubt
- Unable to assess your own competence and skills
- Give credit for your success to other people or circumstances
- Criticizing your performance
- Fear that you will not live up to your own or other people's expectations
- Over-producing or over-achieving
- Sabotaging your own success
- Did I mention self-doubt?
- Establishing high goals and feeling like a failure when you fall short of reaching them

There's no single answer to why any of us experience Imposter Syndrome. Some experts think that it has to do with our personality preferences, while others believe it has to do with childhood influences such as family up bringing or cultural norms.

One thing is for sure, outside influences can contribute to feelings of imposter syndrome. The environment and institutional influences are known to spur on feelings of inadequacy.

Whenever you belong to a group where stereotypes exist, there is an increase propensity for self-comparison. And when you think that you don't measure up to those around you, you tend to feel like a phony.

**Cheryl's Example:** That is what happened to me when I first join an association of professional speakers. By the time I learned of this group, I had owned a successful training company. But



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when it came to thinking of myself or being seen as a “professional speaker”, I felt like I didn’t belong. It’s crazy because at that point I’d had been speaking in front of and facilitating audiences for years. It was doing basically the same thing, but with a different label and importance placed on it. I put everyone in that speaker’s group on a pedestal, even if they were just starting out. And I assumed they were all making tons of money as a professional speaker, when I wasn’t just yet. The act of comparison made me feel small and like a fraud.

## The Cost of Impostor Syndrome

**Let’s talk about the cost of Impostor Syndrome. I saw an infographic describing the personal cost.** It floored me when I read it and to realize not just the financial cost but also the emotional cost, if it’s not resolved.

### Financial Cost

- The increased stress you experience is worth approximately \$950 per year.
- The additional work-related tension is worth \$2200 per year.
- The lost sleep equates to \$2600 per year.
- The lost productivity is \$3400 per year.
- Not having the confidence to negotiate better pay is worth \$7500 per year.
- The cost of career issues equals \$18,000 per year.

Experiencing Impostor Syndrome could end up costing you over \$29,000 per year.

### Emotional Cost

- Increase stress due to perfectionism
- Added to relationships when constant validation and acknowledgement are required
- A reluctance to step into a bigger opportunity due to fear of failure
- Self-esteem dwindles when credit or acknowledgement are not accepted, but instead passed on to others.
- Insecurity develops from not internalizing your talents, skills, and successes

My impostor challenge was that I wasn’t internalizing my accomplishments. I would work with a group or a client and together we would get amazing results. But instead of acknowledging what I did to bring those results into manifestation, I tended to give the credit to others.

**Because I didn’t acknowledge myself, rarely did anyone else.** In the end I had to constantly produce results to prove I had value and was loveable.

Those of you who know me, you are already aware of many of my accomplishments – I’ve authored two books. I’m certified in several emotional healing techniques. I’ve presented a multitude of workshops where permanent transformation has taken place in the lives of those who attended. I’ve gotten incredible results for my clients. I’m the past president of several professional organizations. And I’ve run a profitable coaching and training business for 30 years.



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Really? How much more do I need to do prove to myself that I am valuable and loveable?  
Sounds so silly, doesn't?

In truth though, this is something that has taken a few years to work through.

Part of what I did to resolve it, was to identify where it came from. When the emotions of insecurity or unworthiness would come up, I'd look to see what memory was attached to it. I quite often found it was an event from my childhood. Sometimes it was in a story my grand other me told me about what I had done when I was very small – say 4 or five years old. Other times, the memory was rooted in events from middle school or what mentors had told me in the early years of my business.

The one common denominator was that I took many of those messages as criticism and that was the foundation to my imposter syndrome.

What I've done since is to unravel the false beliefs and replace them with positive, more accurate messages.

So, if someone wanted you to help them get past their imposter syndrome, what would you suggest they do?

(Cheryl) I'd suggest that they listen to next week's episode of Emotional Self Mastery, where we will discuss just that.

But, if you want to get a head start, set up a 30-minute discovery session with me. (link in the show notes.) And in that session we can talk about what's in your way and how we can kick the imposter to the curb.

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Schedule a 30 Minute Discovery Session with Cheryl.

Special pricing for podcast listeners-\$50/30 Minutes-Schedule and Pay at:

<https://calendly.com/cheryli/30-minute-laser-clearing>

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**Cheryl C Jones** is a facilitator, author, mind-set coach and podcast host who works with individuals and corporate work teams to quickly get to the issues inhibiting them from reaching their goals, overcome the issues and achieve real success.

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