

**Defeating the imposter within:
or,
“they haven’t found me out yet”**

UKSG, 9th-11th April 2018

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I confess it would make me happy if one of the people giving conference talks on impostor syndrome was exposed as a charlatan and a fraud

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**Why am I talking about
imposter syndrome today?**

Are they really talking about me?!

You looked really calm and collected on stage

Yes, but you've got your reputation, and they don't know me

Everyone knows who Sarah is!

"Some years ago, I was lucky enough invited to a gathering of great and good people: artists and scientists, writers and discoverers of things. And **I felt that at any moment they would realise that I didn't qualify to be there**, among these people who had really done things.

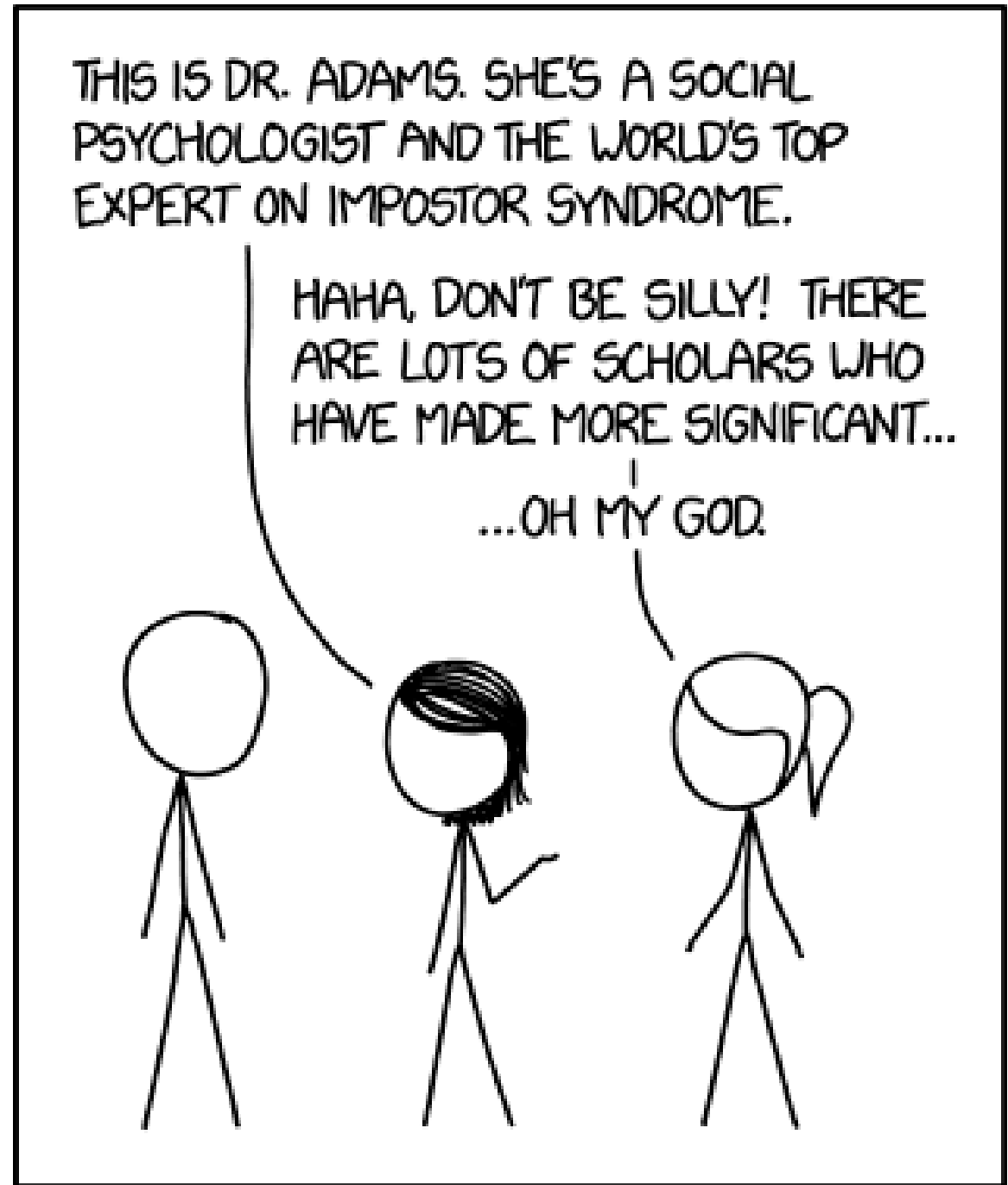
On my second or third night there, I was standing at the back of the hall, while a musical entertainment happened, and I started talking to a very nice, polite, elderly gentleman about several things, including our shared first name. And then he pointed to the hall of people, and said words to the effect of, "**I just look at all these people, and I think, what the heck am I doing here?**" They've made amazing things. I just went where I was sent."

And I said, "Yes. **But you were the first man on the moon.**" I think that counts for something."

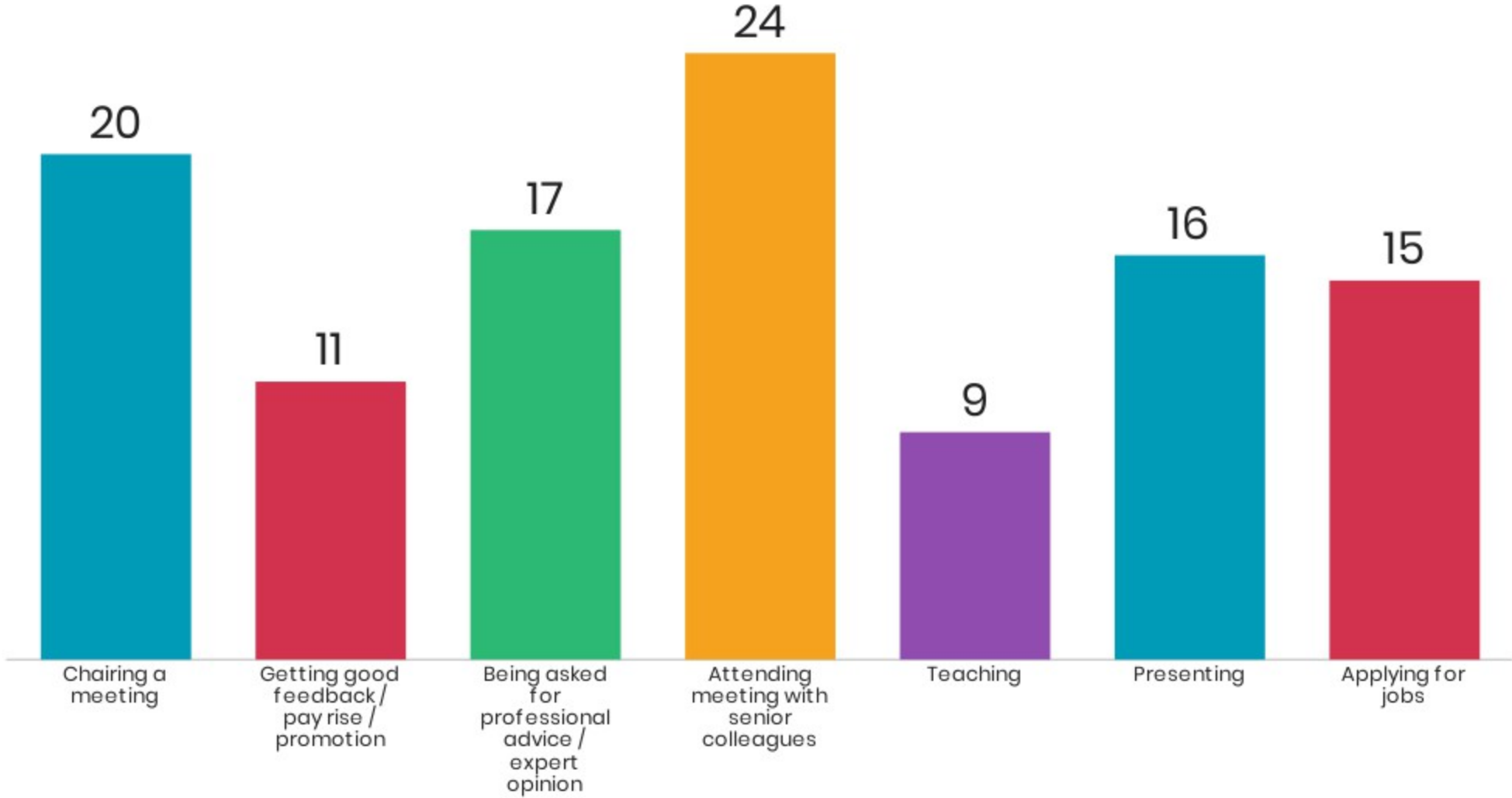
And I felt a bit better. **Because if Neil Armstrong felt like an imposter, maybe everyone did.** Maybe there weren't any grown-ups, only people who had worked hard and also got lucky and were slightly out of their depth, all of us doing the best job we could, which is all we can really hope for".

<http://neil-gaiman.tumblr.com/post/160603396711/hi-i-read-that-youve-dealt-with-with-impostor>

The TL;DR version
from
<https://xkcd.com/1954/>



Which of these make you feel like an imposter?



Time for some catharsis!

- What else makes you feel like an imposter?
- How does it affect you?
- What's the impact?
- How do you handle it?



Nicholas Poole @NickPoole1 · Jan 10



Replying to [@joeyanne](#) [@libswithlives](#)

Absolutely agree that there's huge value in identifying and dealing with self-limiting beliefs. My concern is where people see 'imposter syndrome' as a diagnosis and adopt it as an ongoing state of being or rationale. Definitely good to tackle the issue!



2



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4



Jo Walley @joeyanne · Jan 10



Yes, I can understand that perspective. I do think sometimes giving it a label means it has potential to be used as a modest, self-deprecating reason not to go outside of your comfort zone (which I definitely don't see as a good thing)



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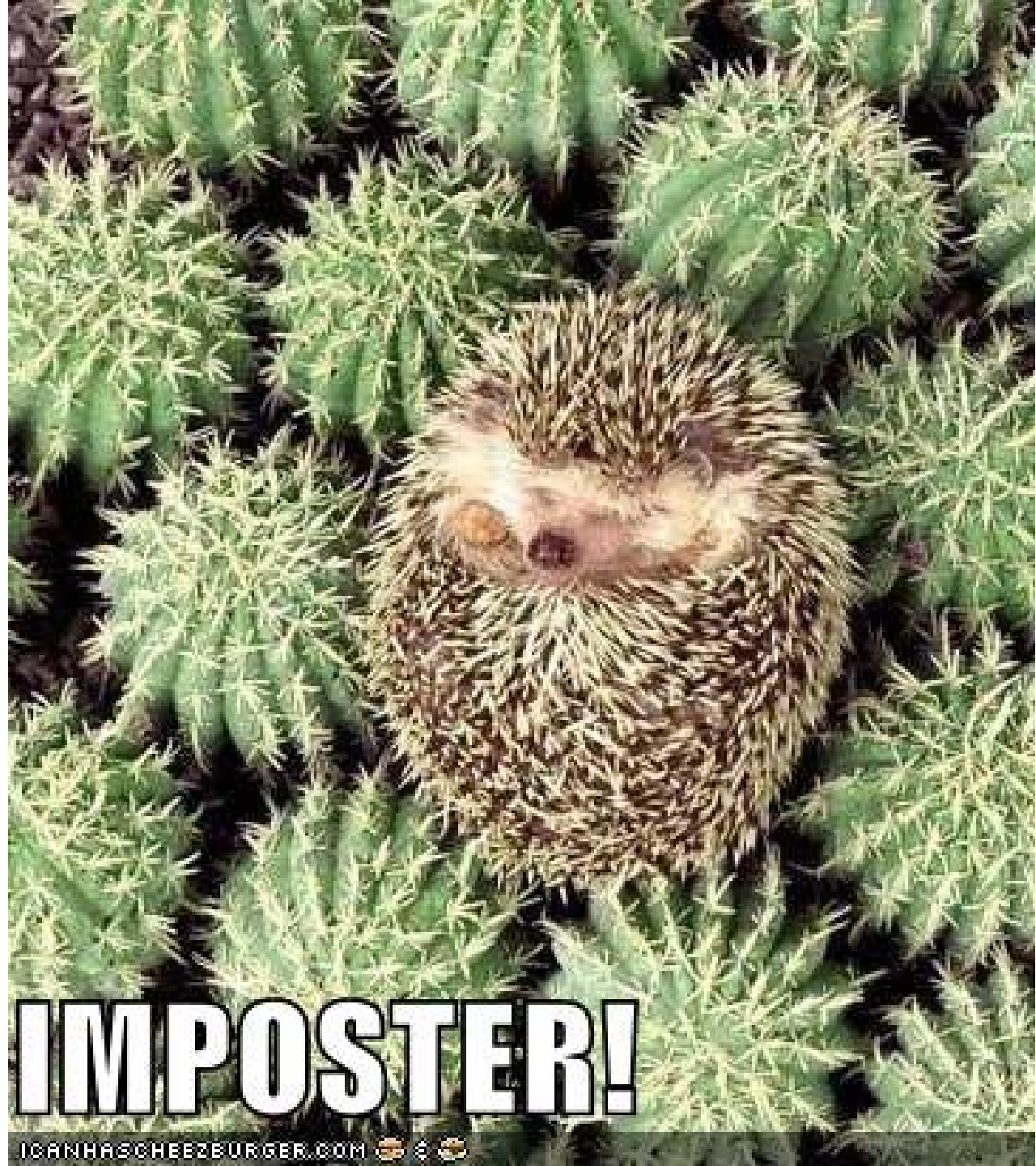


What can we do?

Personally, I:


- Try and keep perspective
- Do the things that scare me, *and*
- Fake it till I make it*

* yes, I know it's a massive cliché



One way to tackle it:

- Write down your 'imposter thoughts', e.g. there are others who know more than you about X
- Why do you think these things? Beliefs, thoughts, experiences that might be feeding these thoughts? Are there patterns or themes?
- Are they unreasonable or do any contain any grain of truth?
- What actions might you take?

The image features three Polaroid-style photographs arranged diagonally on a background of vertically-plank wood. The wood is painted in a gradient of colors: natural wood on the left, green in the middle, blue on the right, and purple on the far right. Each Polaroid has a white border and a black center containing white text.

**The
bigger
picture:**

**is tackling
imposter
syndrome**

**all down to
individuals
?**



Nicholas Poole @NickPoole1 · Jan 10

I also worry that it normalises the phenomenon. If there is a systemic issue in our sector to do with confidence, self-belief or not feeling empowered, then we need to look at that squarely & not suggest it is necessarily the fault of the individual



4



1



9



Gender?

Privilege?



**Thanks for
listening &
taking part!**

Interesting articles

- <https://savageminds.org/2015/09/07/embracing-impostor-syndrome/>
- <https://adainitiative.org/2013/08/28/is-impostor-syndrome-keeping-women-out-of-open-technology-and-culture/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/nov/09/impostor-syndrome-oliver-burkeman>
- <https://scatter.wordpress.com/2013/09/04/feeling-like-a-fraud-youre-not-alone/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cure-imposter-syndrome-admit-you-right-joe-kwon/?trackingId=c7HTVaGYtHJFPzrIM9EB6Q%3D%3D>

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