

A man in a light-colored shirt is drinking water from a canteen. He is looking up with his mouth open, and water is being poured into his mouth. The background is a blurred green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Self-guided learning

A (pocket-sized) survival guide

Where Do I Start?

- Discover your identity
- Find and work with people more talented than yourself
- Work on a real project
- Get paid

A black and white cat is sitting on a chair with a patterned seat. The cat is wearing a black Batman mask with yellow eyes. The cat's paws are white. The background is a light blue wall.

Step 1

Discover your identity

Strengths are easy to find

Examples:

- Animating pixels
- Graphic design/art direction
- Making websites responsive
- Making small apps that solve real problems

Strengths are easy to find

- **Your greatest strength is your home**—a place to return to when you're feeling frustrated or drained
- Safety is fine, but if you stay home too often, you won't meet anyone and your skills will atrophy

Weaknesses are painful but essential



- We are conditioned to avoid pain
- Failure feels like a waste of time, but is it?
- Leaving your comfort zone provides instant perspective

Weaknesses are painful but essential

- Developing a weakness into even a small strength builds confidence and enriches your career
- Sometimes, improving a weakness bears no fruit. Stop working on it and leave it behind
- Find your breaking point

Evolve

Public Speaking

QA Tester

Optimization

CSS

React

Animation

Technical Writer

JavaScript

Vue

Desktop Apps

Database

Python

Angular

MongoDB

C++

Node

Go

Graphic Design

Java

Clojure

Refine

“I am a JavaScript
Engineer with a focus in
developing mobile
applications.”

Step 2

Find and work with people
more talented than yourself

Who *are* these people?



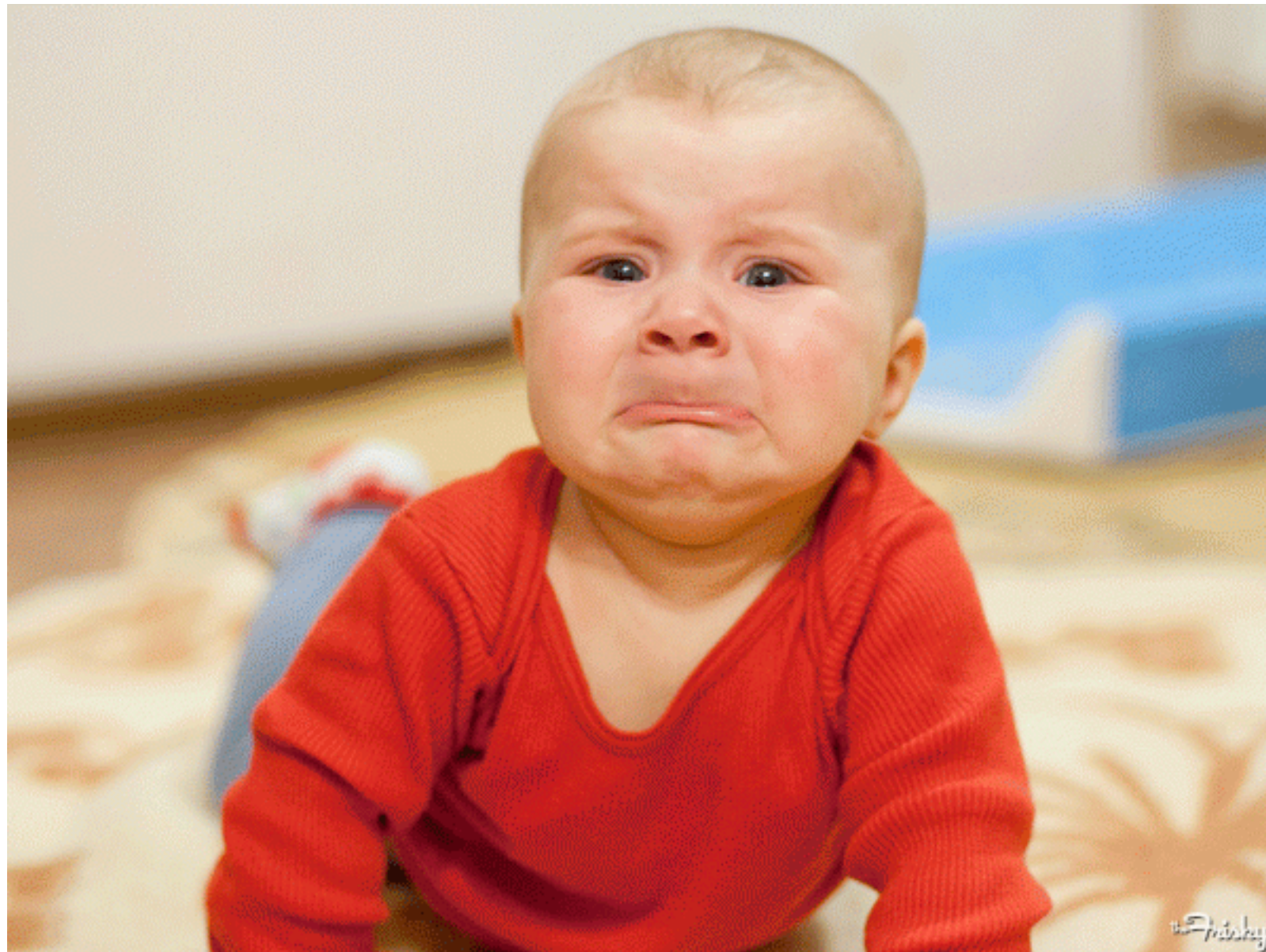
Finding People Who Can Help

- Attend *good* meet-ups
- Join Stack Overflow (read the guidelines first before asking a question)
- Join GitHub and contribute to open source
- Sign up to several newsletters in the area of your strength

Step 3

Work on a real project

I can't find a project



Projects are all around us

- Build a small website for a friend, from scratch
- Watch project-driven, online-learning courses (Udemy, Treehouse, etc.)
- Try to duplicate the user interface of a site you often visit
- Push your work to GitHub or Bitbucket

Step 4

Get paid

Finding a job

Do this

- Apply for something you really want
- Charge only what you are worth
- Do at least as well as you have to

Don't do this

- Never wing it
- Be careful working for a friend
- If things are truly a disaster, cut your losses and walk away

Bonus tips

- You are only as good as your last commit
- If you cannot work with others, you are hurting your career
- Money should not be a primary motivator
- Learn the language—not just the framework
- Help others whenever you can
- Donate a few dollars to support open source software
- Date stability; marry change
- Move around more

Thanks!



twitter: @antibland