



*Irene Kinuthia PCC
Leadership Development Consultant
Certified Executive Coach
Certified Team Productivity Coach
Gallup Certified Strengths Coach*





Courage, Confidence and the Imposter Syndrome

ikinuthia@strathmore.edu

irenewkinuthia@gmail.com

+254 724300256

**“Whether you
think you can
or think you can’t
you’re right”**

Henry Ford

What is the Imposter Syndrome?

it's really a phenomenon!



NOT a real Imposter

An internal feeling of intellectual phoniness, despite successes

Feeling fraudulent

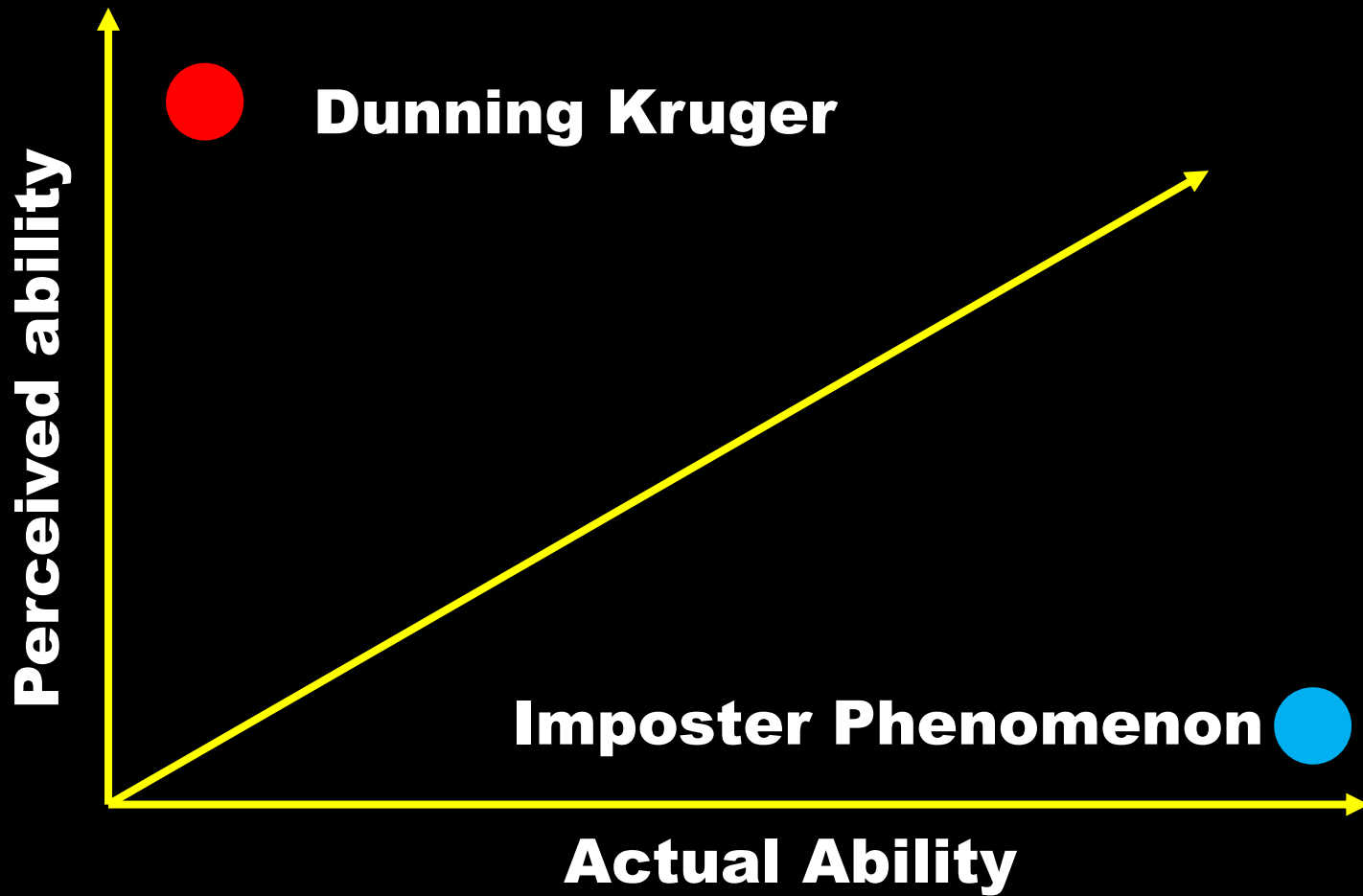
Wondering when you will be found out



What Is the Impostor Syndrome?

- Feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy and incompetence despite contradictory evidence
- Most common among high achieving people
- Commonly occurs at transition points
- Affects both genders





Why Does It Matter?

- Stress
- Physical & Emotional Effects
- Relationship Issues
- Lack of personal & professional satisfaction
- Unreached potential



**Can prevent people recognising their
knowledge, skills and capabilities**

**Can stop people putting themselves
forward for promotion or new tasks**

**Can create high levels of stress,
self-sabotaging behaviour, anxiety
and even depression**

“I still believe that at any time the no-talent police will come and arrest me.”

Mike Myers

“The exaggerated esteem in which my lifework is held makes me very ill at ease. I feel compelled to think of myself as an involuntary swindler”

Albert Einstein

Is This You?

- I attribute my success to luck or timing, rather than my own skills and talents.
- I worry that others will find out that I'm not as competent or capable as they think I am.
- I've unknowingly deceived people into thinking I'm good enough for this job.
- I feel undeserving of my success.
- At any moment I will be exposed as a fraud.

70%

**68% of Senior Managers and
76% of junior managers
Totaljobs survey 2019**

What Does It Look Like?

- A vicious cycle of anxiety and short-term relief
- Fear of failure
- A strong need to be the best
- Perfectionism
- Unwillingness to internalize positive feedback
- Fear of success



When things go well I am afraid I won't be able to replicate the success

I find it hard to accept compliments or praise when I have done something well

I dread being evaluated

I worry others will discover how much I don't know

Where does it come from?



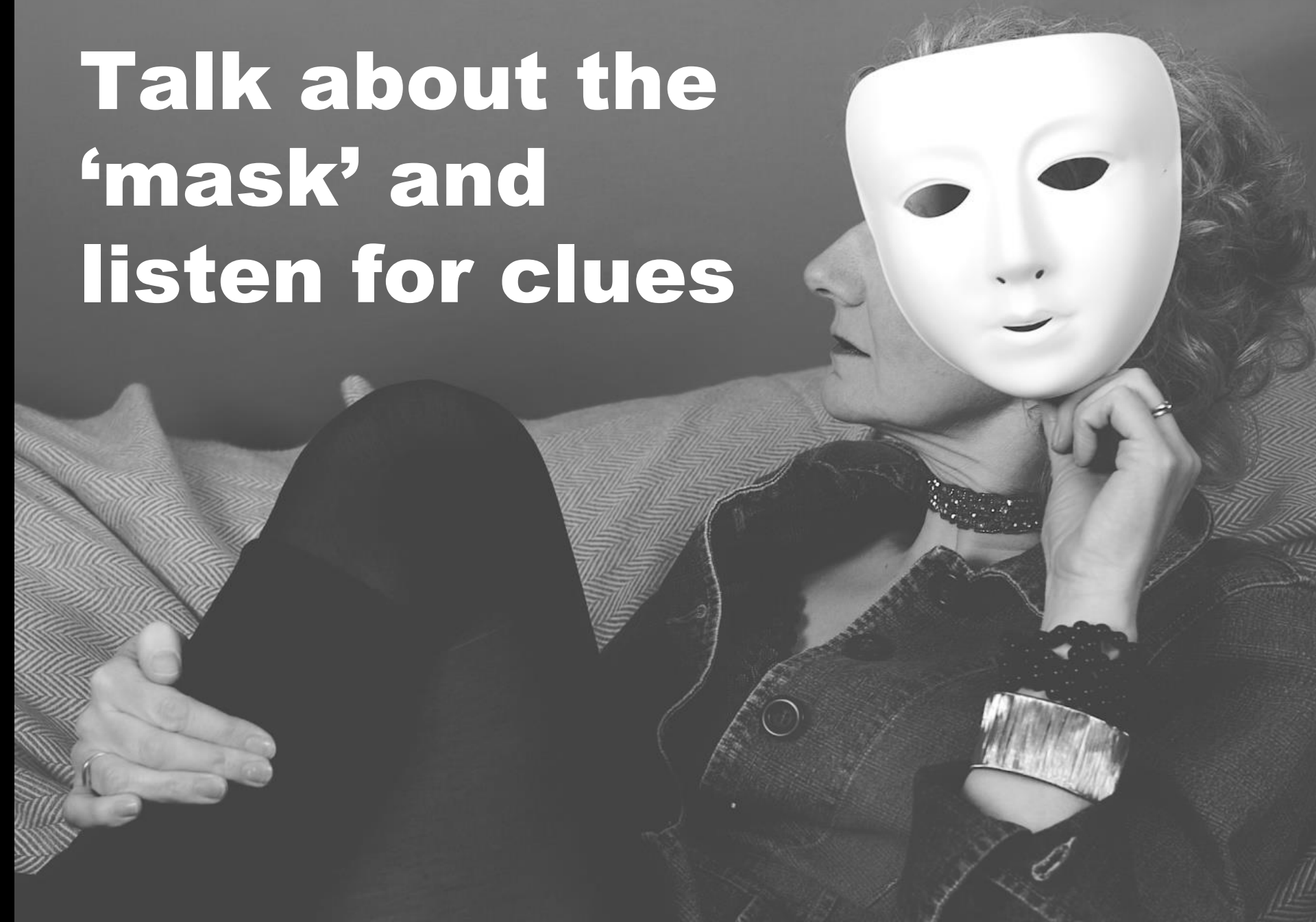
How Did You Get Here?

- Early family influences
 - Messages about success and failure
 - Myths and labels
- First in your family
- Decision to pursue an alternative path
- Pressure to represent your group
 - Limited diversity
- Unsupportive organizational cultures
 - Competition, hostility

A photograph of a lecture hall with students seated at desks. In the foreground, several white paper masks are placed on the desks, symbolizing the concept of 'imposter feelings' and 'spotting it in others'. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Tips to overcome
imposter feelings
and spot it in others**

**Talk about the
'mask' and
listen for clues**



“I got lucky”

“They were just being kind”

“They’ve made a mistake”

“It’s because I worked really hard”

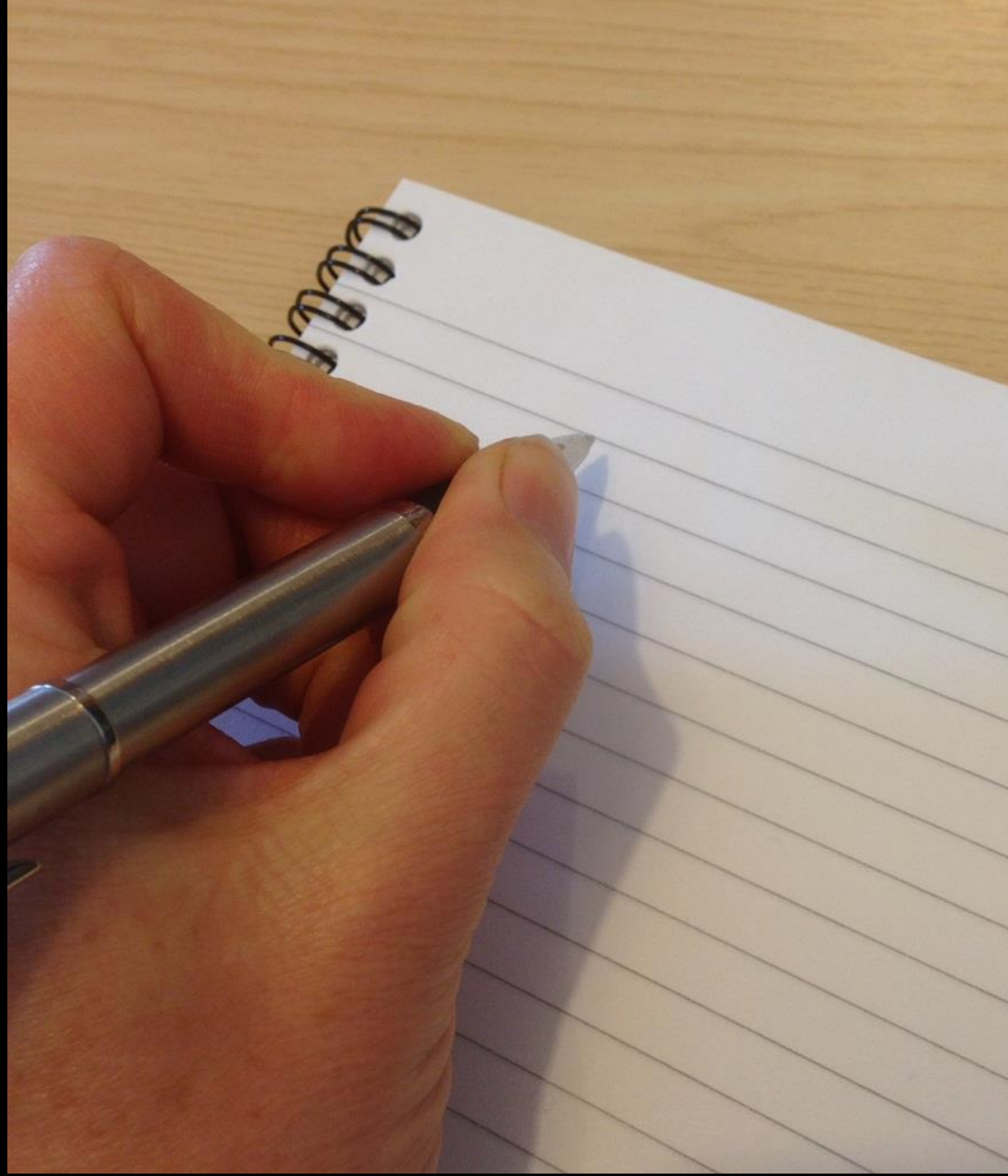
“I’m just doing my job”

“Anyone could have...”

**Note
positive
feedback**

**Avoid
“yes,
but...”**

**Start
“yes,
and...”**



Know and use your Strengths



The Johari Window

<p>1 Open</p> <p>Known to self and to others</p>	<p>2 Blind</p> <p>Not known to self but known to others</p>
<p>3 Hidden</p> <p>Known to self but not to others</p>	<p>4 Unknown</p> <p>Not known to self or others</p>

Re-write your Script

Deal With The P Word

Perfection

Apply the 80% Rule

Deal With The F Word

Failure

**Things that didn't
work**

If you are managing others...



People feel less like an imposter when...

**A job description clearly highlights
what's expected**

**Specific feedback is given about their
work and how well they are doing**

**There is a clear set of performance
indicators and objectives**

**You can choose courage or you can choose
comfort, but you can't choose both**
Brene Brown



Further Reading

“The Impostor Phenomenon” by Dr Pauline Rose Clance

“The Pursuit of Perfect” by Tal Ben-Shahar

“The Confident Manager” by Kate Atkin

“Learned Optimism” by Dr Martin Seligman

“Inferior” by Angela Saini

“The Gift of Imperfection” Brene Brown

www.TED.com

for talks by Susan Cain, Brene Brown & Amy Cuddy



ENQUIRIES



info@coachinghubglobal.com



+254 724300256

+254 722800026

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