

BEYOND YOUR STUDIES!

Things I wish I understood
when I was a student

Ange Albertini

14TH DECEMBER 2021

YOUTH.PY

```
while (studies):  
    grade = test(lesson, exercice)  
    if grade < threshold:  
        break
```

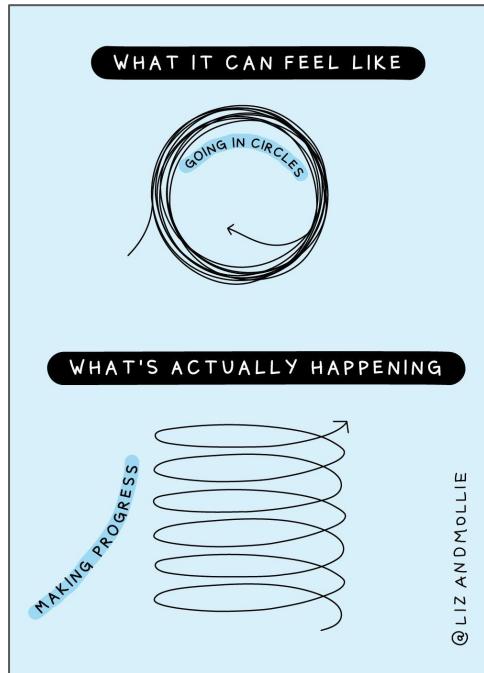
Your life so far...

...a long succession
of tests & grades...



...one tunnel
after the other...

FEELING STUCK IN A LOOP?

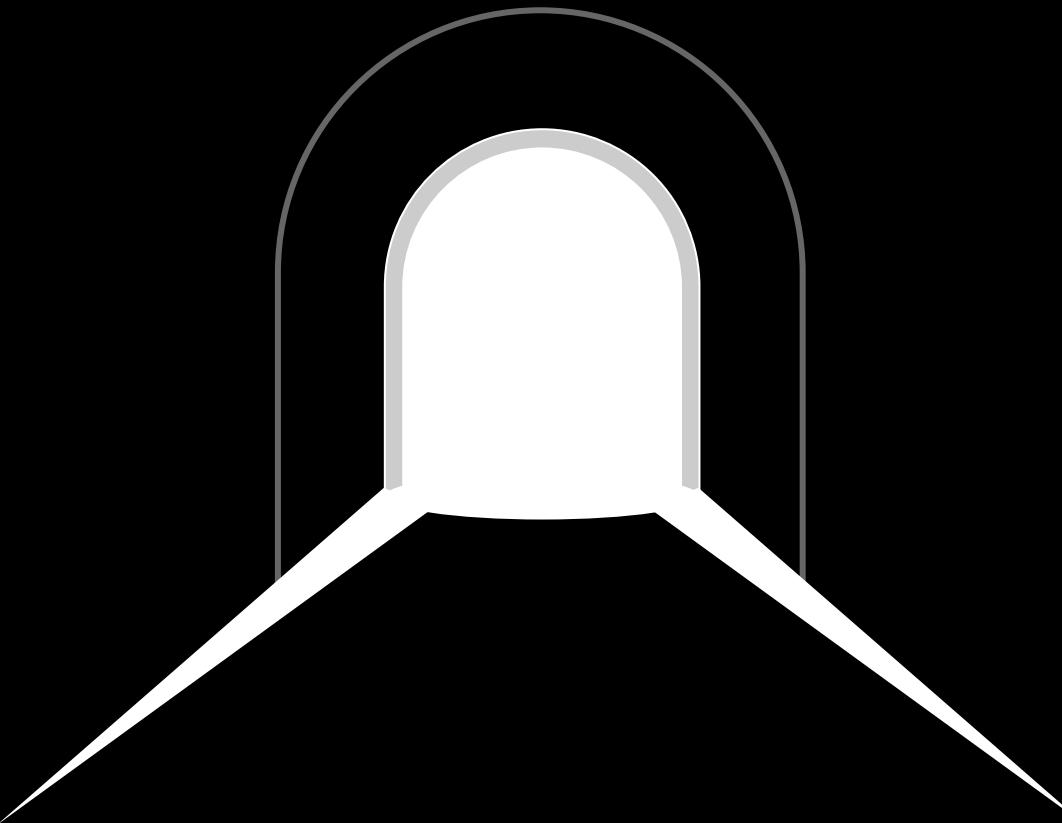


AND YET...
YOU'VE BEEN GUIDED
SINCE THE BEGINNING.

From one step to the next...
your life has been guided by external actors...

THEN IT'S THE LAST TUNNEL...

After years of effort, the end is near!



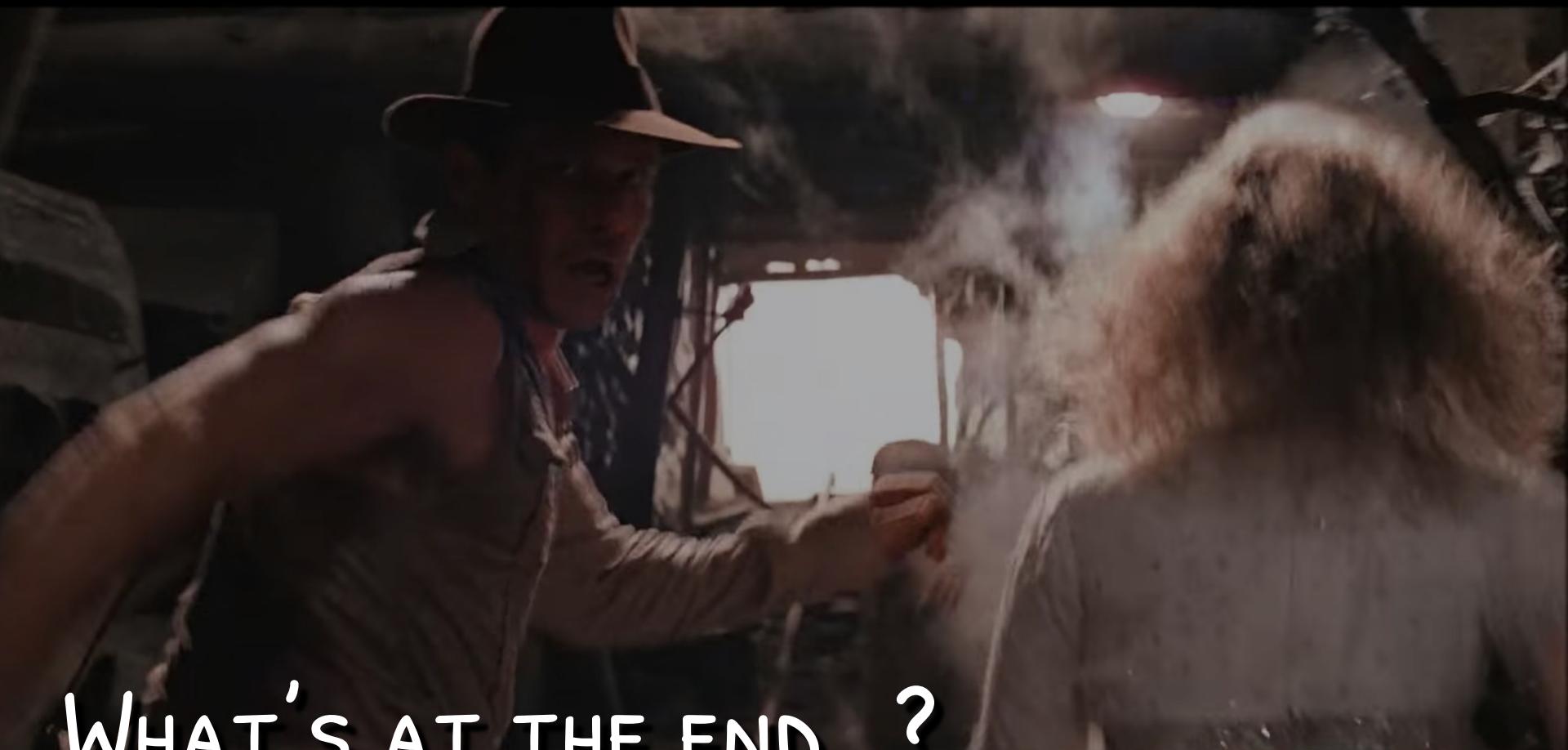
GOALS

1- Get a diploma

2- ...?



Now WHAT?



WHAT'S AT THE END...?



'...YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!

PLAN

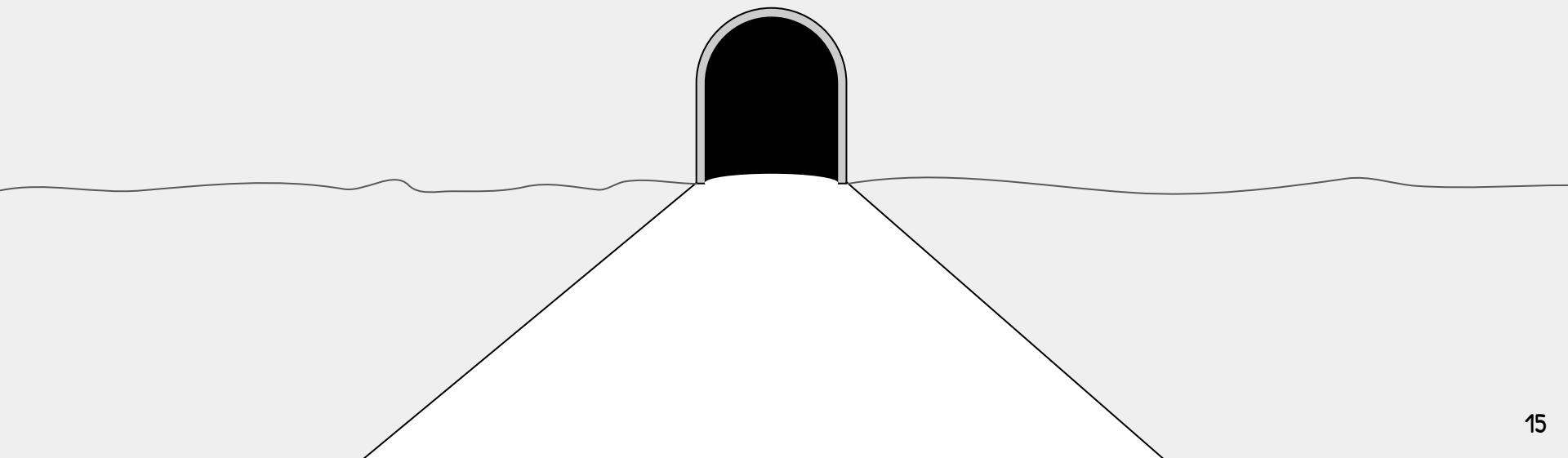
1. Find a (perfect) job
2. Work (follow your dear leader)
3. Retire (rich, famous and happy)

(Do you believe in Santa too?)

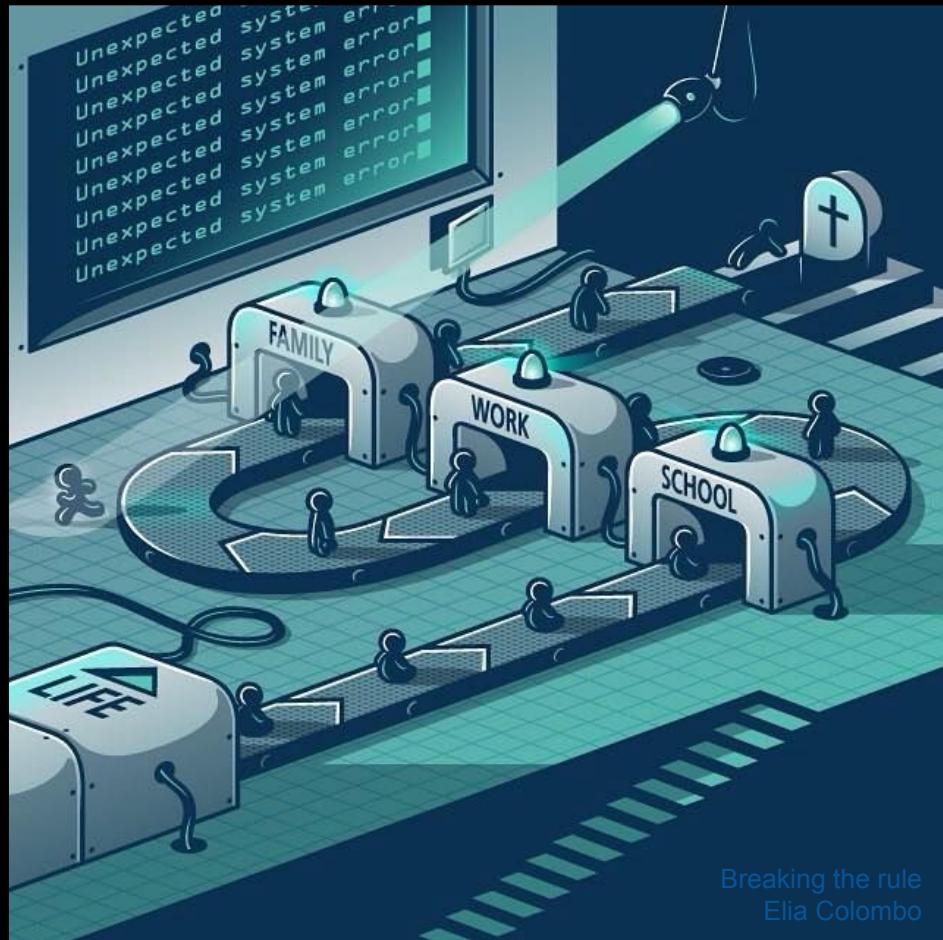


WAIT! ISN'T THAT....

...JUST A DIFFERENT KIND OF TUNNELS?



You might want
to understand
and take
(more)control!



PLAN

1. Survive (find a job?)
2. ...be happy? (hopefully)

DISCLAIMER:
THESE ARE MY OWN VIEWS.
NOT FROM ANY OF MY EMPLOYERS.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER (1/3)

InfoSec engineer at **Google**

Dream job?

Pwnie Award 2017 of Crypto

Dream award?



Pwnie for Best Cryptographic Attack

Awarded to the researchers who discovered the most impactful cryptographic attack against real-world systems, protocols, or algorithms. This isn't some academic conference where we care about theoretical minutiae in obscure algorithms, this category requires actual pwnage.

[The first collision for full SHA-1](#)

Credit: Marc Stevens, Elie Bursztein, Pierre Karpman, Ange Albertini, Yarik Markov
The SHAttered attack team generated the first known collision for full SHA-1. The team produced two PDF documents that were different that produced the same SHA-1 hash. The techniques used to do this led to an a 100k speed increase over the brute force attack that relies on the birthday paradox, making this attack practical by a reasonably (Valasek-rich?) well funded adversary. A practical collision like this, moves folks still relying on a deprecated protocol to action.

<https://pwnies.com/winners/>

ABOUT THE SPEAKER (2/3)

Studied at University. Made many mistakes.

Hopefully it's helpful to share them.

Now at mid-career, In my 40s (twice older than a student)

A multicultural career and family. (to give you different perspectives)

3 kids (2 teens) at home.

I'll base this talk on my own experience: I'm biased - deal with it.

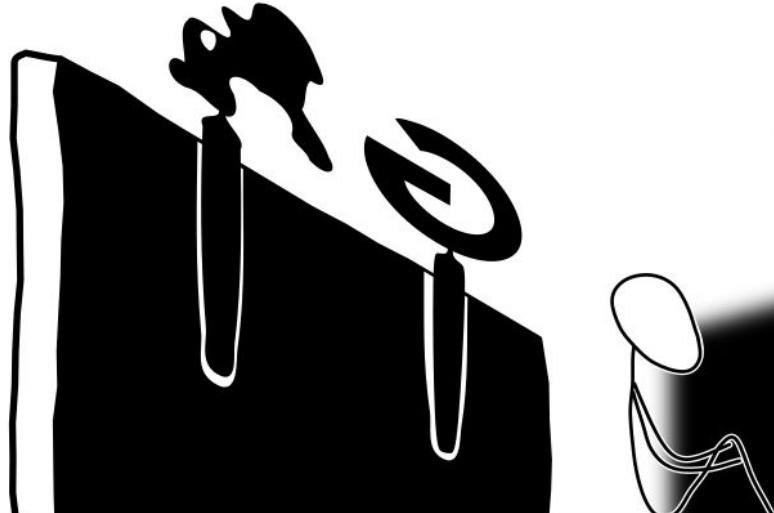
THESE SLIDES ARE NEUTRAL,
BUT THE TALK WILL MENTION
MANY EXTRA PERSONAL EXAMPLES
-> "Story time"

ABOUT THE SPEAKER (3/3)

Some facts
(of arguable value)

My little flame

Story time



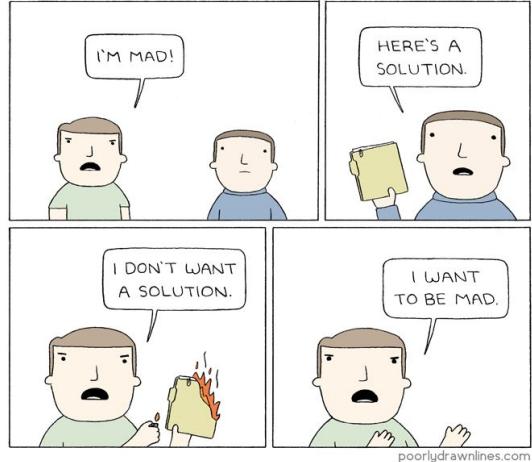
What you see of me



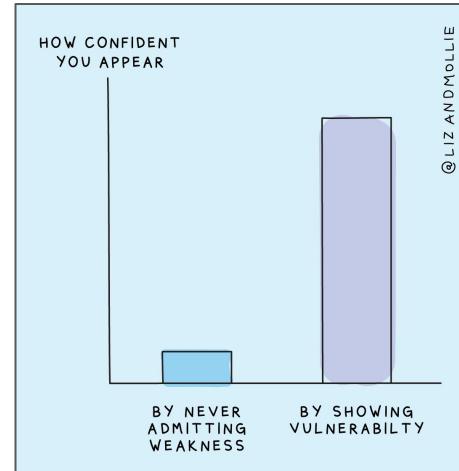
Don't get it wrong,

THIS TALK IS NOT ABOUT
HATING OR REJECTING.

It's about understanding
and assuming
(you don't have to do that publicly)
to make your life better.

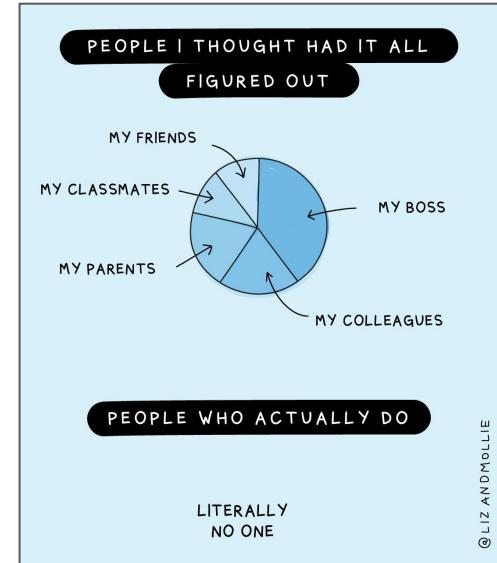


poorlydrawnlines.com



YOU ARE NOT AN IDIOT

Actually, most of us are idiots.
But that's OK.



ACRONYMS USED LATER:

You are not an idiot if... = yanaii

It is normal and ok to... = iinaot

Forgive

You'll spare some energy for yourself.

Try walking in *their* shoes before blaming.

Do not forget

That's nitro for your willpower.

WE ALL HAVE BLINDERS

Experience -> Perspective -> ~~whole picture~~

All pieces of advice are biased.
Don't blame others for not sharing your perspective.

Listen, be inspired, but don't follow or worship.
(because their perspectives might not be a good fit for you)



Different
perspectives

Blinders ->



How OLD ARE YOU?

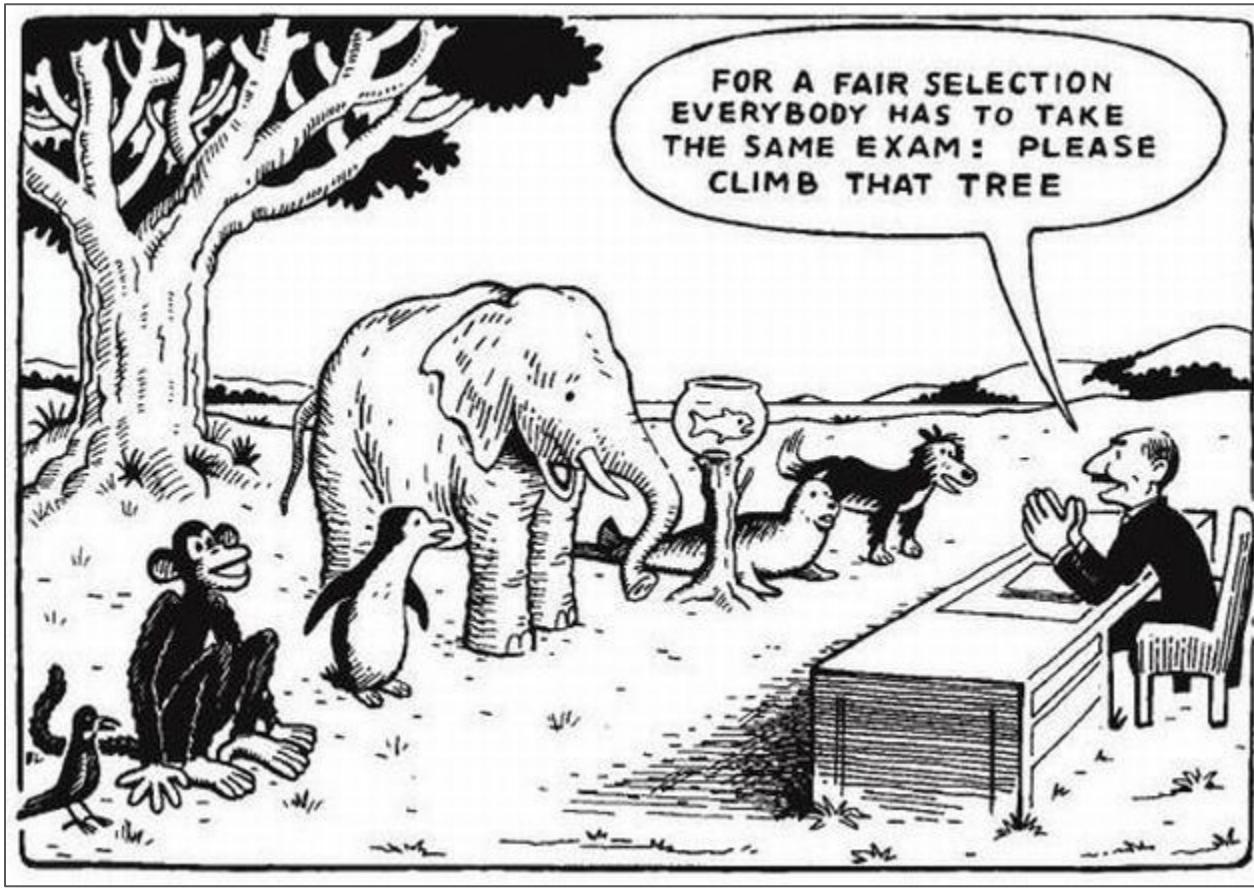
It's hard to share perspective when so many important things are recent.

The foundations of your values might be obsolete soon !

| | Firm | Language |
|------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1991 | | Python |
| 1994 | Amazon | |
| 1995 | | Java[Script] Ruby PHP |
| 1997 | Netflix | |
| 1998 | Google | C++98 |
| 1999 | Salesforce | |
| 2000 | | C# |
| 2003 | Tesla | Scala |
| 2004 | Facebook | C++03 |
| 2006 | Twitter | |
| 2008 | Airbnb | |
| 2009 | Uber | Go |
| 2010 | | Rust |
| 2011 | | Kotlin |
| 2012 | Oculus | Julia |
| 2013 | Docker | |
| 2014 | | Swift |

...C++17... C++20

ON EDUCATION



Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

- *not* Albert Einstein

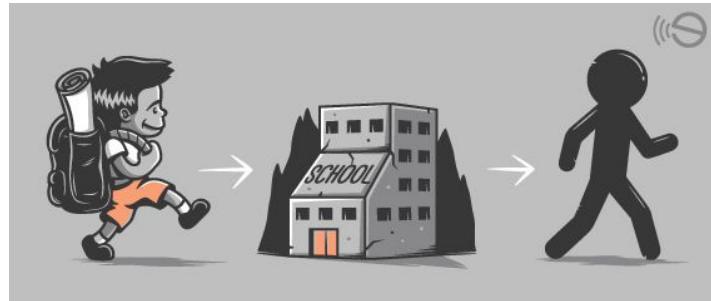
WE ARE ALL FORMED BY MOLDS

Environment, family, school.
You had to follow rules and guidelines.

And now, you're "free"
(but you didn't feel in jail - you were just guided)
but it can be hard to notice it.



Not so many possibilities!



FAILURE WAS NOT AN OPTION

Toddlers learn by trying and failing.

Everybody is born "hackers".

School has no time for that.

You must get it right **before** the next test.

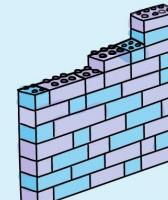
-> Many adults are uncomfortable with experimenting.

FIRST
ATTEMPT
IN
LEARNING

WE THINK OF FAILURE AND
SUCCESS AS OPPOSITES



WHEN IN REALITY FAILURE
IS PART OF SUCCESS



TRENDS & MYTHS

- Worship the top
- Praise the upper middle
- Shame the bottom
- Easy success, single-handed victories, instant wins
- Doing well -> fame -> money == appearance

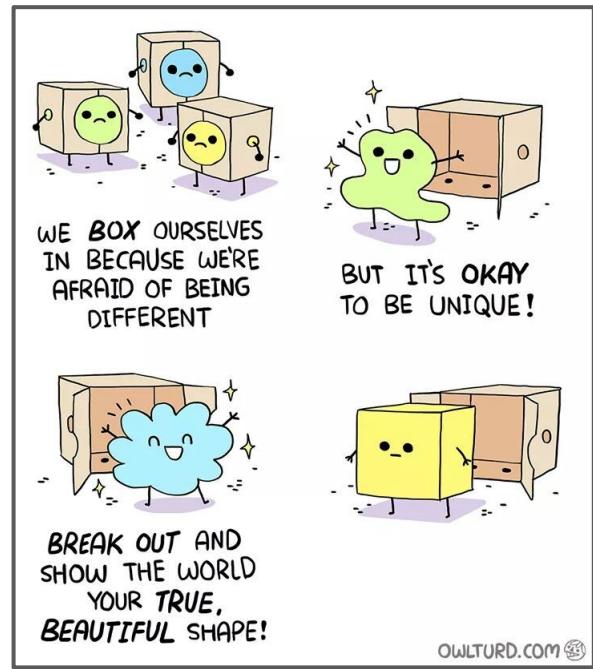


No GATEKEEPING 1/2

It's **OK** to:

- just work 9-5.
- have standard hobbies.
- **not** be passionate about your work.
- **not** be challenge-driven.

Whatever floats your boats.



No GATEKEEPING 2/2

It's also OK to:

- work at nights, pants optional.
- have "weird" hobbies.
- be **passionate** about your work.
- be **only** challenge-driven.



Be honest with your values.

FORGET THESE CLICHÉS

Being a pro doesn't always make you better.

Some hobbyists are just unbelievable - less pressure helps.

Having the right diplom doesn't make you better.

A diplom isn't enough.

In X years, your diplom will be useless.

Your experience will be more important.

What you studied will be obsolete.

DO YOU LOOK UP AT THE STARS?

Stars waste a lot of energy to create hot air around them,
keep growing and eventually explode. Avoid them.

The most impressive persons I worked with:

- humble, honest, patient (with everyone).
- No waste of time trying to impress or diminish others.
- attractive by nature, not by trying to be someone else.

They're blackholes. They naturally attract things around them by their nature.

Like young kids showing you what they built: "I did X" (and I had a lot of fun)

Remember when you were a kid, before all these molds came in your life.

It's not about acting or forcing yourself. It's about finding your playground.

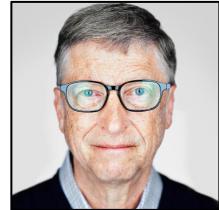
IF A BILLIONAIRE WALKS IN A ROOM...

...then on average, everyone is a millionaire.

Yet nothing in your life will change.

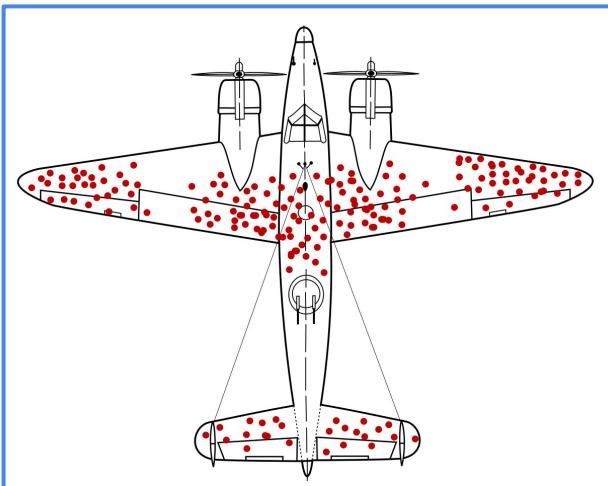
And there's no guarantee that whatever they say/do will change your life even the slightest bit.

"Follow your dreams" can be a very bad advice.



BEWARE OF SUCCESS SPEECH...

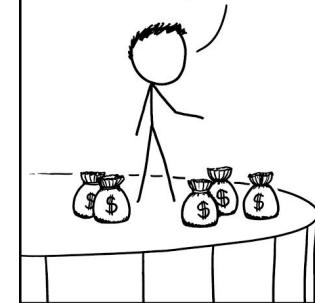
Like this one ?



NEVER STOP BUYING LOTTERY TICKETS,
NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE TELLS YOU.

I FAILED AGAIN AND AGAIN, BUT I NEVER
GAVE UP. I TOOK EXTRA JOBS AND
POURED THE MONEY INTO TICKETS.

AND HERE I AM, PROOF THAT IF YOU
PUT IN THE TIME, IT PAYS OFF!



EVERY INSPIRATIONAL SPEECH BY SOMEONE
SUCCESSFUL SHOULD HAVE TO START WITH
A DISCLAIMER ABOUT SURVIVORSHIP BIAS.



Chris Rohlf
@chrisrohlf

Too bad theres no 'This tweet is a made up story designed for excessive adulation from peers because of the authors dependence on social media induced dopamine hits to cure a crippling self confidence problem' option when reporting a tweet.

2:06 PM · Apr 20, 2018

IT IS NORMAL AND OK TO BE DIFFERENT!

You can adapt your behavior, but
don't try to be someone else.

You do have skills.

Maybe they're not clear enough yet.



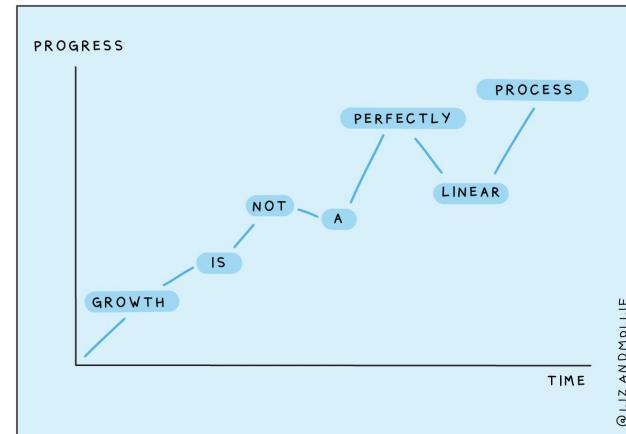
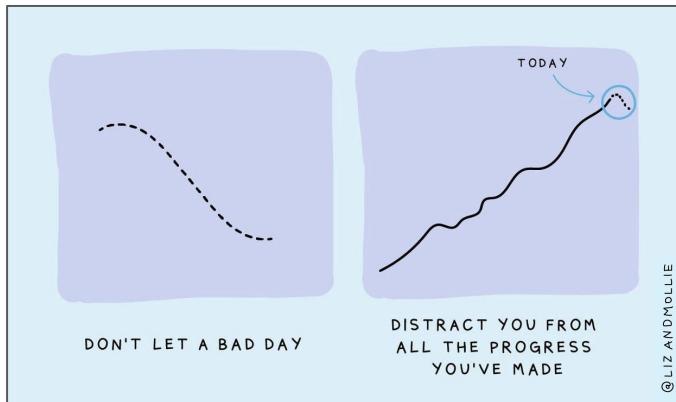
MISGUIDED THOUGHTS

- I'm an imposter.
- I have no skill.
- I have no idea of what I'm doing.
- What's the point in studying X ?



You are not an idiot for having them.

FEELING BAD SOMETIMES?



Forgive yourself too!

Everybody does mistake.

If you blame someone/yourself too much,
ask around.

Sharing experience recalibrates
your expectations.

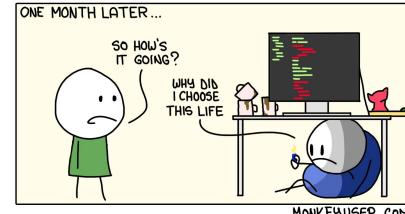
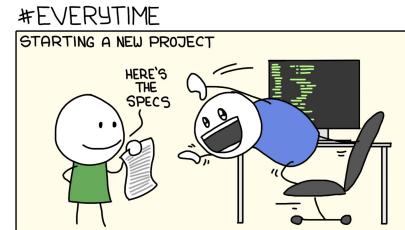
But at the same time...

MOTIVATION IS VITAL

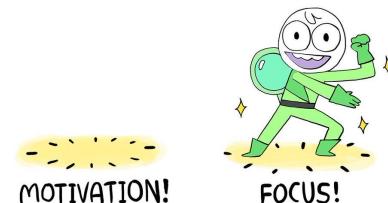
There are things we love. There are things we hate.
Invest time in the ones you really like.

Sounds obvious? Well....

what about the little things that you liked,
before university started taking most of your time ?

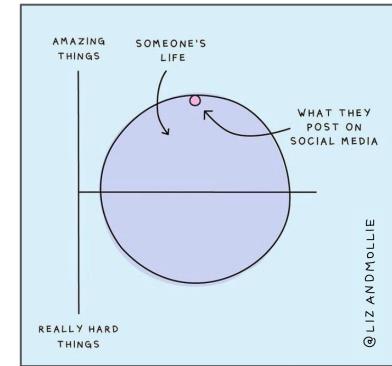


GO! TEAM PRODUCTIVE DAY!

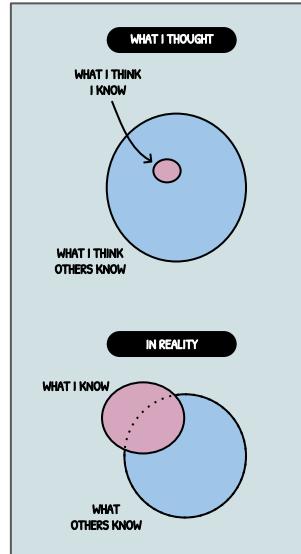


STOP COMPARING YOURSELF

Your skills and experience are just different.
Spend time finding/acknowledging yours.

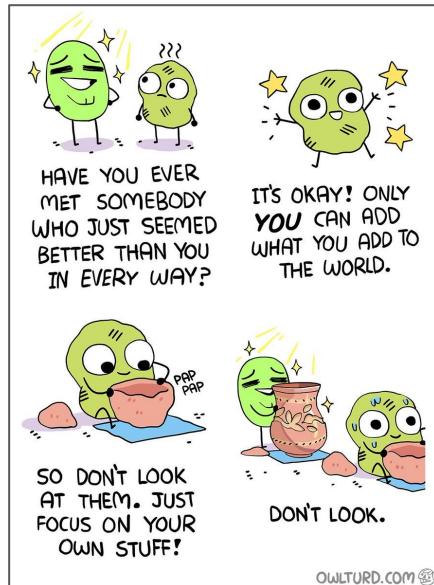


@LIZANDMOLIE



NOBODY IS GREAT BY ACCIDENT

Ask them for how long they tried,
and what's their background.



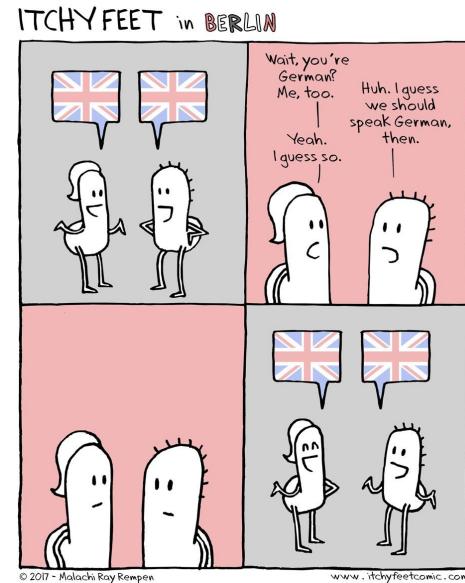
A FEW NON-OBJVIOUS THINGS
TO PAY ATTENTION TO...

FIRSTLY,
MOST IMPORTANTEST...

A CORRECT LEVEL OF ENGLISH!

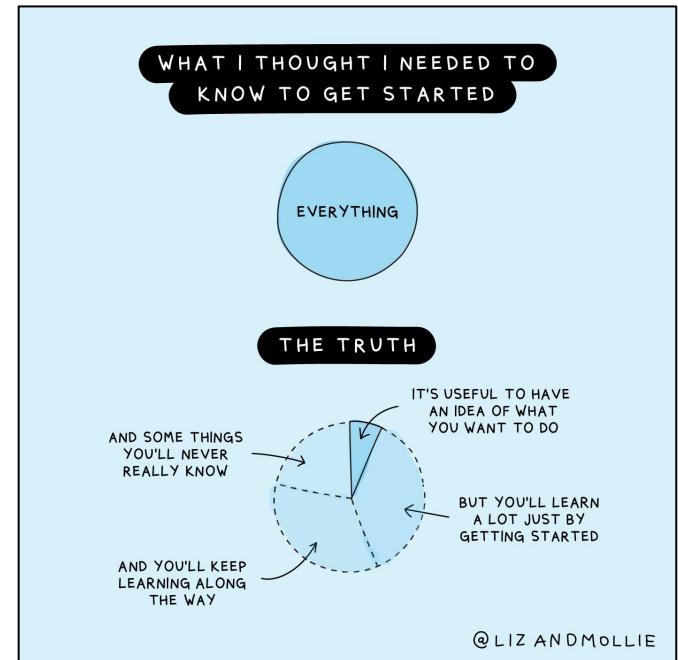
Being **comfortable** in an international english conversation really helps.
It's sad to see experienced people being stuck by this.

It's not about losing your roots,
speaking international english will not make you a royalist ;)



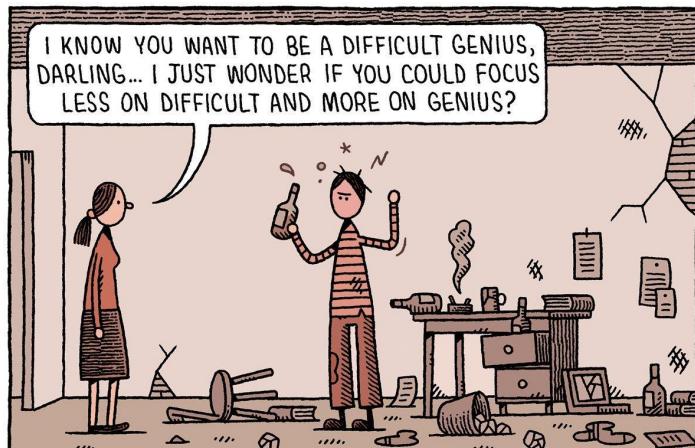
"LEARN ENGLISH", SERIOUSLY?

With a diplom, that's all you need for now.
You'll learn the rest along the way.

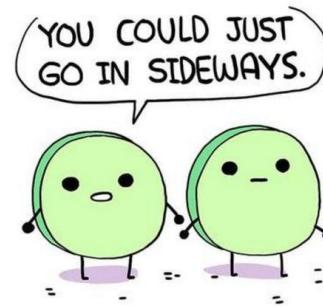
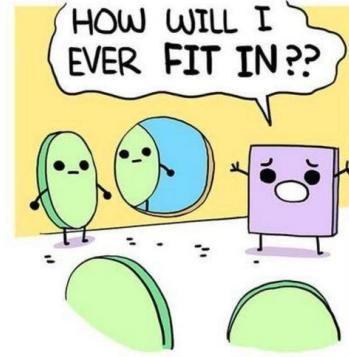
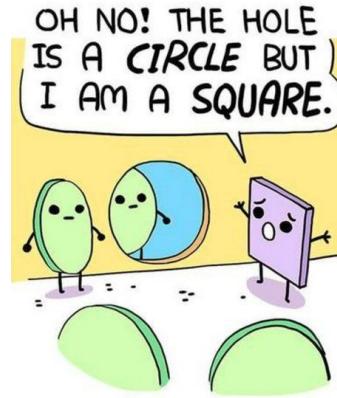


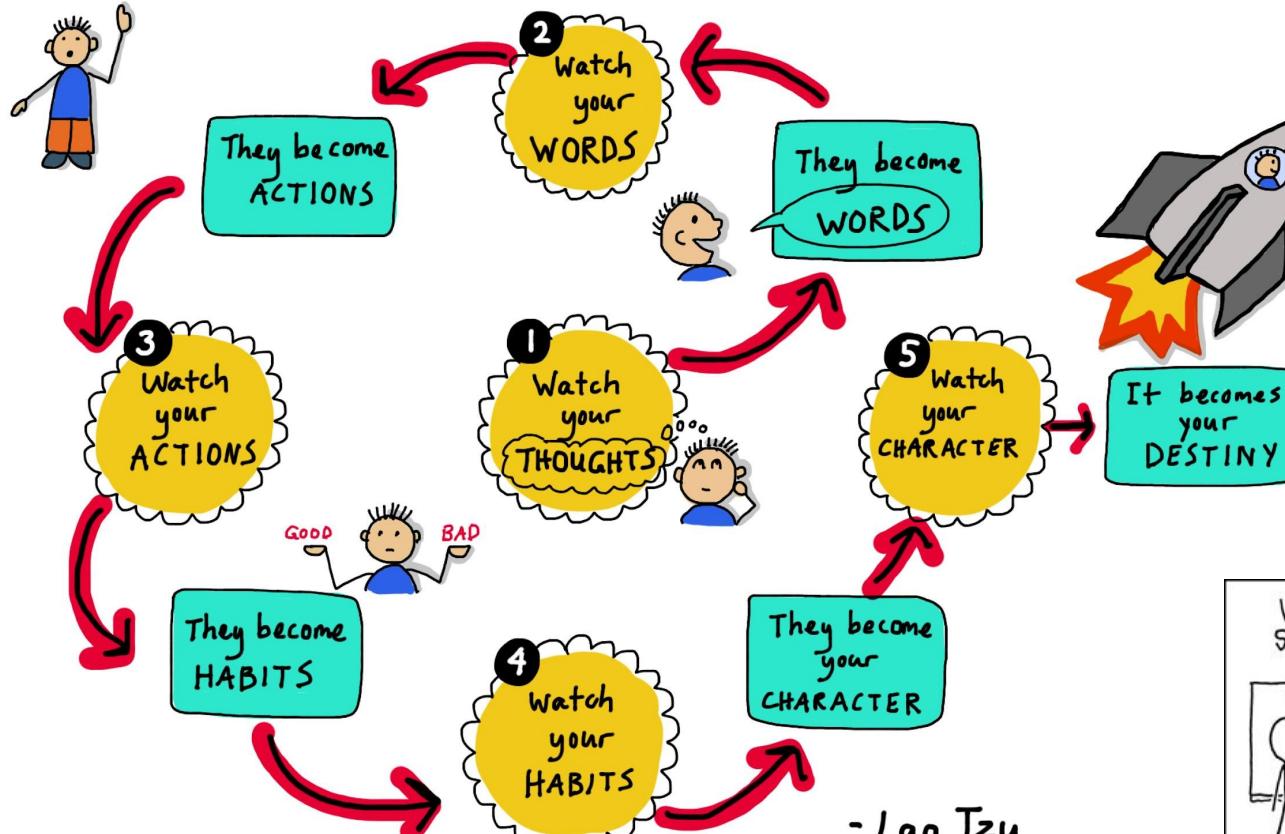
ATTITUDE

If you play with fire, you get burned.
It's OK to be different,
but everyone has their limit.
(and then bullies will pay back).



TOM GAULD

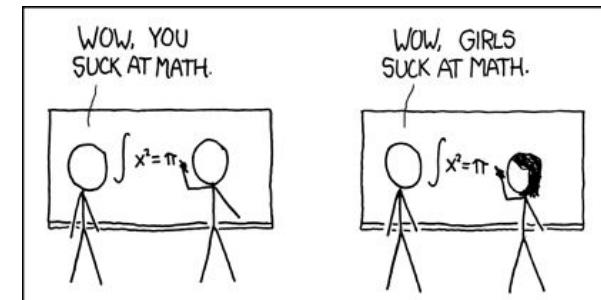




- Lao Tzu

@sylviaduckworth

"Respect" is not "authority".
Try swapping roles!



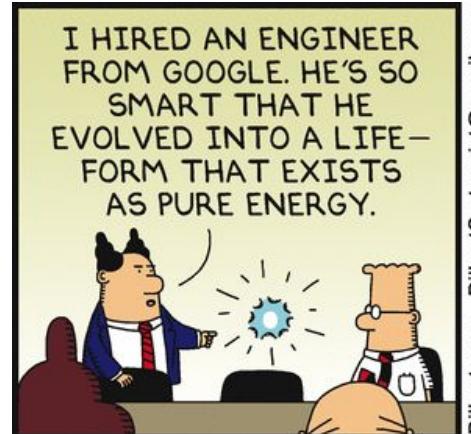
YOUR THOUGHTS AND WORDS HAVE MORE IMPACT THAN YOU THINK.

YOUR DIPLOMA/EXPERIENCE IS NO EXCUSE!

Arrogance only shows how narrow-minded you are.

Being insecure is human. Being a jerk is not OK.

It's pretty sad to see employees behave like they were the founders TBH.



x3b
@q3k

Follow

Go to Google, they said. Just for the CV entry, they said. It'll open doors, they said.

"Has potential, however we've had very bad luck w/ ex GOOG types over the years"

1:30 AM - 20 Mar 2018

"BE YOURSELF"

It's not about "rejecting".
It's about being honest with yourself:
If you hate X, then admit that
you shouldn't do it **too long**.

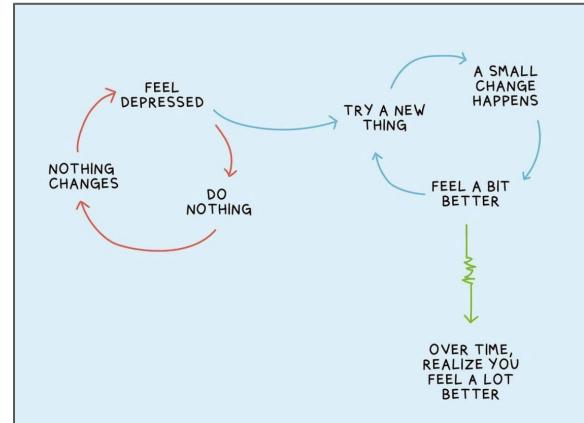
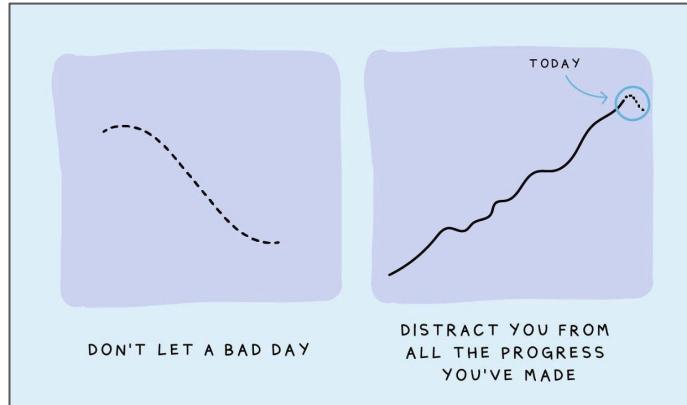
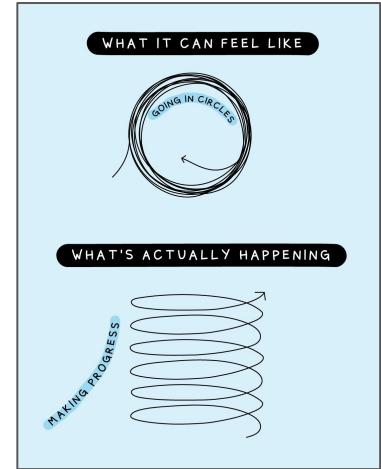
But you can't hate everything,
otherwise you're just a useless hater ;)



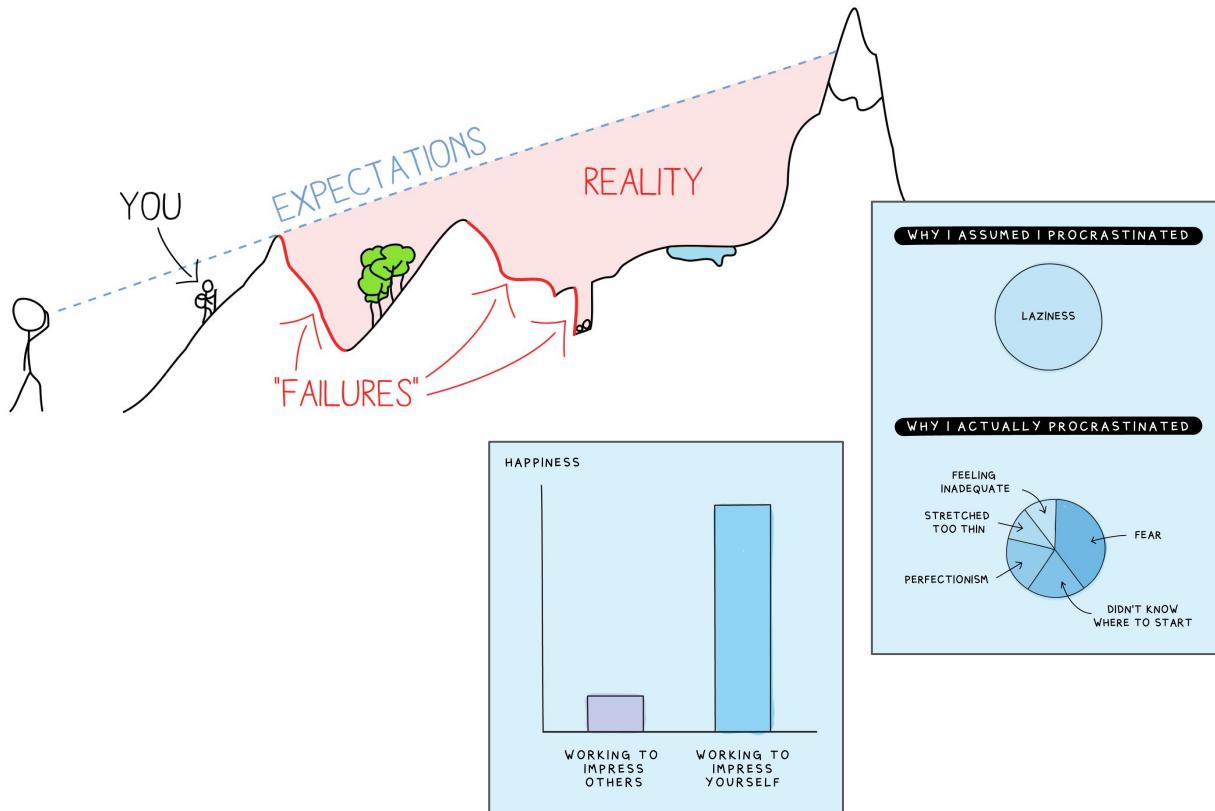
LACK OF PROGRESS IS RELATIVE

Bypass trick:

Start/end your day by spending time just for you.



DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF



HEALTH

You're not 'smart' if you're healthy.

You're just lucky enough.

There's no health credit.

Take care of yourself!

Buy that better pillow, brighter lamp,
get rid of these uncomfortable shoes !



Add to Basket

(if it's for your health)

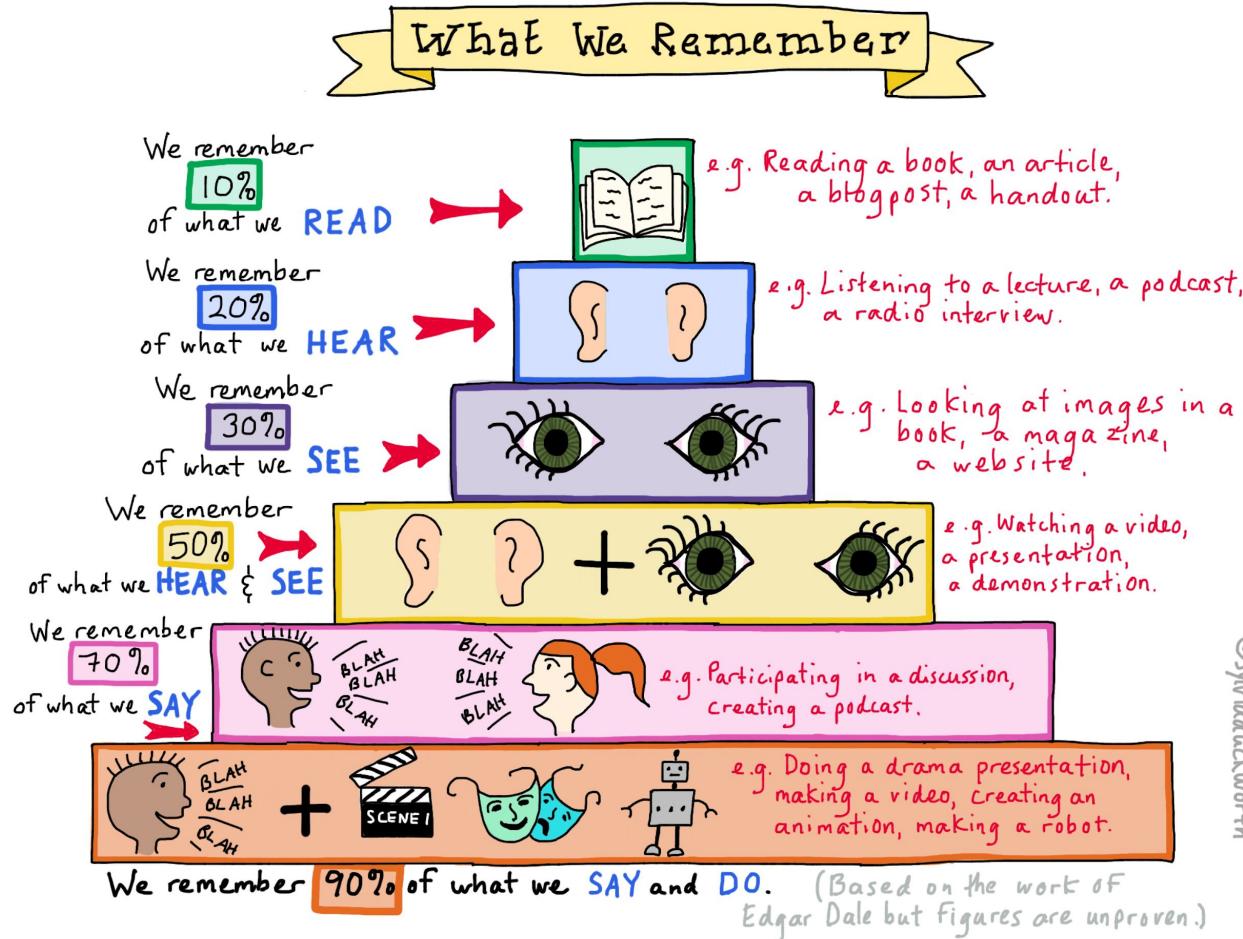
Story time



Now let's see...

WHAT DID YOU STUDY FOR?

SCHOOL USUALLY PROVIDES A UNIQUE FORM OF LEARNING. FIND YOUR OWN!



DIPLOMA

(basically job #0)

A privilege
An illusion
An international standard
Meaningless school & grades ?
Private social network

SCHOOL AND JOB MARKET DIFFERS VASTLY.

School only covers a subset of skills.
You have more useful skills than what was acknowledged at school.
(even if it's not taught at school [yet]).

Schools provide credentials
that are acknowledged by institutions.

You DON'T NEED MORE SKILLS. You ALREADY HAVE MANY SKILLS.

You need to understand your skills,
their strengths and weaknesses.

You may lack experience for now, but that's another problem.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE THE BEST. YOU JUST NEED SOME SKILLS.

Is your local bakery the best in the world ?

Classes make it easy to rank people, and **always** emphasize on the best.

You just need to be "better" than the others available.

And you're not "too late" on the market. You won't be the best anyway.

(Unless you create something new)

MAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR SKILLS.

Try and list what you like(d) that...

...isn't taught in school.

...was taught in a different way.

...you had no time to try.

EVERYONE HAS SUPERPOWERS

- what you're (very) comfortable with.
(maybe even without noticing)
- uncommon in your "group".
(professional, social, racial, religious...)



Examples: Patient? Flexible? Open-minded? Different? Java/PHP 😊

They're *superpowers* because they can't be obtained naturally.
Whether they're useful is a different problem...



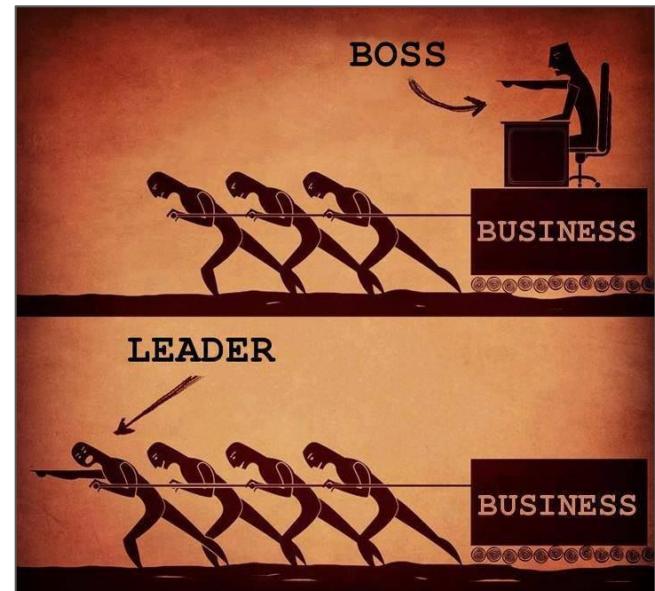
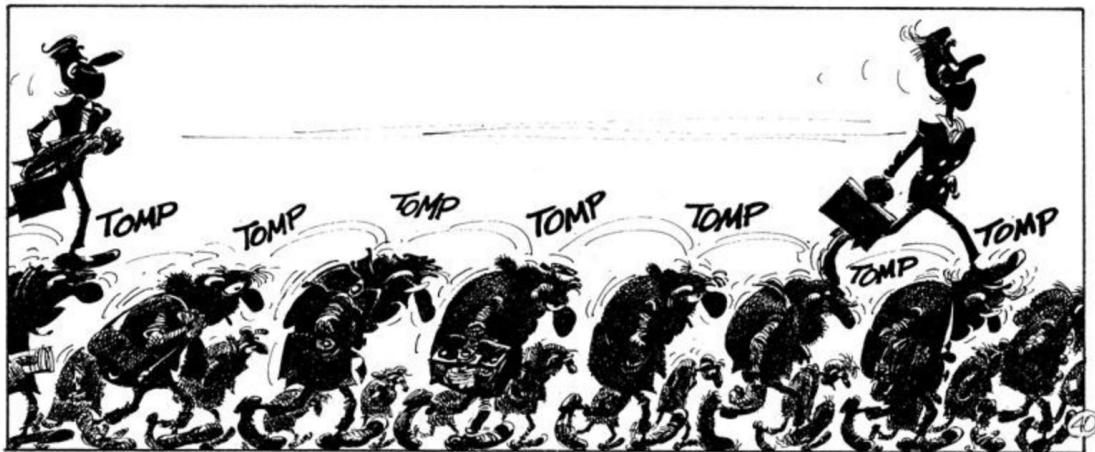
owlculturD.COM

CHECKLIST

- A proper level of english
- A good attitude - be honest with yourself, try to swap roles.
- Understand your skills, likes and dislikes.
- Spending a little time making your life more comfortable.

That's all you need. You have enough. You can learn more on the job.

Now, LET'S FIND A JOB!



INDEPENDENT

Very intense. Very risky.
Requires dedication!

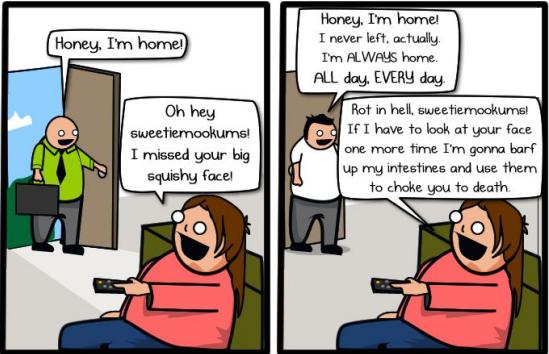
Loss of regimen



Story time

Stress on relationships

Before working at home After working at home



Distractions



Degradation of social skills

One month in

Six months in

One year in

Lack of employee banter



START-UP

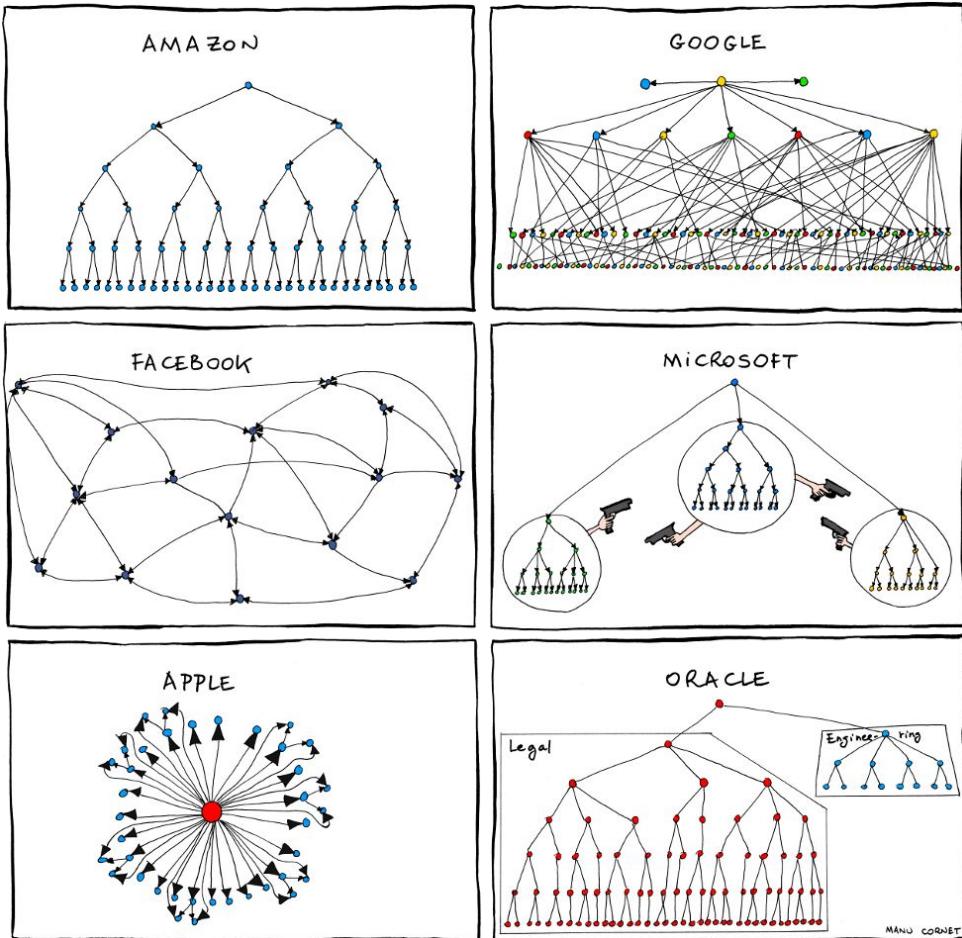
Be ready to do **everything!**

A single **day** can drastically change a lot of things!

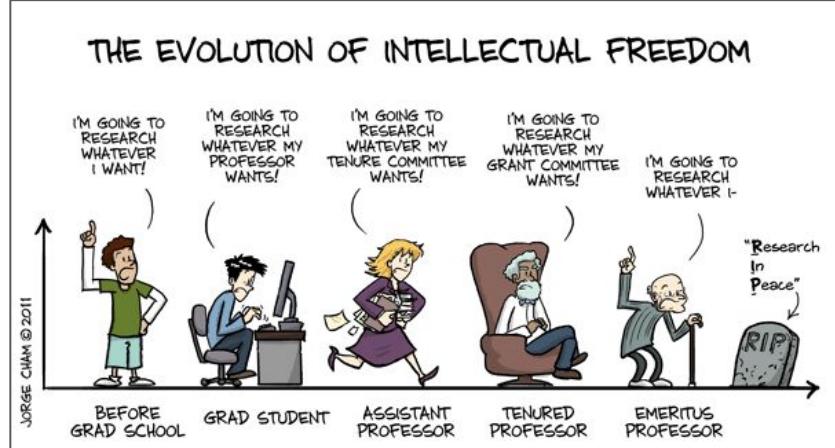
The ship might sink at any moment.

BIGCORP

OpenSpace, meetings, **culture**,
Bureaucracy, politics,
territorialism.

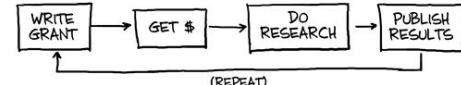


ACADEMIA



THE GRANT CYCLE

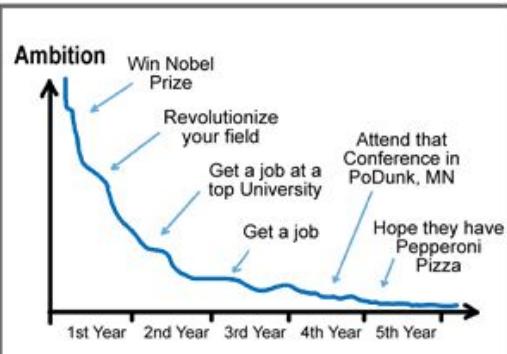
HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK:



HOW IT REALLY WORKS:



YOUR LIFE AMBITION - What Happened??



THE PLANS:

THE PLAN YOU TELL YOUR ADVISOR

- I'M GOING TO BE A PROFESSOR AT A MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITY AFTER I GRADUATE.

THE REAL PLAN

- LOOK FOR CAREER ALTERNATIVES.

THE SECRET PLAN

- BECOME A BAKER/ROCKSTAR/WRITER.

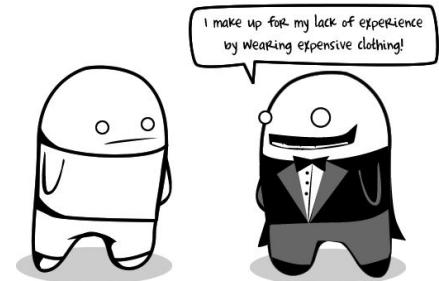
JOB INTERVIEW

A filtering ceremony, full of weird rituals.



Rare and critical moments for your career,
so apply often to get more confidence!
(for next time even if you fail)!

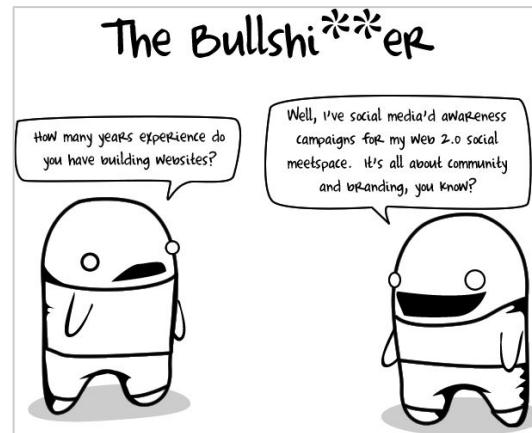
The over-dresser



BE HONEST, BE YOURSELF!

Not knowing is fine. Admitting it guides the interviewer.
(You could fit in a different position)

Overselling yourself is easy to detect. You end up digging your own hole.

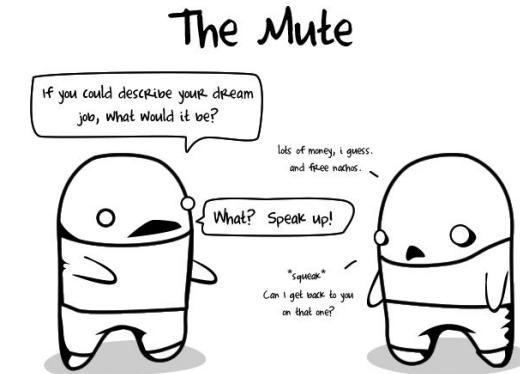


DON'T BE (TOO) SILENT

Silence has too many interpretations.
Even if you're stuck, just explain your reasoning.

It's normal to be nervous:
No need to over-apologize for that.

Think of an interview as a normal conversation
with an expert giving you their time and preparing something for you.



NOT ALL EMPLOYERS ARE WORTH IT

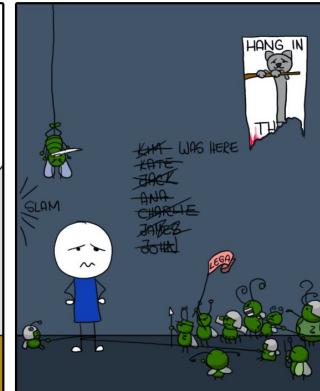
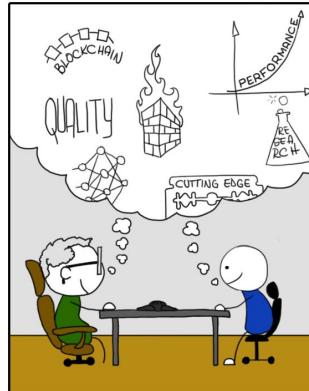
Some interviewers are just *ssh*les.

Salary, advantages... but also:
Stable situation?

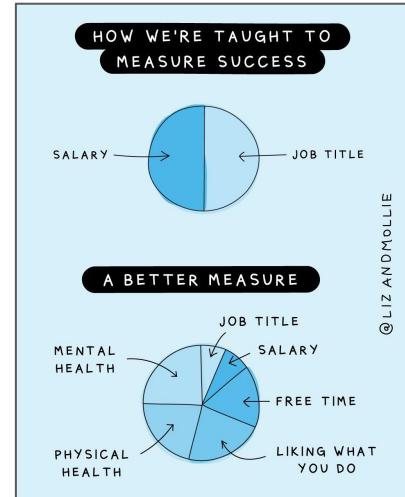
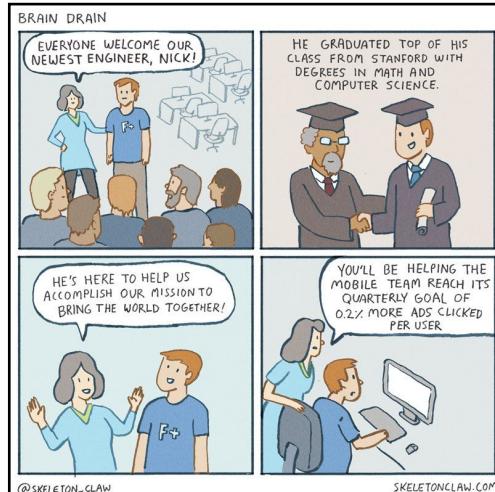
Is the person giving you orders
also responsible for you?

Also, f*ck unpaid internships.
(stockholm syndrome?)

INTERVIEW vs. REALITY



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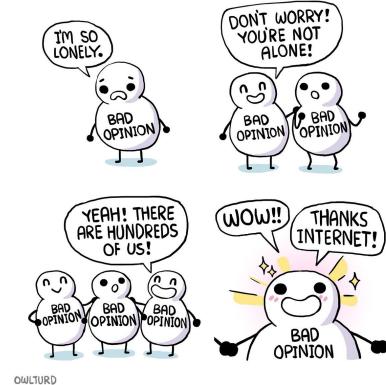




Social media

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Great to connect w/ peers
 - Good information stream
(filtered, flood)
 - fun
- Followers count is great for the ego
but not that useful in practice
 - Huge echo chamber
 - Mob behavior
 - Drowned in an ocean of b*llshit

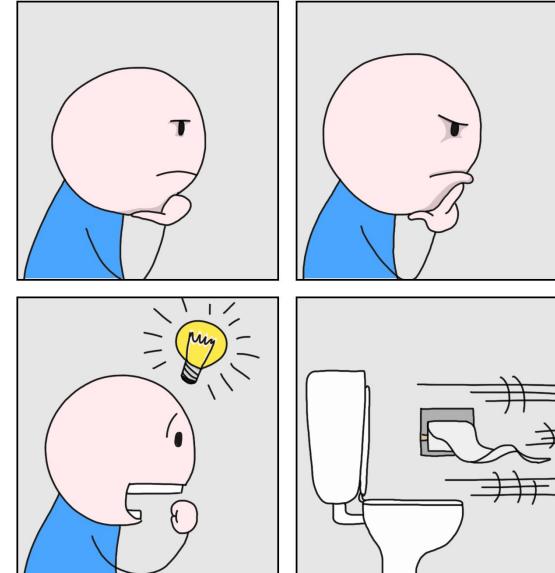


"BORED" ?

Fate gave you time. Find out why!
there's probably an inspiration floating near you.
Catch it!

Stay focused and disconnected:
that's time for yourself!

DEBUGGING



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DON'T AUTO-SAVE: WRITE DOWN!



Your talk/project has been cancelled?
Don't worry, you still gained experience, but you need to preserve it!
Write it down nicely, so that you can easily get back to it!
It's for **yourself**! Even if no one is interested anymore.
(you might be actually very close to success)



SOME ADVICE...

**"IF YOU ARE THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE ROOM,
YOU ARE IN THE WRONG ROOM" ?**

Smartest according to who?

There is a room for everyone.

You don't have to show all your layers.

Hiding a part of yourself can be relieving.



PRIDE CREATES UNNEEDED FRICTION

It's ok to be proud of our values, but some of them could vanish instantly,
then we realize how useless they were all along.

You've been guided most of your life.

It's hard to acknowledge how many of our values are actually personal.
(and not taught).

I'M NOT SURPRISED ANYMORE TO BE SURPRISED.

People have incredible talent that they take for granted.
Their surroundings made them sometimes believe that they're
just standard, if not *boring* or *lame*.

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Gaming, politics, promotions, stability, meetings...

EVERY SYSTEM CAN BE GAMED

It's tempting to "take shortcuts",
but trust is hard to regain.
Hate the game, not the players.



Coincidentally,
the "players" are always the ones saying
"that's how it works" ;)

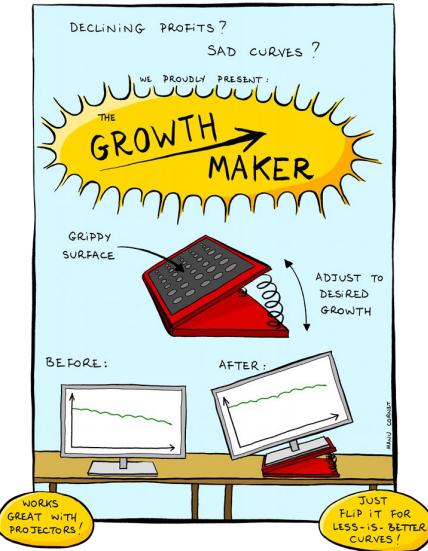
Final metric: scored goals.
Unmeasurable and gameable: pain

Metrics

The measured unit can be totally irrelevant.
It's **critical** to reevaluate them!

Of course, gamers will object.

How many tennis balls
can you store in a tube?



POLITICS

It's a full time job!
Ready to waste
all your time & energy ?
(better yell at clouds)



PROMOTIONS

Many companies cheat here [quotas, politics].

Golden handcuffs ? (people often step down)

More bureaucracy, more politics for more money and a shiny title.

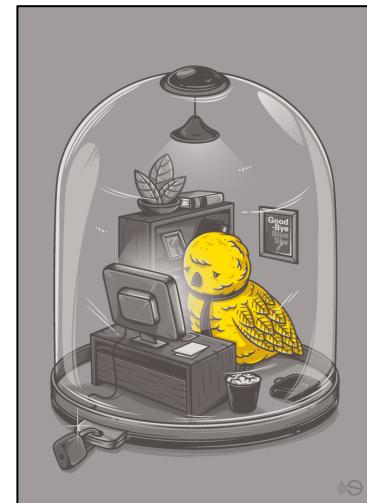
Promotion is just one form of reward. There are plenty others.

There's no perfect, permanent job

THERE'S NO STABLE SITUATION.

Heaven <- external events -> hell
(different manager, schedule...)

Two nearby teams can work totally differently...



MEETINGS

The regular sh*tshow of ego and mediocrity.
Use it to get inspiration or relax :)

Forgive, don't forget ;)



FOCUS



POSSIBLE CAREER PATH

- first X years: find a job at any cost.
 - hate it enough to find a better one (career path change #1)
 - 40s: mid-life crisis. Realize what you **really** care about.
 - > bigger career path change.
-
- > it's **OK** to work on something unrelated to your diplom.
(it's just a potential key to the first job).

DETAILS ON THE FIRST JOB

Like toddlers:

1. Be clueless, but imitate others.
2. Slowly get better, gather experience
3. Become better at it.

There's no shortcut.

Now, the ultimate secret...

HOW TO BE THE ... **BEST !**

(at something)

CREATE YOUR OWN NEW THING!

Do something long enough. See what's missing. Try to fill the gap.

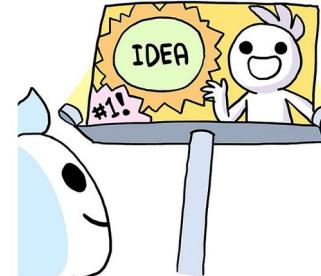
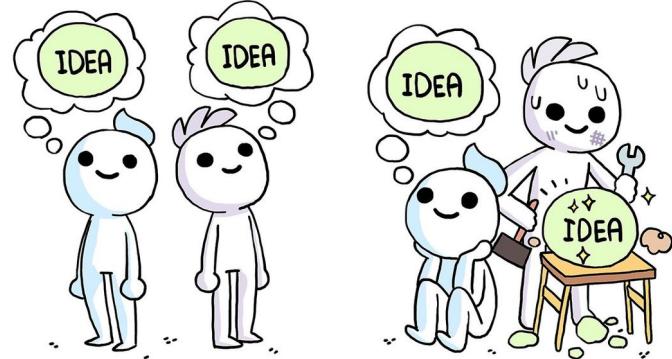
Don't expect people to see what you see.

(only you can see your idea, and nobody will work on it if you don't)

Listen to advice, but persist. Don't hype, be honest.

Write down and expand your ideas (Go offline)

If you think you don't belong to this world, you were made to create your own.

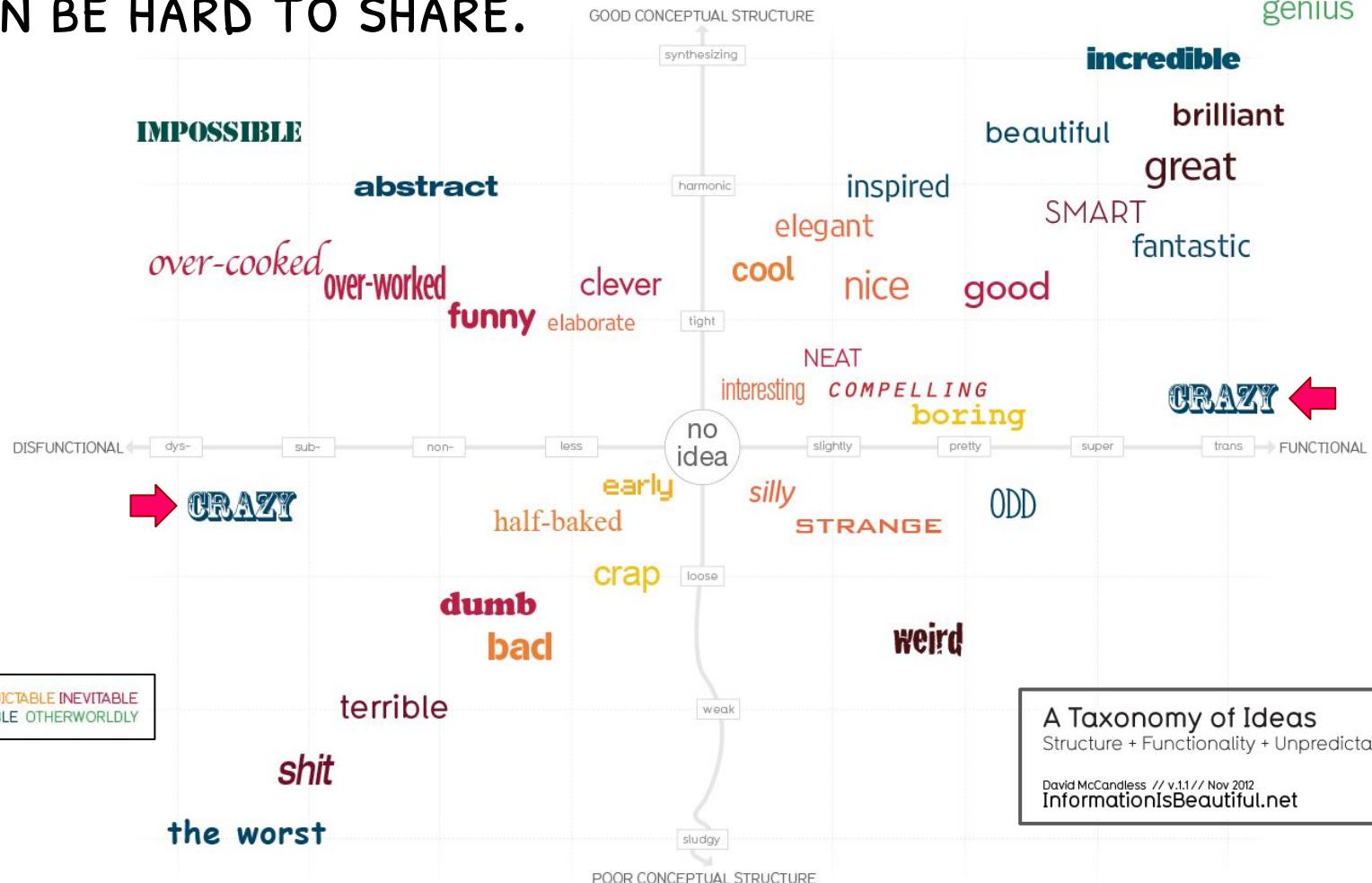


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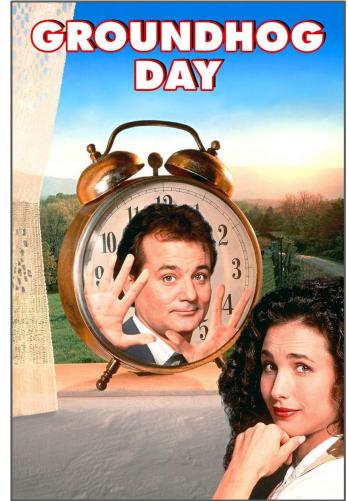


IDEAS CAN BE HARD TO SHARE.

genius



Honestly IT IS SCARY!



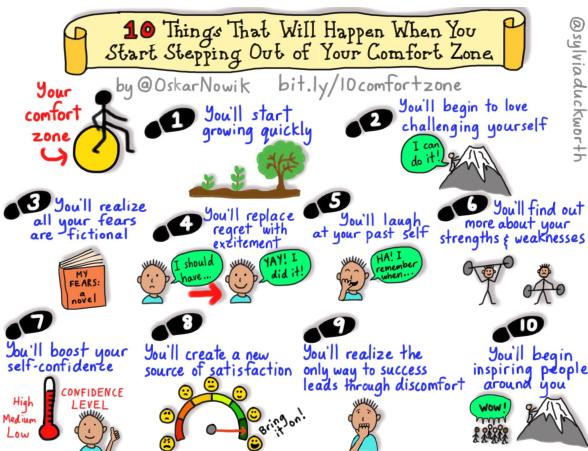
Scary to do things no one else did. Scary to fail. Scary to be laughed at.
Maybe only the despair of a boring job without any future can give you the energy.
You need to fall completely before you can stand up again.
If your fall takes too long, leave your comfort zone to get more motivation!

Regrets?

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP! (TOO MUCH)

Regrets are just normal.

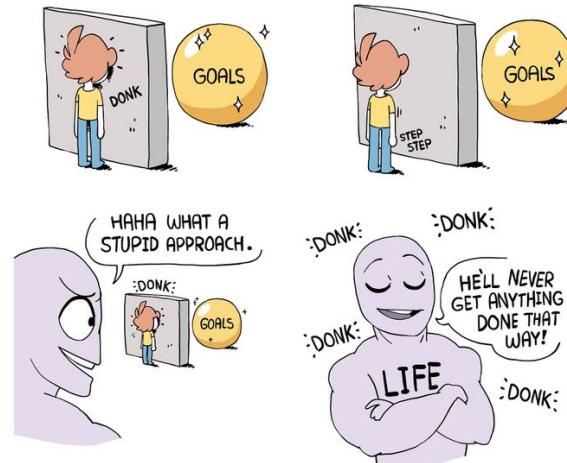
They give us the boost to try harder, be bolder.



REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY WORKS SOMETIMES.

Sometimes nothing works better than the "right" person telling you you can't do it.

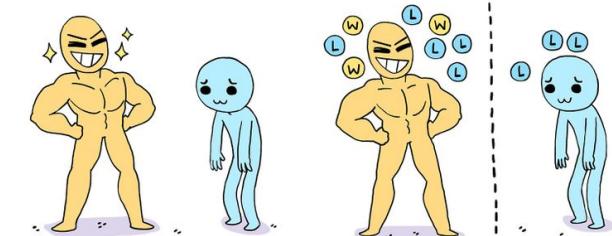
Making a bet / commitment (with a deadline) also helps.



YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!

Don't say "do it!",
because it requires confidence.

"Just try/let's have fun" is enough.
"F*ck it" also works ;)



PEOPLE THINK THERE ARE WINNERS AND LOSERS.

BUT THE WINNERS ALSO LOSE.



THEY LOSE MORE THAN THE LOSERS.



THEY'RE SECRETLY JUST SUPERLOSERS.



IT'S OK TO STOP

Be honest with your mistakes. Assume them.

Kill your own project early! (You got experience anyway!)

Ask for honest (direct, but constructive) feedback.

No need to find excuses, to hide behind lies or hype.

So, lose with dignity, honesty, and don't forget where you come from.

The only person you should compare yourself to is who you were yesterday.

And save your work properly: you might succeed later when you have more experience.



FREE TIME

We can't have enough free time.

- Use every little piece of it
- Be honest with yourself and replace **trends** with what you **really** like.
(Both are hard TBH)



NOTHING COMES EASY

Anything takes a long time to master.

If you can still count how much you've tried,
it's probably not much.

Practicing now will benefit your future.



"The art of like twirling or doing tricks with a pen in a very appealing nice looking way.
Make it look like it's easy even though it takes like hours and hours and hours of practice."
- LiveOverflow

Story time

right now.

fuck checking facebook again,
fuck that pic you just saw on instagram,
fuck worrying about how many people liked your last post,
fuck the news,
fuck that person you really should email back,
fuck your self-doubt,
fuck whatever happened yesterday,
fuck starting tomorrow,
fuck will people like this,
fuck will this be good enough...

fuck all of your excuses.

sit the fuck down and do your work.

BUT HOW CAN I?...

What did you try?

Face it: if after [X time], you never tried,
Then you were probably never interested ;)

And if you still hate it after X tries,
then be honest and move on ;)



RELATIONS

Everyone has different expectations, understanding of the same situation.

Explain how you feel, it will guide others.

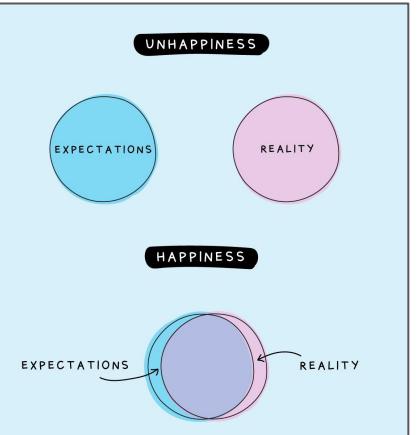
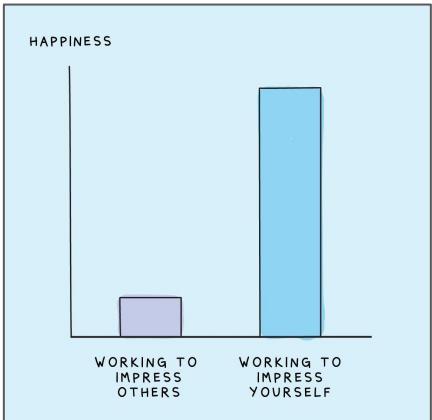
A good relation is about balance, not control.
(and not being controlled)

The 5 love languages:
gifts, time, touch, service, words.





LOOKING FOR HAPPINESS?

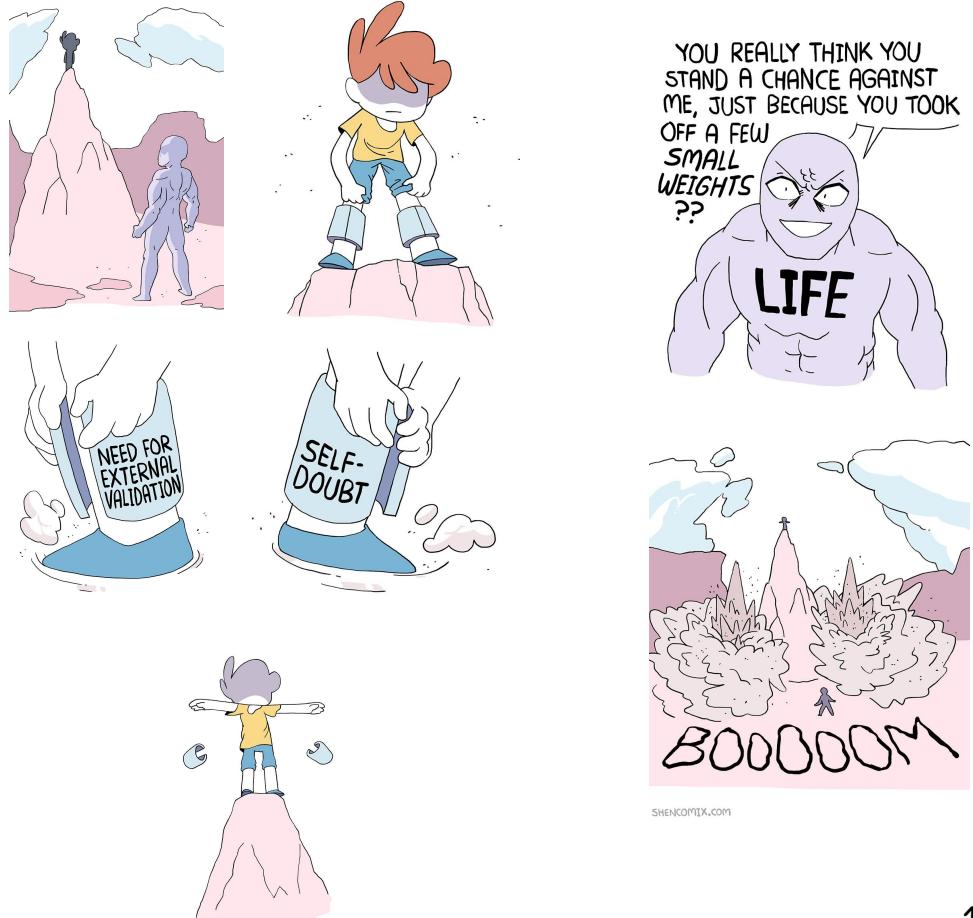


STOP GIVING A FxCK

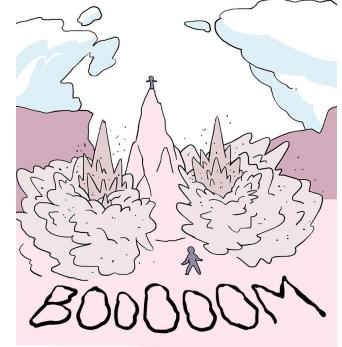
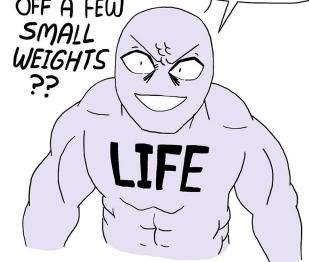
There's no end to your tunnel.

You're the light.

Story time



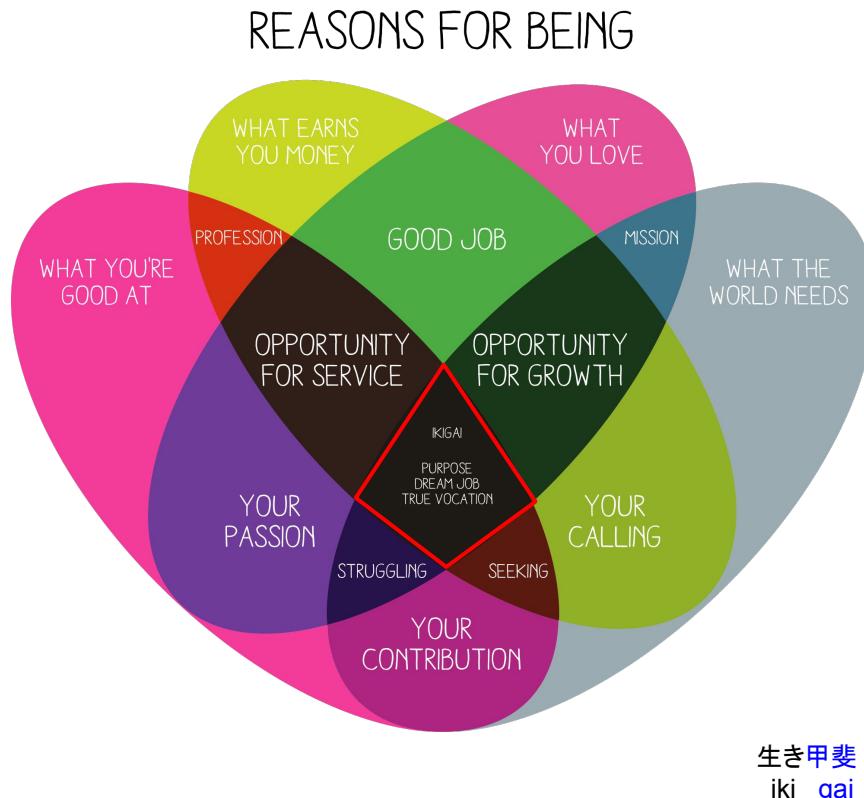
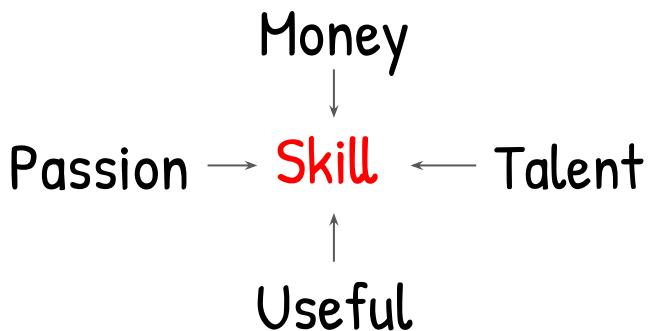
YOU REALLY THINK YOU
STAND A CHANCE AGAINST
ME, JUST BECAUSE YOU TOOK
OFF A FEW
SMALL
WEIGHTS
??



SHENCOMIX.COM

How IT SHOULD WORK (THE MYTH OF A PERFECT LIFE)

Optimally,
they all converge around a single skill.



生き甲斐
iki gai

IN REALITY...

Actual usefulness is entirely **optional**.

(Flunkies, goons, duct tapers, box tickers, taskmasters)

Passion and Money are distinct.

(one follows your heart,
the other life constraints)

Hopefully, they partially overlap.



~~USEFUL~~



COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Especially during hardships.

Life is unfair, makes no sense.

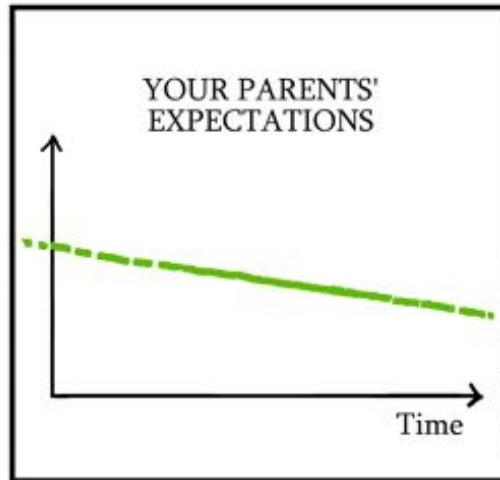
Find/define your own purpose, to give sense to your life.

DON'T OVER-WORRY, WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

Most mistakes can be undone.
So there's no reason to worry.

Seriously, what could be the worst mistake?

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE IS...



JORGE CHAM © 2009

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM



BABIES

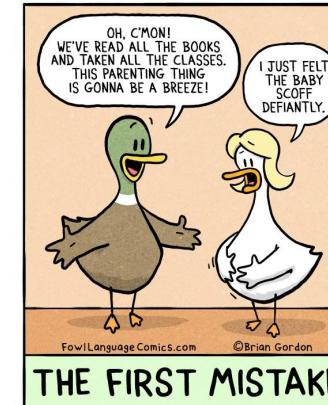


Compared to having kids
Office work is **very** predictable

HAVING KIDS IS HARD

Having kids will just make **everything** harder!
You can't be ready enough.

Don't have kids unless you feel ready and happy!
(Don't worry, opportunity will come.)
But kids only worsen any relationship problems.



THE FIRST MISTAKE



what your life is really
like after having kids



Forget traveling the world,
or pursuing your dreams.



A cartoon illustration of a pregnant dog sitting in a puddle, surrounded by other dogs. A speech bubble from the pregnant dog says, "Really it's all about having kids."

Death: just the last action in your own game.

What will you do
until that point ?



A rant, a.k.a. "things you could improve":

INFOSEC LACKS HONESTY

I know that honesty is optional to make money.
But seriously, so much noise...

INFOSEC AND METRICS

Security doesn't have easy metrics.

So defense is very political.

Hackers don't give a shit:

- About your project's scope
- It's managed by a third party
- It's a legacy system
- It's "too critical to patch"
- About your outage Windows
- About your budget
- You've always done it that way
- About your Go-Live Date
- It's only a pilot/proof of concept
- About Non-Disclosure Agreements
- It wasn't a requirement in the contract
- It's an internal system
- It's really hard to change
- It's due for replacement
- You're not sure how to fix it
- It's handled in the Cloud
- About your Risk Register entry
- The vendor doesn't support that configuration
- It's an interim solution
- It's [insert standard here] compliant
- It's encrypted on disk
- The cost benefit doesn't stack up
- "Nobody else could figure that out"
- You can't explain the risk to "The Business"
- You've got other priorities
- About your faith in the competence
of your internal users
- You don't have a business justification
- You can't show Return on Investment
- You contracted out that risk

DEFENSE'S ADDICTIVE ENDLESS LOOP (WAIT, REACT, HYPE)

- Brag about how good you are [do nothing's waiting loop]
- Detect a problem
 - Measure the pwnage (ignore it if it's not possible)
 - Quickly fix the bug! (no change in-depth needed)
 - brag how fast you reacted, and how much you've saved

Rinse, repeat.



BINARY SOCIOLOGY (OBSERVE WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING NOR SOLVING)

Required pre-condition: sit on some **exclusive** data.

- A new something is out.
- Milk your data, shake your graphs until Wow factor is reached.
 - Hasty attribution is optional.
- B*llshit your way into a conference.
- Brag about visibility and impact.

Actual impact: none

FAKE DEFENSE RESEARCH

- Start something (mix trendy concepts with buzzwords, actual usefulness is optional)
- Get some results (with no practical impact)
- Shake results until some WOW factor can be concluded (but not reproduced)
- Bullsh*t your way in a conference.

Publish minimal source or maybe even useless binary

Ex: it works reliably on "hello world".

Conclude your project is an international success.

Great visibility for you. Actual impact: null.

FAKE ATTACKS

- Find [accidentally] a vulnerability of some kind (not necessarily new) [understanding not required]
- Logo, website, stickers, trailer, song
- Apply at a conference. Bullsh*t the abstract.
- Share as few details as possible.

Optionally publish minimal source/ useless binary

Conclude your project is an international success.

Actual impact: null.

MORE HONEST TALKS PLEASE

- Stop the hype.

Be honest with your results. With the impact.

- Mention previous art:

Don't pretend you did something totally new (if you didn't).

- Mention where you failed. What went wrong,
or just took long (-er than expected).

Pretending that wins are instant only backfires.

It's up to you.
Don't act surprised
when your credibility is gone.
Is a big infosec crash coming?

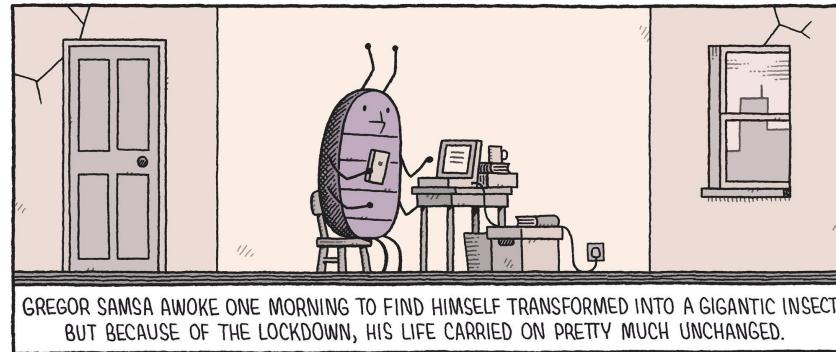
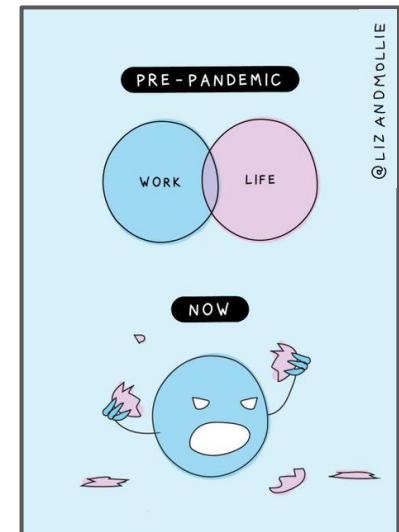


WHAT KIND OF PLAYER ARE YOU?

</rant>
118

IT'S OK – IN INFOSEC – IF YOU DON'T...

- play CTF.
- do any research.
- give any presentation.
- do any hacking.
(did you see how most hackers code?)

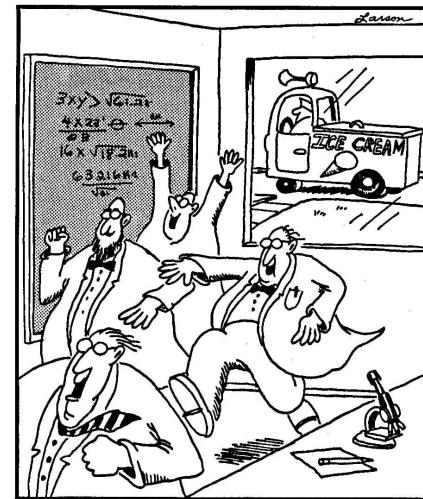


AND THAT PANDEMIC CERTAINLY DIDN'T HELP...

CONCLUSION

THINGS I WISH I KNEW

- Stop focusing on “the best”.
- People are different. Everyone has skills.
- You’re much more than your work/studies.
- Focus on yourself.
- Don’t try to be someone else.
- Connecting outside your bubble helps a lot.
(if you can’t, read books!)



THERE'S NO SHORTCUT, REALLY.

It's OK to take long. To make mistakes.

HOPEFULLY YOU DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES.

Or maybe you just feel better when you do your own.



Thank you!
Take care of yourself

COMICS REFERENCE

Dilbert, Gary Larson, Goomics, Grant
Snider, Information is Beautiful, Liz
and Mollie, Owl Turd, Sylvia Duckworth,
The Oatmeal, Tom Gauld.

WHAT VIDEO GAMES TAUGHT ME

1. If you are facing new challenges/obstacles, then you're going the right way.
2. No one blames you if you have to check the map.
3. Always come prepared.
4. Everyone is worth talking to.
5. Even if you don't get money for something, you always get experience.
6. Explore!
7. The places that are hardest to get to always have the best rewards.
8. The best way to become someone's friend is to actually talk to them.
9. If you want to be someone's friend faster, also give them food.
10. Don't hold on too much crap, you'll fill up your inventory.
11. Don't be deterred if a challenge was too much for you: go back, level up, increase your skill, and try again.
12. You don't learn anything if you get someone else to do it for you.
13. Don't feel like you have to plow through the main story. The best content is sometimes in the side quests.
14. If you've tried and failed 30 times, you probably missed something. Go back and look around.
15. Never judge someone's skill solely on their achievements; you don't know how they got them.
16. When you succeed after multiple failures, you feel so much more accomplished.
17. Take full advantage of character customization.
18. Decisions rarely only affect you. Please choose wisely.

WHAT REBELS WANT FROM THEIR BOSS

<https://www.rebelsatwork.com/blog/2017/04/19/what-rebels-want-from-our-bosses>

1. We are not troublemakers. We're motivated to make our organization better than it is.
2. We care more about work than most people. That's why we're willing to engage in controversy.
3. We need a work environment where it's safe to disagree and ask questions that challenge the status quo.
4. The more diverse a team's mindsets and experiences, the more creative the team. We may not be like you and that is a good thing. Love our differences and quirks.
5. Challenge us. Give us the thorniest problems. Let us prove that our "wild ideas" can work. We want to be stretched, not do work as usual.
6. Don't give us lip service. If one of our ideas isn't important to our goals or it's just too radical for the culture, tell us that, not something glib like, "there's no budget or resources."
7. Coach us on how to navigate organizational politics so we avoid making mistakes that could embarrass you and us.
8. Rebelliousness is an act of courage and risk-taking. It's a positive behavior.
9. Tell us what we're doing right more than what we're doing wrong. Appreciation is the greatest sustainable motivator at work. Give us more and we'll move mountains for you.

1. Be patient. No matter what.
2. Don't badmouth: assign responsibility, not blame. Say nothing of another you wouldn't say to him.
3. Never assume the motives of others are, to them, less noble than yours are to you.
4. Expand your sense of the possible.
5. Don't trouble yourself with matters you truly cannot change.
6. Don't ask more of others than you can deliver yourself.
7. Tolerate ambiguity.
8. Laugh at yourself frequently.
9. Concern yourself with what is right rather than who is right.
10. Try not to forget that, no matter how certain, you might be wrong.
11. Give up blood sports.
12. Remember that your life belongs to others as well. Don't risk it frivolously.
13. Never lie to anyone for any reason. (Lies of omission are sometimes exempt.)
14. Learn the needs of those around you and respect them.
15. Avoid the pursuit of happiness. Seek to define your mission and pursue that.
16. Reduce your use of the first personal pronoun.
17. Praise at least as often as you disparage.
18. Admit your errors freely and quickly.
19. Become less suspicious of joy.
20. Understand humility.
21. Remember that love forgives everything.
22. Foster dignity.
23. Live memorably.
24. Love yourself.
25. Endure.



Adult principles

by John Perry Barlow

30 CHARACTERISTICS OF MANIPULATORS

BY ISABELLE NAZARE-AGA

<https://www.isabellenazare-ag.com/30-caracteristiques-du-manipulateur#30-characteristics-manipulator>

They make other people feel **guilty**, in the name of professional **conscience**, family ties, friendship, love, etc.

They unload their **responsibilities** onto others or dismiss their own responsibilities. / They do not *clearly* communicate their requests, needs, feelings or opinions.

They often respond **vaguely**. / They **lie** / They are **self-centred**. / They cite all kinds of logical reasons to **disguise** their requests.

They **change** their opinions, behaviours, or feelings **depending** on the person or situation. / They make **veiled threats** or openly resort to blackmail.

They make others **believe** that they must be **perfect**, never change their minds, **always** know everything, and **immediately** respond to requests and questions.

They **cast into doubt** the qualities, skills and personalities of other people—they criticize without appearing to do so, devalue and judge.

They have their messages communicated by other people or via intermediaries (telephone instead of face-to-face, written notes).

They create **suspicion** and stir up ill feeling; they **divide to conquer**, driving a wedge between people, which can lead to relationship break-ups.

They know how to make themselves into **victims** to gain sympathy (e.g. exaggerated illness, « difficult » surroundings, overloaded at work).

They ignore requests (even if they **claim** to be taking care of them). / They use **flattery** to seduce us, give gifts or suddenly start waiting on us hand and foot.

They use the moral principles of others (e.g. notions of humanity, charity, racism, « good » or « bad » mother) to satisfy their needs.

They abruptly **change topic** in mid-conversation. / They avoid or get out of discussions and meetings. / They cannot take **criticism**, and **deny facts**.

They make **false statements** to discover the truth, **twist** and interpret facts to suit themselves. / They can be **jealous**, even if they are parents or spouses.

They do **not take into account the rights**, needs and desires of others. / They **make us do things** that we would probably not have done of our own free will.

They often wait until the **last minute** to ask, order or have others do something. / They rely on the ignorance of others while vaunting their own superiority.

Their words appear **logical** and **consistent**, while their attitudes, actions or lifestyle are totally **opposite**.

They generate a state of **discomfort** or of **not being free** (trap). / They are excellent at meeting their **own goals**, but at the **expense of others**.

They are constantly the **focus of conversation** among people who know them, **even** if they are **not present**.

If you now someone with 14 of these characteristics, beware!