



EPISODE 11

## *Do You Have Author Impostor Syndrome?*

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Welcome back everyone. This is the Author Revolution Podcast and I'm your host, Carissa Andrews. Thanks so much for joining me today. I know I've said it a lot, but I truly appreciate that you've chosen this podcast to be on your list of ways to spend your author education time.

I think you're really going to get a lot out of this episode. We're going to be talking about something I talk about in my in-person workshops and presentations because it's a crucial one for getting out of your own way. What am I talking about?

Author Impostor Syndrome, my friends.

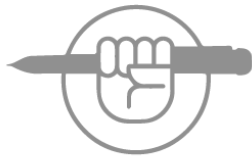
Are you saying, what the heck are you talking about, Carissa? Well, Author Impostor Syndrome is just like any other impostor syndrome. It takes form in refusing to accept ourselves as authors; perhaps even despite many articles, scribblings, and both published and unpublished books under our belts. Worse yet, it paralyzes us because we're scared to death someone will tell us we're no good and shouldn't even be able to call ourselves and author.

As it turns out, Impostor Syndrome is when—despite many accomplishments and accolades—we feel as though we're a fraud. Many of us take this a step further, embracing the terrifying perception that we'll one day be found out—and worse yet, called out—for being the impostor we are. When in fact, it's our subconscious trying to convince us our successes are undeserved and, perhaps, that we're deceiving not only ourselves—but those around us. Yeesh, what a terrifying way to live. Right?



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It's a pretty common phenomenon.

Geek out time: According to a 2011 report by the Behavioral Science Research Institute,\* as many as 70% of Millennials are struggling with Impostor Syndrome on some level. Read that again—a whopping 70%! Now, even if you're not a Millennial (I'm not), this is still a staggering number. Interestingly, those who are most susceptible to its symptoms tend to be people willing to put themselves on a limb—reaching for growth and evolving. This means creatives, high-achievers, and CEOs, etc. are often struggling with this skewed world view. Many push past it—and you can too.

The term Impostor Syndrome was first introduced in the 70's, by two women: Pauline R. Clance and Suzanne A. Imes. They were noticing a trend at the time where high-achieving, intelligent women felt as though they weren't as intelligent or capable as their peers deduced. Throughout the years, this bizarre notion we now call Impostor Syndrome has been identified to strike pretty dang equally among men and women. Let's just say, it doesn't discriminate. Ironically, as it turns out, the majority of the time—these fears are just that: fears. People who feel this way, are typically more than competent enough to handle whatever job requirements or tasks they're trying to overcome. However, for some reason, they've convinced themselves otherwise.

This includes you.

I have something you need to hear.

Webster's definition of author:

- 1: the writer of a literary work (such as a book)
- 2: one that originates or creates something

If you've been working on a story or creating an article, blog post, novel, or even published many before – you're already an author. Right now. Not someday in the future.



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Author Impostor Syndrome takes shape in five different ways, as per Valerie Young's archetypes. We're going to go over the five archetypes because it's important to know you're not the first author who's felt this way and you certainly won't be the last. But the good news is, once you identify which one you are, you have a way to combat it. Ready?

The first author impostor archetype is The Perfectionist.

Are you one of those authors who wants everything to be perfect before ever making another move? Has your manuscript sat on your hard drive for months, years, or more waiting for you to clean up every last line edit, plot twist, and have the time for the perfect marketing runway? Do you set super high goals for yourself and hate to miss the mark? (I'm totally one of those!) How about wanting to take on everything because you're the only one you trust? (Hmmm...)

If any of this sounds familiar, you're probably a perfectionist. Perfectionism and Impostor Syndrome are practically bed buddies. I mean, think about, if you're a perfectionist and view your work as "not quite up to par"—how can you ever accept your accomplishments up to this point? Perfectionists are rarely satisfied with their results and are constantly striving to do better. While this is totally a good thing, it can obviously get in our way when we want to finalize a big project, like a novel.

One of the ways to overcome this type of impostor syndrome is to consciously make the decision to move before you think you're ready. Scary, I know. However, it pushes you past your comfort zone, and into the realm of getting shit done.

Remember, this is your mantra:

"Done is better than perfect."

No one is reading your "it'll be perfect some day" novel. But they could be reading your 97% perfect novel today. The choice is yours.



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Now, I gotta be honest. This is totally one of my hangups. I have a propensity for wanting things to be done exactly the way I envision them to be done. This means I take on a lot more crap than I need to. While I do tend to get things done, I overload myself to the point of insanity.

Here's what we perfectionists need to focus on: What needs to be done, and what do we just want to be done? What's effective, versus busy work? As soon as we can answer that for ourselves, the more potent we become.

The best way to combat this archetype of author impostor syndrome is by setting a new goal you can start right now. Maybe it's write for an hour a day. Whatever it might be, decide and then tell someone. Next, get things set up as though you know 100% you'll reach that goal. For instance, put your book up for preorder on Amazon before it's ready.

The second archetype is The Superwoman/man.

Do you push yourself to work harder, longer, or more often than most authors you know—simply for the privilege of calling yourself an author? How do you handle downtime? Do you freak out? Are vacations a waste of time because you could be working on your book instead? All of these types of mentalities are really just masking an insecurity you have about your place in your author career. Workaholics have an innate drive to prove themselves, but ultimately, their insecurity pushes them past the brink of healthy. Not good.

Learning how to face your insecurities and overcome them will give you a platform for growth. This can be working more on your internal dialogue (which we'll talk about more in later sections), or setting personal goals to spend more time finding what makes you happy—outside of your novel/book writing endeavors. The way you can combat this archetype is by learning to take a deep breath and stop searching for external validation. Ouch, right? I get it – I totally identify with this one. Instead, focus a little more on your work/life balance and maybe pick a relaxing hobby to untangle your web of nervous energy.

The third author impostor archetype is called the Natural Genius.

Do most things typically come very easily to you? And when they don't, do you assume you're automatically bad at it? What about a track record for getting straight A's in school? Or picking up something new very quickly? Natural geniuses are similar to perfectionists, in that they set their bar ridiculously high. But their gauge isn't about perfection, it's more about getting it right on the first try. They view having to redo something, or spend time learning as failure because they should have been able to grasp it on the first go around. You'll find authors with this problem will avoid challenges with concepts they feel they're not great at. Perhaps as specific as learning Amazon ads, or as broad as launching their book in general.

Those who do push past their initial knee jerk reactions over challenges may find their confidence shaken when things don't work out right away. Does this sound like you?

In order to combat this archetype you need to challenge your perceptions. Sometimes things in life do not come quickly, even for you. So if you have a skillset you've been putting off because it hasn't given you the results you expected, then dig deeper. Take a more in-depth course or trial and error with a/b testing. Get into the weeds until you unravel the whole mystery.

Now the fourth impostor is called the Rugged Individualist.

These impostors loathe asking for help. They feel reaching out for assistance unmasks them as the frauds they feel they are—so they simply don't do it. Instead, they'll either go all out on their own, trying to learn, accomplish, and do everything without anyone's input. Those rugged individualists who have people who could help wouldn't ask—they'd instead delegate in a way that makes it a requirement of the other person, and not a personal need of them.

If this sounds like you, the only way to combat this author impostor archetype is by doing the thing you think you'll hate the most. Yup, you guessed it – ask for help. Did you know most people appreciate seeing the (even semi) vulnerability in others? Not only does it give you some credibility as a human being (What? You're not a freaky machine?), but it gives the other person the opportunity to shine in collaboration with you. Believe it or not, you have people around you who have their own awesome strengths. Utilize them!

The final author impostor archetype is the Expert.

There's never enough training to satiate the Expert Author Impostors. No matter what they've learned and overcome, they always feel as though they need to learn more in order to be viewed as an expert author. Even when readers or fellow authors can see it, these impostors usually feel as though they somehow managed to “trick them” into this belief and that their perception of them isn't reality. They live in fear of being found out as fraud, so they will shy away from writing books, or releasing them into the wild unless they have 100% of the criteria they feel they should have. Unfortunately, in this ever-changing field of digital media, the rules are constantly in flux. This can put the expert into full-on panic mode, as they try to keep up with the latest publishing and marketing trends. And trust me, I know.

So, how do you combat this one? Sit down and assess all of your skills and strengths. Give yourself a pat on the back where it's due—because you've likely done a helluva lot more than you realize to get where you are. Make a list if you have to just so you can prove it to yourself. In fact, write down the top 20 challenges you accomplished in 2019. Deal? I bet you'll realize there's a lot more than that you've knocked out.



After turning a critical eye to how I operate, I find that all of the archetypes have a tendency to crop up in my life for different parts of my journey. I'm not always one or the other – and you might not be either.

So, question time! Which one of the archetypes do you identify with? Leave me a comment on iTunes or head over to our Author Revolution Online Community on Facebook and let me know there. Let's discuss the ways we can combat this mind game and how we can achieve all of our goals this year.

Now, don't forget, if you liked this podcast episode, leave me a review where you listen. If it won't let you, email me at [carissa@authorrevolution.org](mailto:carissa@authorrevolution.org) and I'll still read it live on the air – and if you don't mind, I'll even post it on the author revolution website.

Alright guys, that wraps up our talk on Author Impostor Syndrome. I hope you found it super helpful and if nothing else, a relief to know you are not alone. Every author goes through these exact same thoughts and fears – even Maya Angelou.

Now, don't forget that if you want to go over the show notes, find clickable links to anything we talked about today, or reach out to me online, you can also go to [authorrevolution.org/11](http://authorrevolution.org/11).

Next week I want to talk about writing a series and how to brainstorm and organize your concept. It should be a fun one!

Until next time. Go forth and be awesome.



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