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**Break Free From
Imposter Syndrome:
Embrace Your
Competent, Capable Self**

Presented to
Collaborative WIM Initiative
February 3, 2021 by
Michelle Greer Galloway

attorney advertisement
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Your Presenter

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 - Executive Committee, Litigation Section of California Lawyers Association (2018-present)
 - Past-Chair, ABA Intellectual Property Section, Professional Ethics and Responsibility Committee
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LinkedIn

- Connect with me to receive announcements about upcoming programs related to leadership and professional skills
- For information about seminars Michelle offers, go to <https://www.cooley.com/people/michelle-galloway> and click on the red box.
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michelle-galloway-4263b4/>

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Overview

- Imposter Syndrome
 - What is it?
 - What Causes it?
 - How it leads to indecision, procrastination, or overwork
- Confidence
 - What is it? Why is it important?
- Confident Communication and Presence

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Poll

- Does success correlate more with
 - Competence
 - Confidence
- Did you expect to reach the level of success you have achieved in your career?
 - Yes
 - No

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Competence or Confidence

“Price of Admission”



“Taking You To Next Level”



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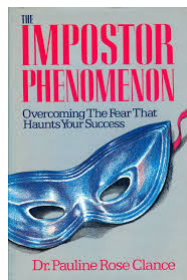
So What Is Imposter Syndrome?

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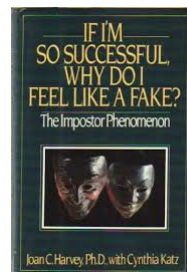
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First Discussions

Term coined by Dr. Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes (1978)
Clance, P. R., & Imes, S. (1978). *The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention*. *Psychotherapy*, 15(3), 241-247.



1. A belief that one has fooled others into overestimating one's own abilities;
2. Attribution of personal success to factors other than one's ability or intelligence; and
3. Fear of exposure as an imposter.



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Imposter Syndrome Test by Clance

- <http://paulineroseclance.com/pdf/IPTestandscoreing.pdf>

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Imposter Syndrome Defined

- Feelings of inadequacy
 - I'm not good enough
- Persist
 - Despite accomplishments/contrary information
- Fear
 - Others will discover you are not good enough

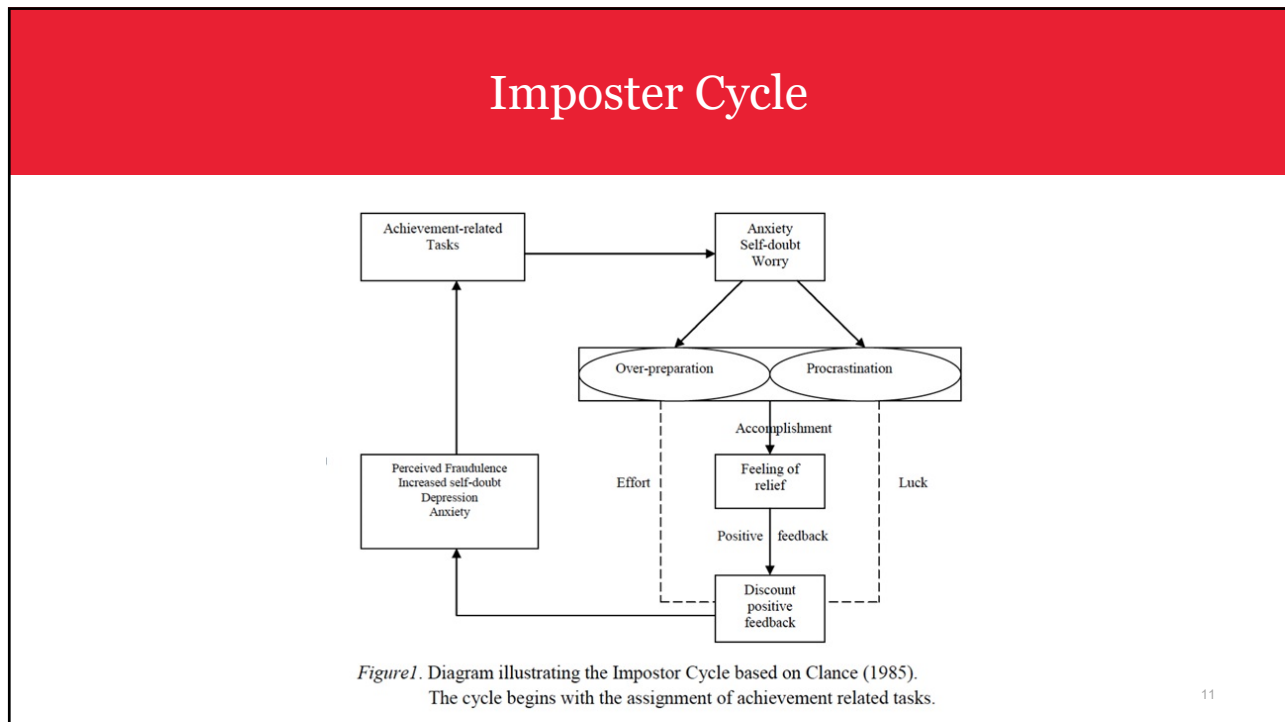
inadequate

adjective

lacking the quality or quantity required;
insufficient for a purpose

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Poll

- Have you experienced imposter syndrome at some time in your career?

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Female Executives Reporting Imposter Syndrome

- “75 percent of female executives report having personally experienced Imposter Syndrome at certain point in their career.”
 - Advancing the Future of Women in Business, The 2020 KPMG Women’s Leadership Summit
 - 47% report Imposter Syndrome results “from never expecting to reach the level of success they have achieved.”

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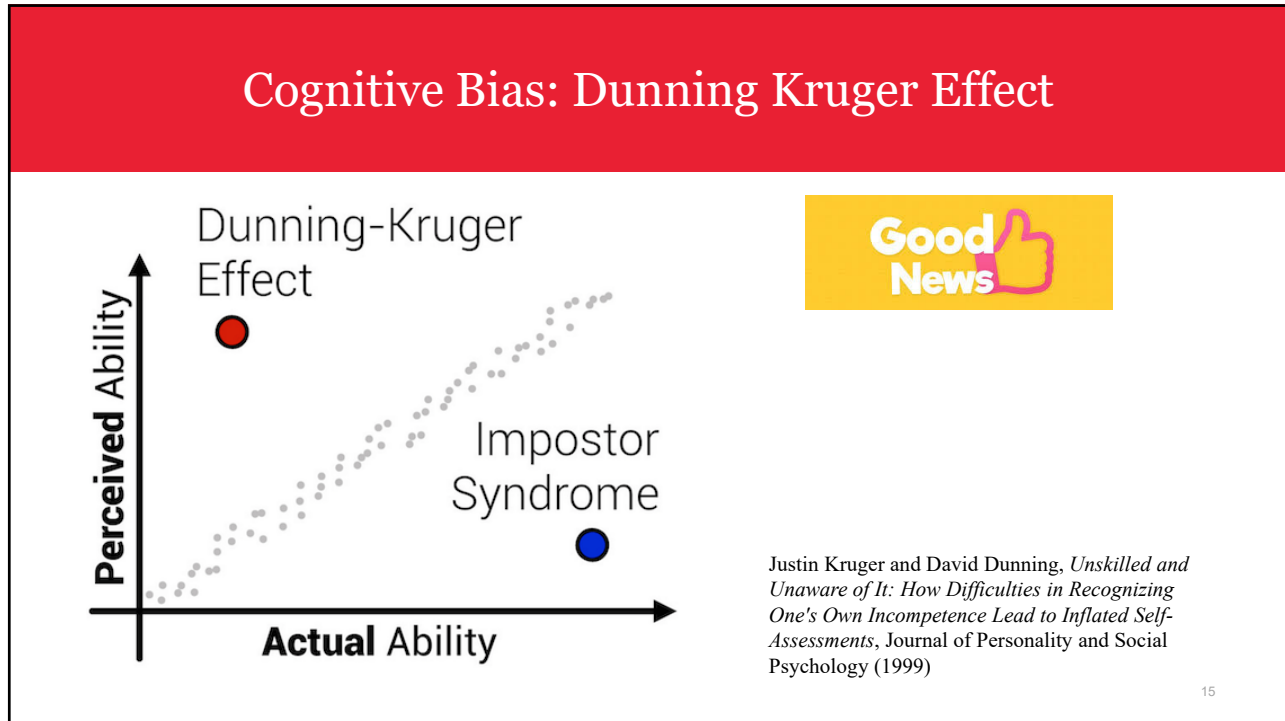
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Who Suffers from Imposter Syndrome?

- Little normative data
 - Estimates at 40-70% of population
 - Research in academia, nursing, librarians
- May be more prevalent in creative fields
- Millennials
 - Fixed mindset, higher rates of depression, impact of “compare and despair” social media
- First Generation
 - Sense of belonging
 - Persistence in face of obstacles

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You Have Company

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Sheryl Sandberg

- “There are still days when I wake up feeling like a fraud, not sure I should be where I am.”



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Meryl Streep and Jodie Foster

Meryl Streep

“You think, ‘Why would anyone want to see me again in a movie? And I don’t know how to act anyway, so why am I doing this?’”



3 Oscars; 21 Academy
Award Nominations

Jodie Foster

“When I won the Oscar, I thought it was a fluke. I thought everybody would find out, and they’d take it back. They’d come to my house, knocking on the door, ‘Excuse me, we meant to give that to someone else. That was going to Meryl Streep.’”



Golden Globes Lifetime
Achievement Award

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Maya Angelou – Presidential Medal of Freedom

- “I have written eleven books, but each time I think, ‘uh oh, they’re going to find out now. I’ve run a game on everybody, and they’re going to find me out.’”



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Men Have Imposter Syndrome Too



Richard Shotwell/Invision/Associated Press, reprinted NPR April 18, 2020



Ron Frehm, Associated Press, in LA Times

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What “Causes” Imposter Syndrome? or Why Am I Not Good Enough?

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Poll

- Do you fear that you are not capable to meet expectations at work?
- Do you fear that those around you do not believe you are capable to meet expectations at work?

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Causes

- Low “sense of belonging”
- Societal expectations
- Stereotype threat
- Cognitive distortions

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WOMEN 02/21/2018 05:25 pm ET | Updated Feb 23, 2018

College’s ‘Women In Math’ Panel Features Only Male Speakers

Who thought this was a good idea?



By Alanna Vagianos

Ever wanted to learn about women in math, but from an entirely male perspective? Then look no further than Brigham Young University.

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INTEL OCTOBER 5, 2017 / 4:45 PM / 6 MONTHS AGO

All-male panel on feminism comes under fire in Mexico

Sophie Hares

3 MIN READ



<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mexico-women-debate/all-male-panel-on-feminism-comes-under-fire-in-mexico-idUSKBN1CA2ZV>

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Manels

Women create alternate tech conference, protesting snub at big security confab

Elizabeth Weise, USATODAY Published 1:20 p.m. ET March 5, 2018 | Updated 2:09 p.m. ET March 5, 2018



SAN FRANCISCO — After a furor over the lack of women in the lineup at one of the world's largest computer security conferences, a group of women and their allies has organized an alternate conference to run at the same time and in the same city.

The alternate conference is dubbed "Our Security Advocates Conference," or OURSA, a not-so-subtle dig at RSA. It will be held on April 17 at the San Francisco offices of computer security company Cloudflare, about a mile from the Moscone conference center where RSA is being held.

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Societal Expectations

- In one study of hypothetical female and male CEOs who talked more than other people
 - Both men and women viewed her as less competent and less suited to leadership.
 - See Victoria Brescoll, *Who Takes the Floor and Why: Gender, Power, and Volubility in Organizations* (2012)

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Stereotype Threat

- “Internalized oppression”
 - The chameleon effect – individual comes to believe in “truth” of the stereotype

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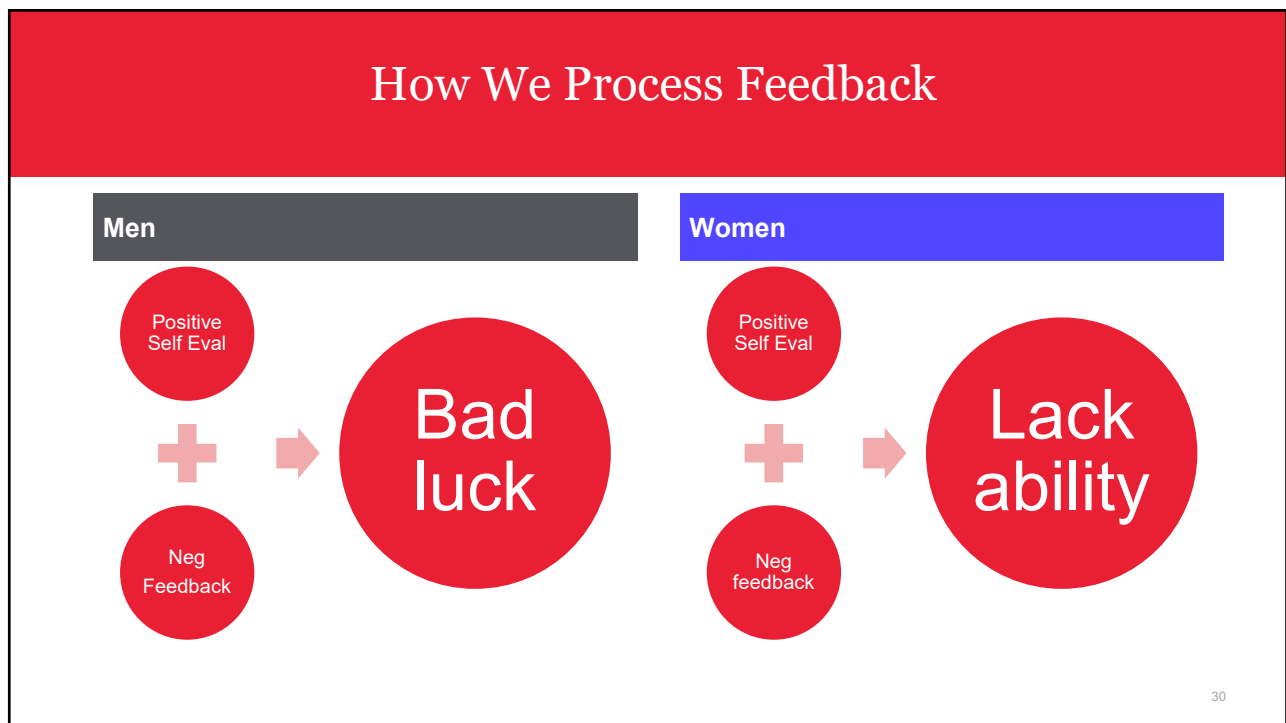
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Stereotype Example

- Including a check box for gender on a math test causes women to perform worse than men
 - Same with race and class
- Interplay re identities
 - Asian American women performed better on a math test primed with ethnic identity question and worse when primed on gender identity
 - *See The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women*

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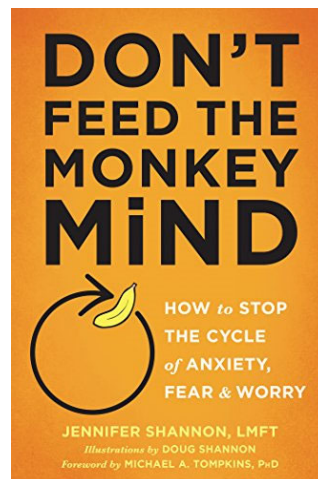
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Monkey Mindset

- “Intolerance of uncertainty: I must be 100% certain.
- Perfectionism: I must not make mistakes.
- Over-responsibility: I am responsible for everyone’s happiness and safety.”



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Let Go of “Perfect” Good Enough is . . . Good Enough

Perfectionism
is self-abuse
of the highest
order.



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Cognitive Distortion

THINGS YOU BEAT YOURSELF UP FOR:



- STUFF OUT OF YOUR CONTROL
- STUFF EVERYONE HAS LITERALLY ALREADY FORGOTTEN ABOUT
- STUFF NOBODY ELSE EVEN NOTICED

www.angiegreaves.com/imposter-syndrome

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Comparing My Insides to Your Outside

- Duck syndrome



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Poll

- Which do you remember more?
 - Successes
 - Failures

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Costs Are Real

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Costs	
Individuals	Companies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety and fear – physiology and psychology• Exhaustion – overwork; procrastination/overwork• Self<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High criticism• Low self-esteem• Low self-compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unrealized potential<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A constant “leak”• Motivation and engagement• Creativity• Collaboration• Health

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Is Confidence Biology – Is It “All in Your Head?”

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Biology of Confidence

- Estrogen
 - Supporting the part of brain involved in social skills
- Testosterone
 - 10 times higher in men
- Serotonin
 - Helps us remain calm; quiets amygdala
 - Women produce 52% less than men (see *The Confidence Code*)

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“Honest Overconfidence” – Remembered Performance

- Phrase coined at Columbia Business School to describe male overconfidence
 - Math test
 - One year later asked to recall performance

Women	Men
Overestimated by 15%	Overestimated by 30%

E. Reuben, P. Rey-Biel, P. Sapienza, L. Zingales, *The Emergence of Male Leadership in Competitive Environments*, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization (2011)

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Selection Bias Based on Candidate Overconfidence

- Groups to select someone to represent them at competition and given differing financial incentives
 - Women and men both lie about performance; increase with financial incentives
 - Men exaggerated performance to greater degree
 - Women selected to represent the group **33% less often than their abilities suggest**

E. Reuben, P. Rey-Biel, P. Sapienza, L. Zingales, *The Emergence of Male Leadership in Competitive Environments*, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization (2011)

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What Is “Confidence”? and
Why Is It Important?

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Confidence Defined

- “A sense that they can achieve what they set out to do.”
 - *The Confidence Code*, Introduction
- “Confidence is the stuff that turns thoughts into action.”
 - *The Confidence Code*, at 50.

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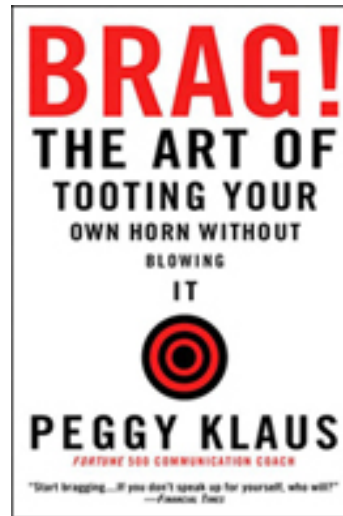
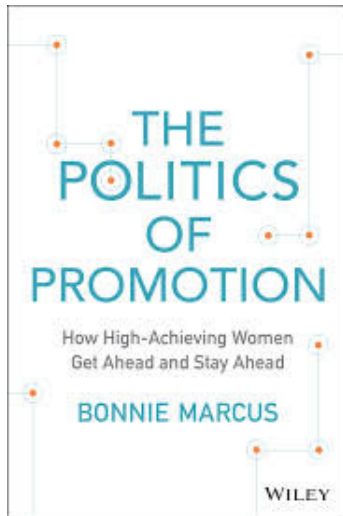
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Communicating – Self-Promotion

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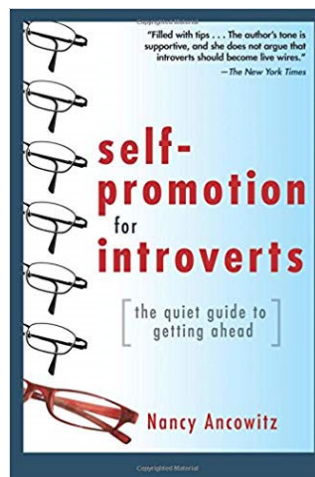
Paradox: Self-Promoting or Bragging?



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Promotion Paradox: Introverts



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Self-Promotion

- Focus on substance
- Focus on how you promoted/advanced organizational goals

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Poll: Applying for Promotions

- When reading a job description to apply for a promotion, women apply when they meet ___% of the job description.
 - 60%
 - 70%
 - 80%
 - 90%
 - 100%
- When reading a job description to apply for a promotion, men apply when they meet ___% of the job description.
 - 60%
 - 70%
 - 80%
 - 90%
 - 100%

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How Confident to Apply For Promotion?

- HP studied why there were not more women in top leadership positions:
 - “Women working at HP applied for a promotion only when they believed they met 100 percent of the qualifications listed for the job. Men were happy to apply when they thought they could meet 60 percent of the job requirements.”
 - *See Act Now To Shrink The Confidence Gap*, Forbes (Apr. 28, 2014); *see also* Katty Kay and Claire Shipman, *The Confidence Code* (2014)

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Communicating Confidence

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Organization of Success

- Start with your punch line
 - Are you reporting conclusions or process?

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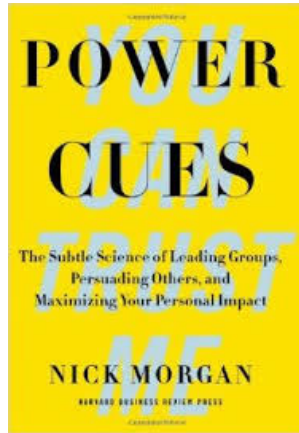
Language of Success ... Be Careful!

- Don't start with "I" (stands for indecisive/downplay)
- Downplay qualifications
- Downplay authority
- Hedge/indirect
- Apologize
 - Gmail has a Plugin called "Just Not Sorry"

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Context – Nonverbal Communication



- How do you “show up”; are you self-aware?
- What do you convey through body language?
- What do you perceive in others?

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Speak Up – Group Dynamics

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“Speak Up”

- Penalized for not participating in meetings; often self-inflicted
 - Content
 - Certainty principle
 - Non-assertive, qualified language
 - Context
 - Social time before and after the meeting
 - Sitting at the table
 - Don't take conversations personally

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Strategy: “Amplification”

When President Obama took office, two-thirds of his top aides were men. Women complained of having to elbow their way into important meetings. And when they got in, their voices were sometimes ignored.



The Post is exploring how women gain, consolidate and experience power in politics and policy.

So female staffers adopted a meeting strategy they called “amplification”: When a woman made a key point, other women would repeat it, giving credit to its author. This forced the men in the room to recognize the contribution — and denied them the chance to claim the idea as their own.

“We just started doing it, and made a purpose of doing it. It was an everyday thing,” said one former Obama aide who requested anonymity to speak frankly. Obama noticed, she and others said, and began calling more often on women and junior aides.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/09/13/white-house-women-are-now-in-the-room-where-it-happens/?utm_term=.9c401a9cb195

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Fake It – Or Get a Growth Mindset

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Shift Your Mindset About Goals

- Reframe challenges as learning opportunities
- Understand that interactions are a negotiation that can
 - Align expectations
 - Inform decision-making
 - Bring opportunities and resources

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GRIT/Perseverance



A diagram consisting of three red circles. The first circle on the left contains the text "Growth Mindset". To its right is a red plus sign. The second circle contains the text "Optimistic Self-talk". To its right is a red equals sign. The final circle on the right contains the text "Perseverance".



The book cover for "GRIT: THE POWER of PASSION and PERSEVERANCE" by ANGELA DUCKWORTH. The cover features a pattern of grey arrows pointing in various directions. A red banner at the top right says "NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER". At the bottom, there is a quote: "Psychologists have taken decades reporting for the secret of success, but Duckworth is the one who found it." attributed to "—DANIEL G. REIS, author of 'Raising an Athlete'".

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Other Tips to Own Your Success

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Receiving Compliments/Praise

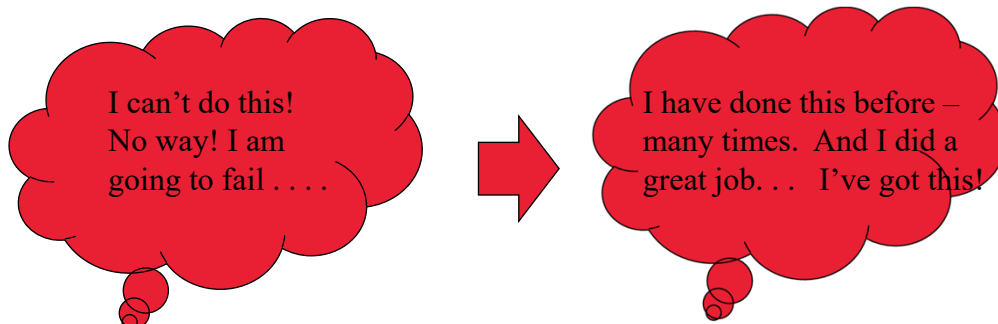
- Why is this hard?



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Reframe Self-Talk



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Name That Feeling

- Feeling – not a FACT
- Challenge the imposter thoughts cognitively
 - What is my evidence for that?
 - What would my best friend say about that evidence?
 - What would my mentor or sponsor say about that evidence?

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GET A YET

IF YOU ARE TEMPTED TO SAY
"I CAN'T"
HAVE THE COURAGE TO ADD
"YET"

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Your “At A ____” or “WOW” File

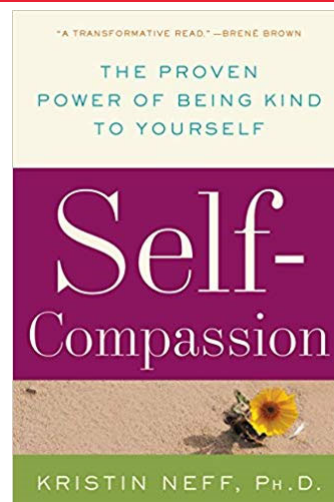
- Your accomplishments/Success Log
 - What did I achieve?
 - What challenges/obstacles did I overcome?
 - How did I feel?
- Compliments
 - Write them down!
- Read them!

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Self-Compassion

- Look at own shortcomings with kindness
 - Without judgment
 - Without disparagement
- Speak to yourself in times of difficulty or stress as you would speak to your best friend or child
 - Acknowledge the difficulty
 - With language that is kind and gentle
 - With encouragement



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Helping Those With Self-Doubt

- Challenge distorted “thoughts” of the inner critic
- Focus on managing the inner critic/threat response
 - See Tara Sophia Mohr, *Helping an Employee Overcome Their Self-Doubt*, Harvard Business Review (Oct. 1, 2015)

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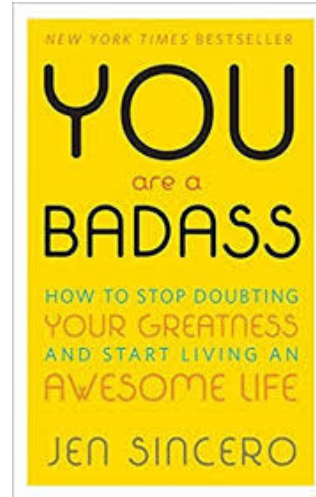
Wrap Up

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Look from Outside In

- “It’s just as easy to believe we’re awesome as it is to believe we’re giant sucking things.”
- “[T]ry seeing yourself through the eyes of someone who admires you. They get it. They believe in you leaps and bounds. They aren’t connected to your insecurities and negative beliefs about yourself. All they see is your true glory and potential.”



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Questions?

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Conclusion

These materials are intended as an introduction to the subject matter covered in the presentation. The presentation and the materials contained herein do not attempt to provide legal advice for any particular situation. Each particular situation must be analyzed individually in light of all of the surrounding facts and circumstances. Because of the complexity of the legal issues that will always arise in connection with the subject matter hereof, it is critical that counsel be involved. These materials are provided for educational and discussion purposes *only* and are not to be copied, used or distributed outside of this seminar without the express written consent of Cooley LLP. Copyright Cooley LLP and Michelle Greer Galloway 2021.

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