
[JSR] – Fighting confusion, overwhelm, fear and JavaScript fatigue

1 message

Zell Liew <zell@zellwk.com>

Mon, Mar 4, 2019 at 1:13 PM

To: Anibal <anibalsantosgo@gmail.com>

Hey Anibal,

You may feel afraid, confused or overwhelmed whenever you face JavaScript. They're normal reactions. Many people who are learning JavaScript feel the same as you do. I felt them too.

Take a deep breath. You're going to learn how to tackle the fear, confusion and overwhelm so they no longer hold you back from learning JavaScript.

It's natural to feel fear, confusion and overwhelm.

Humans resist change. It's our nature. We rather be couch potatoes than have error thrown in our faces by some damn programming language.

The fear, confusion and overwhelm you feel daily are part of this resistance. No matter how much you want to learn JavaScript, there's always going to be a little bastard that tries to thwart your plans from within.

It insults you by claiming you're stupid, and you'll never manage to learn JavaScript.

It confuses and overwhelms you by throwing all sorts of random information you don't need while you're trying your best to learn.

It shuts you down by telling you that you should chill and watch Game of Thrones this evening, not hammer away at your computer over a piece of junk.

Well, that's the enemy. Within. It's so good at concocting nonsense to make you stop learning, you'll be surprised by its creativity! Sometimes, you don't even know why, but you just don't feel like learning! It's incredible!

But **if you give in to the temptation**, the fear, the overwhelm, the confusion, or whatever it throws your way, **you're training yourself to give up**.

Eventually, you feel you're getting nowhere. You beat yourself up. And you'll give up.

It's okay if you've given up before

IT'S OKAY!

I've given up before too. Many times, in fact. So many that I've lost count.

But what's past is past. You can make a choice right now. **You can choose to start anew**. Things will be different this time.

You know the enemy, you know who to fight. (There's no avoiding fear, confusion and overwhelm).

You'll know how to fight them too.

Fighting fear, overwhelm and confusion

To stop fear, overwhelm and confusion from taking over you, you first need to know why they surface. You'd know roughly why if you've done your homework two days ago.

If not, here are common reasons why people feel afraid, overwhelmed or confused when learning JavaScript. You may have experienced some of these yourself:

- You're paralyzed. You don't know where is the best place to start and how the entire JavaScript ecosystem fits together.

- You want to find a good dev job, but the requirements are insane. There's no way you can learn them all to be a junior developer.
- You already learned the syntax, but you have no idea how to think through problems because nobody taught you how to.
You feel stupid and incapable because you cannot seem to remember anything you learn about JavaScript.
- You want to make sure you're learning the best practices so you get it right the first time. You don't want to waste time writing bad code.
- You don't want to waste time learning and relearning frameworks. You want to pick the best possible one and stick with it.
- You don't have enough time/energy to learn JavaScript after work, studies, family and other priorities. You feel completely drained.
- You struggle to understand JavaScript because you can't find good materials to help you understand WTF is actually going on.
- Supporting multiple browsers and environment scares you... there's so many factors to watch out for 🤪

Any of them sound familiar?

If you resonate with at least any scenario above, you fell into at least one of the three common traps to learning:

1. The victim trap
2. The learn fast trap
3. The paralysis trap

Let's go through each trap to understand what they are and how to break out of them.

The victim trap

You're in the victim trap if you feel that you're powerless about your circumstances. Something out there is preventing you from learning JavaScript.

You may resonate with these statements:

- You can't find any good materials
- You don't know where to start.
- You feel that its impossible to get hired because the requirements are insane.
- You can't build things because nobody taught you how to think through problems.
- You don't have the time/energy to learn after [insert work, family, hobbies].

You find yourself complaining and sulking a lot. You'll say things like:

It's their fault (whoever it may be) for making JavaScript so complicated. There are so many tools out there, so many practices to learn and so many browsers to support.

It's their fault for not writing good documentation, for not writing courses and tutorials in a way you understand, for not assuming you know things when you don't.

It's their fault for requesting insane JavaScript requirements in every dev you saw.

If you complain about not having enough time to learn JavaScript because [insert work, family, play, hobbies], maybe you want to consider your priorities again. Do you REALLY want to learn JavaScript? If it's not high on the priority list, then its best to stop kidding yourself and work on the things that matter instead.

Overcoming the victim mindset

The key to overcoming the victim mindset is to recognize **you control your life**. You trade priorities, you make decisions, you find a way to learn if you really want to.

Stop sitting back and blaming the world. Everything that's worth doing is going to be difficult. Easy things can be done by anyone. Hard things can only be done by people who put in the effort.

Are you going to be the sucker who complains he/she can't learn JavaScript forever? Or are you going to get to work?

If you're going to get to work, stop playing the role of a victim.

Carve out time for JavaScript. Stop making excuses for yourself, no matter how valid they are.

Don't worry about getting overwhelmed and confused. Expect it. You learn by getting confused since you're rewriting your brain. Let that sink in and continue working things out.

Don't worry about not getting a job. You won't get a job by learning bits and pieces of many languages. You'd have a much better chance if you learn something deeply, because you'd demonstrate expertise and perseverance, which is rare in the today's world.

Don't worry knowing where to start. I'll show you where to in the next email.

The learn fast trap

You're in the learn fast trap if you feel the urge to learn quickly. You may resonate with these statements:

- You need to learn JavaScript to find a job in 3 months
- You read through tutorials but you can't find answers to your questions.
- You can't understand any of the tutorials you've read. They're too hard or too advanced.
- You cannot seem to remember anything you learn about JavaScript.
- You compare yourself to other people (or to yourself). Then, feel proud or shitty about your speed.

The key here is to realize you may have (consciously or unconsciously) imposed an unreasonable deadline for yourself.

When you have an unreasonable deadline, you most likely hypothesize a solution/method with what you already know. Your search for the answer then becomes googling to confirm your bias instead of taking in information and letting your mind organize them (which is how humans learn).

You may also have skipped steps, which is why you can't understand the materials you've read, or can't remember what you've learned. This happens to many people who try to learn frameworks like React without having a solid understanding of how JavaScript works.

Overcoming the learn fast trap

The key to overcoming the learn fast trap is to **prepare yourself to learn well, not fast**.

Take it slow. **Pay attention** and try to formulate arguments from what you read. While you do so, drop any preconceived ideas you have about the subject. Best practices in one field may not be the same in another.

Dig into documentations, internalize fundamentals, figure out new best practices.

Experiment. Code. Fail with your experiments. Start another. Do do it over and over, tweaking till you succeed.

When you work hard this way, the knowledge and skills you gain stays with you forever. You'll never forget them, even if you put them down for a year. JavaScript, like riding a bicycle, can be a skill you keep for life.

Plus, the more you know, the faster you can understand new concepts. That's how our brains work. Give yourself the time to let the initial concepts sink in. They may confuse you now, but they won't confuse you for long.

The paralysis trap

You're in the paralysis trap if you feel you need to make the right decision before starting to learn. You may resonate with the following statements:

- There's too much information out there.
- You can't decide what frameworks to use.
- You don't dare to start learning because you don't know what's the best way to learn.
- You want to learn it the "right" way so you don't have to relearn it later.
- When you don't have enough information, you dig for more information. You feel you're missing the vital key before you can decide. Sometimes, you have too much information you don't know how to process them.

Overcoming the paralysis trap

The key to overcoming the paralysis trap is to understand that **you can never be 100% sure that your decision is right**. You need to learn to make decisions despite not having the guarantee.

Why?

You don't have all the time in the world to gather information. You can only work within your constraints to gather as much as you require.

Besides, you can never have complete information. Everyone has their opinions, so your information is skewed anyway.

But you still got to make that decision.

Don't worry if you're wrong. It makes a valuable lesson. You know what not to do from now on. Thomas Edison didn't fail to invent the lightbulb for 9,999 times. He found 9,999 ways that wouldn't work. That's why he made it the 10,000 time.

Better to move and get it wrong than to stay still. If you move, you learn. If you stay still, you're stuck for who knows how long.

Have you considered what costs you're incurring by staying still. These costs are collectively called the cost of inaction. It can cost you a ton.

So **take action**. Take the wrong action if that's the only thing you know now. You'll learn to course correct as you go. Once you get it right, you're set.

Wrapping up

In this lesson, you learned how to fight fear, confusion and overwhelm as they surface through your learning journey.

Take note of the learning traps – the victim trap, the learn fast trap and the paralysis trap. Don't fall into them. But if you do fall in, you have the tools to get out now.

With your new mindset in place, you're ready to hear the fastest way to become 👍 at JavaScript. That's what you'll learn next lesson.

Meanwhile, I encourage you to strengthen your awareness against the traps. You'll be in a better position if you don't fall into them as easily as you used to. (They'll come. And they'll hit you hard).

To do so, hit reply and answer the following questions:

1. What traps did you fall into?
2. What made you fall into these traps?
3. What are possible action steps you could use to get yourself out of the trap(s)?

That's it for today's lesson. If you have any questions about mindset or how you should position yourself best to learn JavaScript, don't hesitate to send your questions over. I'm here to help.

Stay awesome,
Zell

-
- Need 1-1 help? [Let me know](#)
 - If you no longer wish to receive emails from me, you can [unsubscribe](#) anytime.
 - If you want to change your name or email address, you can use [this link](#).
 - Here's my address if you want to send something over: [Blk 427 Serangoon Central #05-310](#), Singapore, Singapore 550427