

YOU DESERVE TO SHINE: HOW TO OVERCOME IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND EMBRACE YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL

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* 2024 Top 100 Bestseller in Business & Workplace on Books.com.tw

Do you feel like your successes are mostly due to luck? Do you feel undeserving of praise? Do you avoid highlighting your accomplishments for fear of being called out? Let bestselling author and accomplished businesswoman Jill Chang show you how to stop negating yourself and embrace your capabilities and talents.

In spite of their accomplishments, many successful professionals are plagued by the feeling that they're just getting by on luck, and that their next project could be their undoing. Known as imposter syndrome, this condition can have a negative impact on our careers as we pull away from important opportunities for fear of being exposed as a fraud. Author Jill Chang, a self-described "extreme introvert" who inspired more than 200,000 readers with her previous best-selling title *Quiet Is a Superpower*, now returns with *You Deserve to Shine* to address this common problem. Once again drawing on personal experience and honest self-examination, she shares the tools and techniques she used to deal with her own imposter syndrome.

The first half of the book shows readers what imposter syndrome is, how it operates, and why it afflicts certain people, breaking down



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common misperceptions and helping readers understand the value of a positive sense of self. The second half guides readers through practices and techniques, including a practical step-by-step program for addressing imposter syndrome. Readers will learn how to silence their inner critic, build self-esteem, restore confidence, seek out positive support networks, and detox from the negative influences of social media. Specific strategies are provided for readers working in various industries, roles, and stages of their careers. Whether you are a recent graduate at your first job, a high-level manager, or someone transitioning to a new career, you will find targeted advice to meet your situation.

Despite her impressive accomplishments as an author and philanthropic advisor, Jill Chang also found herself struggling with imposter syndrome. Integrating her personal experiences, practical techniques, and research-backed insights, Jill gently guides readers through their struggles with self-doubt, encouraging them on a path of personal growth towards a satisfying work-life where they can let their talents shine.

Jill Chang 張瀞仁

Currently a strategic philanthropic advisor, Jill Chang works on a multi-national team that serves the needs of international philanthropists and corporate clients. Her previous book, *Quiet Is a Superpower*, has been translated into seven languages. The English version topped the category best-seller list on Amazon's US site, and won the prestigious independent publishing award Forward INDIES. The Japanese version won #1 of Best Three Books of the Year (translated, non-fiction) in 2022 and sold 210,000 copies, making Jill Taiwan's top selling author in Japan.

YOU DESERVE TO SHINE: HOW TO OVERCOME IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND EMBRACE YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL

By Jill Chang

Translated by Petula Parris

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Part 1: This is What an Imposter Looks Like

When I wrote my first book, *Quiet Is a Superpower*, it hit the bestseller lists in multiple countries and scooped up annual book awards in both the United States and Japan. That should be a *big deal* for any debut author... But, do you know how it made me feel? It left me wanting to curl up in shame.

“Most writers are consistently churning out new works – and here I am droning on about the same book after four years!” I thought. “And why do they keep calling me a *writer*? Richard Powers and Haruki Murakami are writers. Not someone like me...”

When I first learned that Diamond Inc., a well-known Japanese publisher, had acquired the rights to my book (for quite a hefty price), I couldn’t quite match my agent’s enthusiasm. I panic called my cousin in Japan: “What’s happening? That publisher usually publishes successful authors. They’ve made a mistake. This is going to backfire!”

During my multi-country book tour, my suitcase was almost bursting at the seams with all the clothes and accessories I’d planned for each interview. Nevertheless, I still made sure to pack a copy of my book. I figured that, if I got stuck on a question, I could quickly flip to the right page and consult my scribblings for an answer. In hindsight, it’s kind of sad that I felt the need to refer back to my notes... seeing that I’d written the book in the first place!

How did I become like this? Should I blame my gender, my blood type, my zodiac sign – or is it my family’s fault, or just my personality? Was one-year-old Jill already like this? What about eight-year-old Jill? Did something go awry during puberty? Or maybe it was upon entering the workforce? As it turns out, the reason behind this all is: the **imposter experience**.

Wait! Who are you calling an imposter?

Imposter experience isn’t exactly a *condition*. Think of it more as a passing, or sometimes chronic, *state of mind*. It’s when you feel you don’t deserve that lucky break, or when you tell yourself you aren’t clever or capable enough.

Other people view you through a filter

When Gillian’s company informed her that her contract wouldn’t be renewed, she started stressing about finding a new job. She called her former manager, Jason, to complain: “They’re

restructuring and decided to let me go. But I don't feel I'm good at anything... How on earth am I supposed to find another job?"

Jason and Gillian made a great team. Even though they were based in different countries and rarely met in person, they had completed several tough projects together. They had co-interviewed many of their teammates, and although they were no longer colleagues, they remained close friends.

"Well I'd do anything to work with you again!" Jason told her. Gillian knew he was just trying to comfort her, but still, it felt good knowing someone was on her side.

"Did you know Adam came out to the West Coast to visit me recently?" Jason added. Adam was one of their former teammates. After moving to another city, he'd changed jobs and was now managing a team across at least a dozen countries. "When we met up, we kept saying how great you are. It's a shame you weren't there! You'd have heard for yourself how much we enjoyed working with you."

Gillian couldn't imagine there was much good to say about her. She was simply trying her best to get through each day without messing up or drawing too much attention to herself. She wasn't even after a promotion; making it through to the end of each day was more than enough. When interviewing new hires, she quietly thanked her lucky stars that she'd joined the workforce earlier. She knew there was no way she'd be able to compete with the talented candidates nowadays. Likewise, each time she took on a new project, she feared something would go wrong. She was sure she'd make a mistake or overlook something. Even when things went well, she preferred it when no one noticed. She didn't want anyone to realize she had simply gotten lucky.

"Everyone has moments of self-doubt. What you're experiencing is known as imposter syndrome. Most people go through it at some point or other – including me," Jason assured her.

Even those at the "top" grapple with self-doubt

Michelle is the kind of person everyone wants to be friends with. She's cool. She's smart. She graduated from an Ivy League law school. But rather than following the typical route to Wall Street or a top-tier law firm, she opted to work as a human rights lawyer at a nonprofit, fighting against injustices on behalf of undocumented immigrants.

Michelle's mind works at the speed of light. On top of juggling multiple jobs, she's had a book published, volunteers for different organizations, and even runs her own newsletter. She is full of warmth, incredibly empathetic, and keenly aware of sociocultural issues.

Once, we happened to be in Taipei at the same time, so we arranged to meet for dinner at a cosy Japanese spot. As we were chatting, I asked her when she was going to write her next book. To my surprise, she lowered her gaze and said: "I don't think there'll ever be another one. It's just too hard. I mean, the writing process is tough enough! But then when it's out, and people come compliment me on it, I just can't handle it. I want to tell them: 'Wait, no, you've got it wrong – I just wrote down what I saw!' It makes me want to disappear."

I stared at her in disbelief. Seriously? But that was exactly how *my* mind worked! How could someone as accomplished as Michelle think that way? But then it hit me – if even *Michelle* felt like this, then maybe so did a lot more people...

Hi, I'm Jill – poster child for imposters everywhere!

I'm curious. Do you ever feel uncomfortable when people congratulate you?

There was a time when I got promoted at work, and I became the first manager in the company's history to be promoted from Asia to the US headquarters. Later, my book was published in the US, landing on the Amazon bestseller list, and I became what people call a *bestselling author*. Invitations to speak started to pour in from all over the world, and my LinkedIn was flooded with connection requests from people in various countries.

But honestly, I felt terrible.

It all felt like one big misunderstanding. Whenever anyone congratulated me, I'd force a smile and say, "It's not that impressive! I just got lucky."

Most people would respond with encouragement: "You're too modest. You need to learn to take a compliment!"

But what they didn't realize was that deep down, I truly believed I'd used up a whole lifetime of luck just to get this far – which meant I didn't have any luck left in the bank to keep the act going. I kept thinking, *Any second now, they're going to find out it's all fake. The more they get to know me, the more they'll see I'm incapable. I'm slow, I'm bad with numbers, I even get nervous talking on the phone.*

I felt torn and anxious. Part of me wanted to keep up the act to avoid disappointing everyone – and, of course, for the sake of my career prospects. But another part of me was convinced that tomorrow, or maybe even within the next hour, someone would figure out I was a fraud. Actually, that's not even fair: to call myself a fraud implies there's something there. Whereas I felt I had nothing at all.

So I carried around that guilt and self-doubt at work, always anxious, always hoping no one would see through me.

As I got older, I started to wonder what was at the bottom of all this. Was it a lack of confidence? Was I too sensitive? Too introverted? Or maybe it came from the East Asian values I grew up with – ones that emphasize humility over taking personal credit.

It wasn't until I came across the work of psychologist Dr. Jessamy Hibberd that I learned there's a name for this: **imposter syndrome** – or as some call it, **the imposter experience**. In this book, I also sometimes simply refer to it as **the imposter**.

You aren't alone – imposters are all around

I much prefer the term **imposter experience**. As I pointed out earlier, **imposter experience** isn't exactly a *condition*, but more like a passing, or sometimes chronic, *state of mind*. It's when you feel you don't deserve that lucky break, or when you tell yourself you aren't clever or capable enough.¹

According to Dr. Jessamy Hibberd, imposter experiences vary in intensity. For some, it's occasional worrying about not being able to complete a task; for others, it's the constant fear of being exposed as a fraud.

Some people only feel this way in certain situations, such as when they find themselves in a totally new environment. Other people carry a deep sense of insecurity with them wherever they go. Even at home, these people are afraid that everything might suddenly fall apart.² Research shows that up to 70% of people have felt this way at some point.³

Data from the Imposter Syndrome Institute shows that the **imposter experience** is especially common among leaders: 84% of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized business owners and 80% of CEOs report having felt like an imposter or unfit for their roles.⁴

So when your boss is confidently laying out next year's goals in a meeting – or berating the team in front of everyone – they might secretly be thinking, “What am *I* doing here? How did *I* get to be leading this team? How long until these guys realize I'm not really qualified for this salary or position?”

That's how common the imposter experience is. Even Grammarly's blog has a quiz called “Which kind of imposter syndrome do you have?”⁵ This goes to show that the people who seem perfect, powerful, or polished might also be using grammar tools to figure out how to phrase their emails, or asking ChatGPT how to deal with certain situations, or taking imposter syndrome quizzes online.

The imposter experience isn't black and white. It ebbs and flows. Sometimes everything feels calm, while at other times the waves are overwhelming.

Back to the story we began with: Did Michelle give up writing completely because of her imposter experience? No. She continues to publish her brilliant newsletter, with many readers now supporting her financially. She's even started her next book, about her struggles across different cultures. Michelle found a way to live with her imposter experience – and kept going. We can too.

¹ Clance, P. & Imes, S. (1978). “The Imposter Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and Therapeutic Intervention.” *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, Fall, 15(3): 241-247.

² “The Imposter Cure: Escape the mind-trap of imposter syndrome” (2019). Jessamy Hibberd.

³ “You're not fooling anyone” (2007). John Gravois.

⁴ <https://impostorsyndrome.com/infographics/youre-not-alone/>

⁵ <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/imposter-syndrome-quiz/>