

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/beat-imposter-syndrome-with-cheerleaders/>

Almost everyone deals with some degree of imposter syndrome, observes author and board director Shellye Archambeau, and women of color are particularly vulnerable. She offers several strategies for beating back imposter syndrome, emphasizing the transformational role that personal "cheerleaders" can play.



## Transcript

- I've dealt with imposter syndrome my entire life.. 00:00:06,330 Studies show that just about everybody does, but women in particular definitely experience it a lot more than men, and women of color, according to studies, actually experience it the most.. So how do you handle it? First of all, realize that a lot of people feel it.. So it's okay.. Second, realize every time, every time, you take a big leap forward, you're starting at the bottom of the next ladder, and that's true for everyone.. And if you really want to make progress, you want to get to the top of a ladder, jump to the bottom run and go again.. If you keep just jumping mid run, you're not going to go very far very fast.. So it's called taking risk, which is also okay.. But how do you get over it? So number one, realize everybody feels that way.. Number two, if somebody offered you the role, then they obviously believe that you can do it..

Believe them, alright? They're telling you they have confidence in you, believe them.. And if that's still not enough, fake it until you make it.. You know, walk in, put your shoulders back and say, "Okay, today I'm playing the role of project manager of brand new company XYZ," right? And eventually you're going to figure it out.. And if that's still not good enough, I tell people, "Get cheerleaders." And I mean, cheerleaders.. Rob, Rob, go! Tina, go! Betsy, go! Dan, right? Cheerleaders, people who remind you, when you're feeling totally incompetent, and incapable, and all this, remind you of who you are, remind you of the skills, the education, what you've actually done, right? Building you up.. Because so much in the world today is tearing us down, telling us how we're not quite, and then fill in the blank.. We're not quite smart enough, not quite techie enough, not quite pretty enough, not quite young enough, not quite, I don't know, right? All these things we're not enough.. Well, the good news is, you really are.. And if you don't believe it, then have somebody, and I don't care who it is, be your cheerleader.. I've had cheerleaders my whole life..

My husband was my biggest cheerleader.. And if you don't have one, appoint somebody.. Say, "Okay, sis, you're now my cheerleader.. And here's what this means.. Because Shellye said I need a cheerleader," right? So go get a cheerleader...