

Feeling like a little mermaid in a big ocean

(Shr)Imposter
Syndrome
and You



Rachael Livermore

What is Imposter Syndrome?

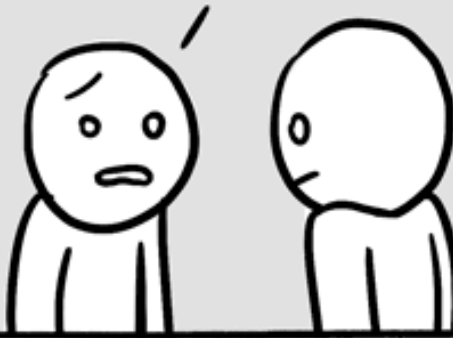
- First described by Dr. Pauline Clance and Dr. Suzanne Imes in 1978

CHAINSAWSUIT.COM

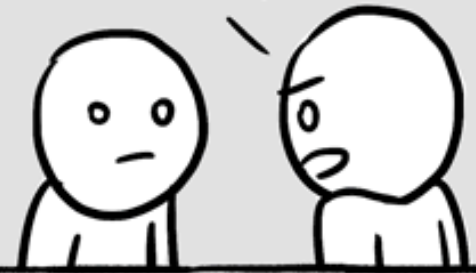
really feeling my
impostor syndrome
lately



what if i'm not
as good as everyone
says i am?



what are you talk-
ing about, everyone
says you're the worst,
including me



What is Imposter Syndrome?

- Sufferers of Imposter Syndrome do not internalize their accomplishments
- They remain convinced that they do not deserve their success and are frauds
- Proofs of success are dismissed as luck, timing, or the ability to deceive others
- They constantly fear being “found out” as imposters



Do you suffer with Imposter Syndrome?

- Do you think your accomplishments are a “fluke” or “no big deal?” Perhaps you’ve only been successful because people “like” you?
- Do you hate making mistakes or being less than fully prepared? (More than is rational)
- Do you worry that others will find out that you’re not as capable as they think you are?
- Is your reaction to success relief?



Do you suffer with Imposter Syndrome?

- Do you feel crushed by criticism, even when it's constructive?
- Do you believe other people are smarter or more capable than you?
- Do you shy away from challenges (or applications) due to self-doubt?
- Do you live in fear of being unmasked?



Binggo!



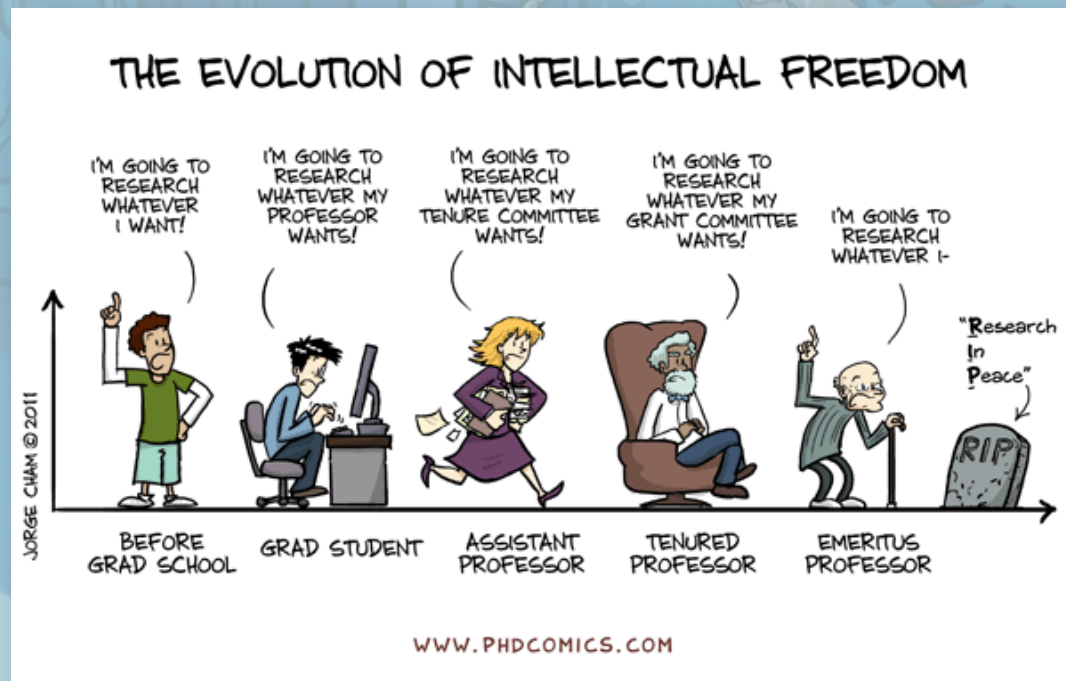
Join the club...

- **Around 70% of academics suffer with imposter syndrome.**
- **70%.**
- **Seventy.**
- **Percent.**



Why so many?

- Short lifespan of career stages mean we never really feel on top of things



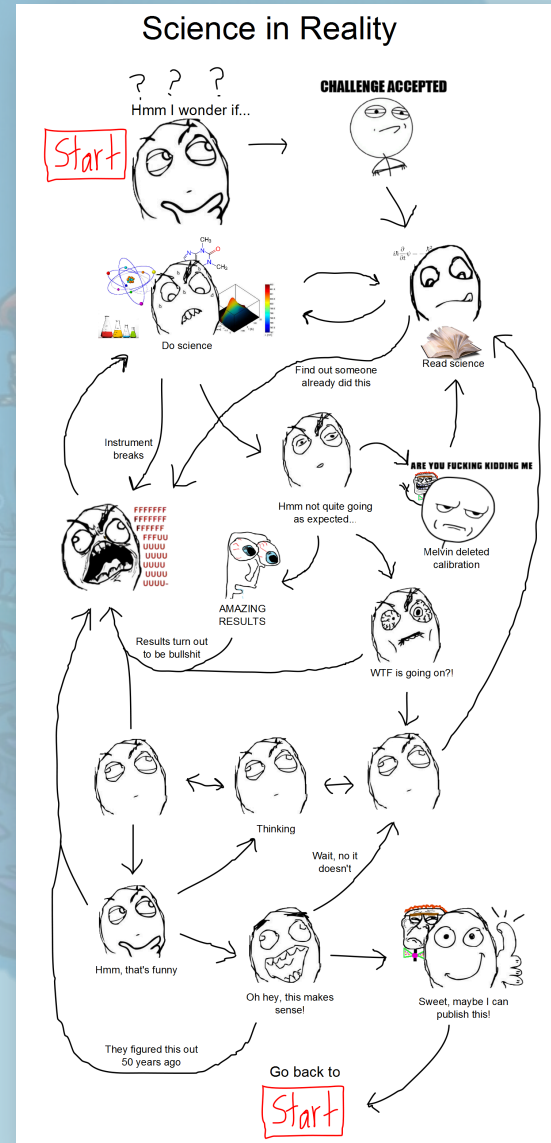
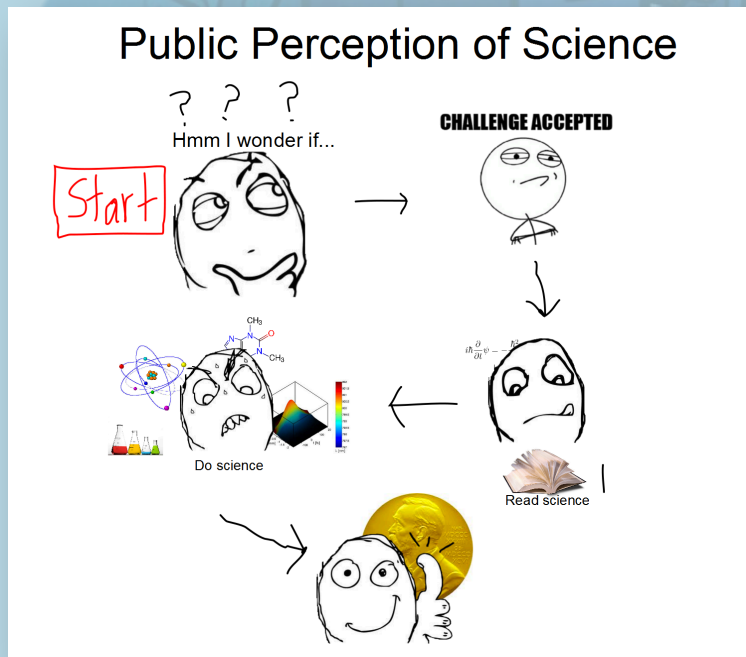
Why so many?

- **Comparing yourself to others is very difficult/fruitless**
- **The field is competitive and praise is rare.**



Why so many?

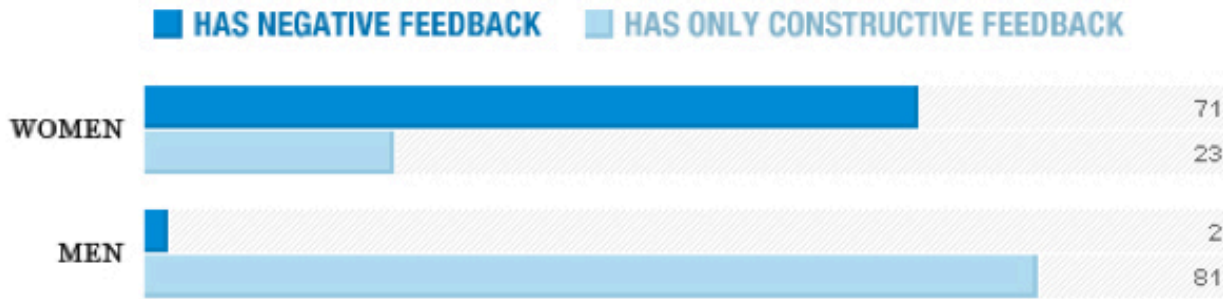
- The scientific method doesn't work the way we were taught it should



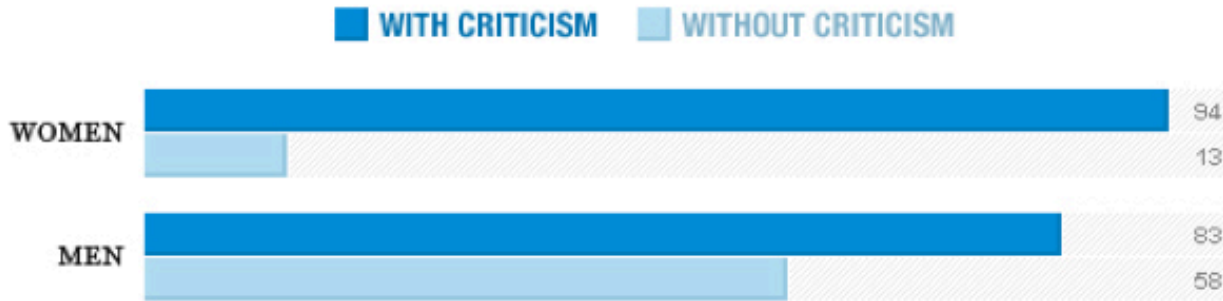
The Confidence Gap

- **Men tend to overestimate their abilities and performance, whereas women underestimate both^[1].**
- **Men apply for jobs when they meet 60% of qualifications; women apply when they meet 100%^[2].**
- **Men initiate salary negotiations 4 times as often as women, and when women do negotiate they ask for 30% less money^[3].**
- **Male business students think they deserve \$80k on average. Female business students think they deserve \$64k^[4].**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED IN CRITICAL REVIEWS



REVIEWS INCLUDING CRITICAL FEEDBACK



248

REVIEWS

141 BY MEN / 107 BY WOMEN

FROM

180

PEOPLE

105 MEN / 75 WOMEN

men^[1].

tes

en

...and it's a race issue too...

- Ethnic minorities are especially susceptible to imposter syndrome, and imposter feelings predict mental health problems more strongly than any other stress related to being a minority^[1].

...but it can affect anyone

- Although initially thought to primarily afflict women, many studies have found that it's prevalent among men too



At-risk Groups

- People for whom success came quickly
- First generation professionals
- People with high-achieving parents
- People in a minority in their field or workplace
- People who work alone
- Students
- People in jobs that are atypical for their gender
- People in creative fields

Why this Sucks

- **Imposter syndrome can make you less likely to apply for that fellowship or faculty position**



Why this Sucks

- It can make you afraid of trying new things or taking scientific risks



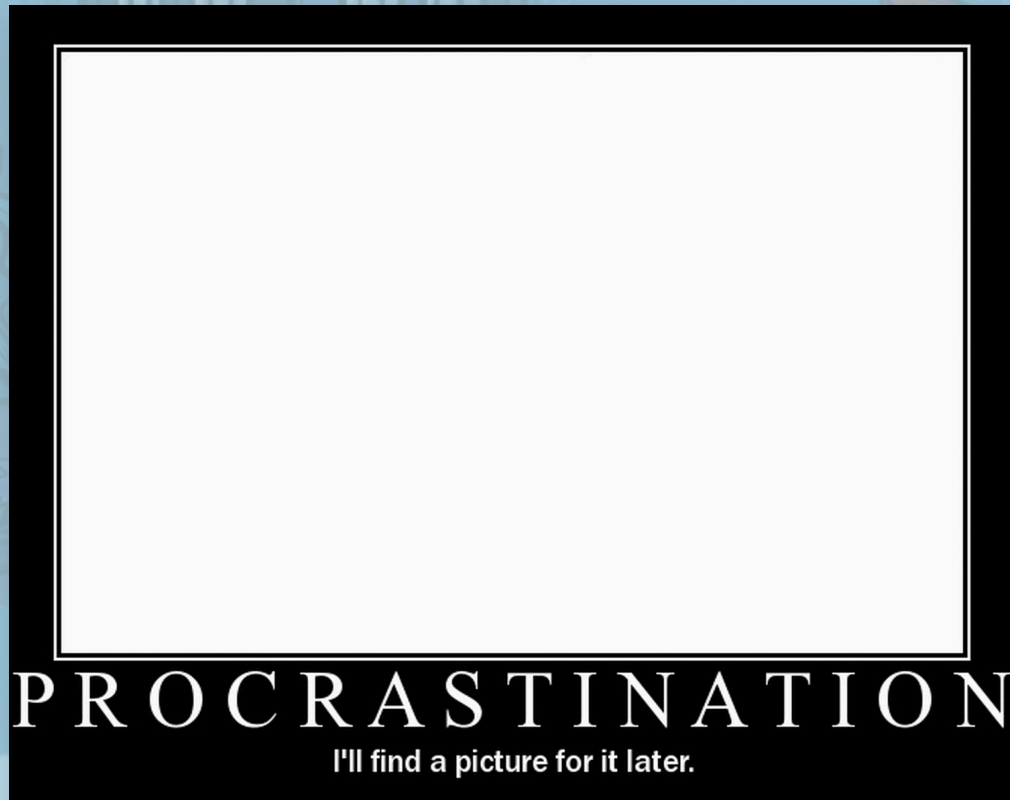
Why this Sucks

- It can make you wary of offering potentially useful insight or asking valid questions



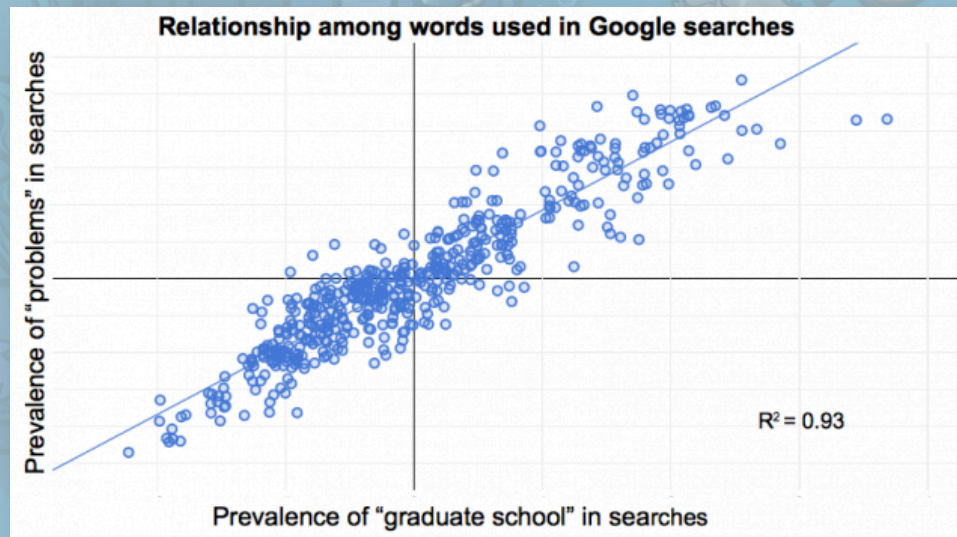
Why this Sucks

- It can actually affect your work



Why this Sucks

- Graduate students are especially prone to psychological stress and 44% report mental health issues*



insidehighered.com

*Hyun J, Quinn B, Madon T, Lustig S (2007) Mental health need, awareness, and use of counseling services among international graduate students. Journal of American College Health.

What can we do about it?

- **Talk about it**

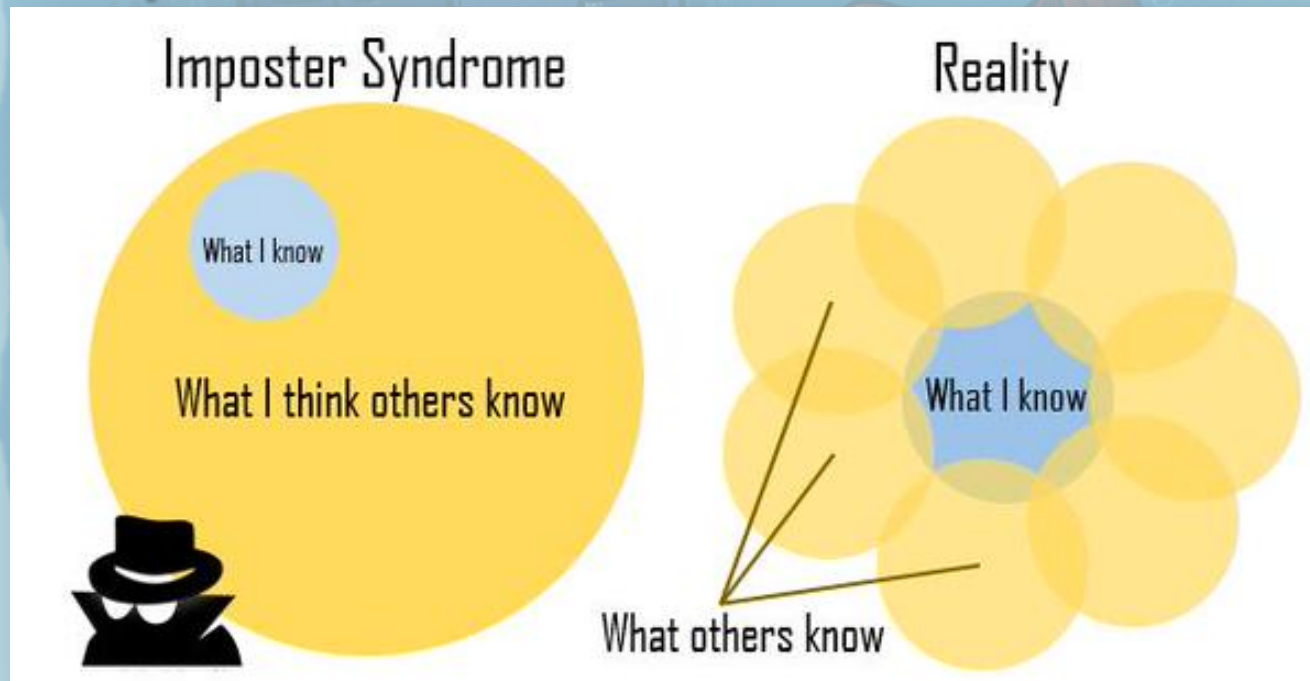


Dr. Valerie Young:
<http://impostersyndrome.com>

<https://twitter.com/mendyourhead/status/328977580013277184/photo/1>

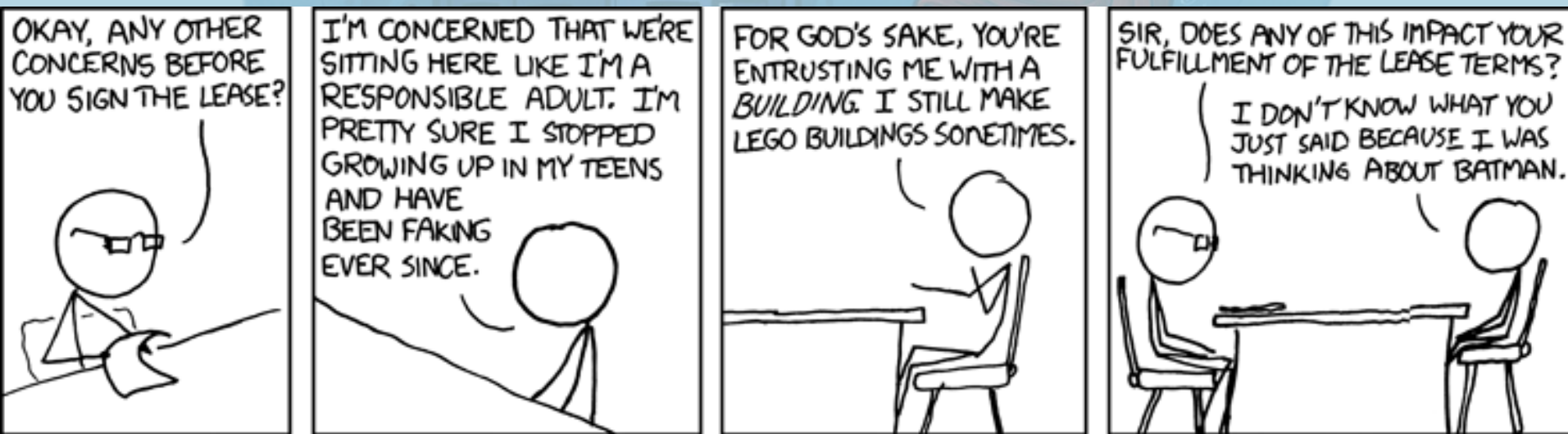
What can we do about it?

- Intellectualize your feelings (easier said than done...)



What can we do about it?

- Recognize that self-doubt is normal



xkcd

Dr. Valerie Young:

<http://impostersyndrome.com>

What can we do about it?

- Remind yourself of your positive achievements

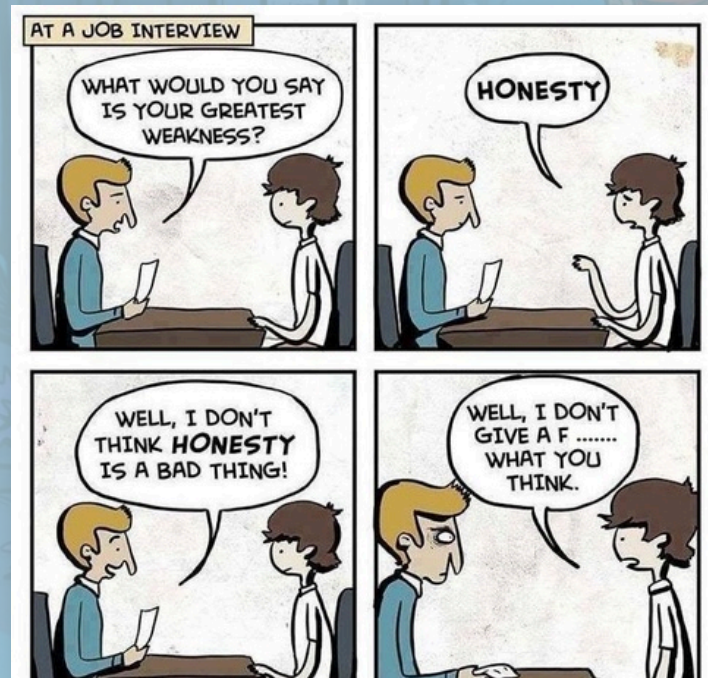
Covers @ FirstCovers.com



I AM AWESOME

What can we do about it?

- Change how you think about your weaknesses



Dr. Valerie Young:

<http://impostersyndrome.com>

What can we do about it?

- **Give equal weight to failures and successes**



What can we do about it?

- Remember that you are allowed a day off

