

Impostor Syndrome in Networking

Overcoming Impostor Syndrome to Further Your Network Automation Journey

Matt Vitale

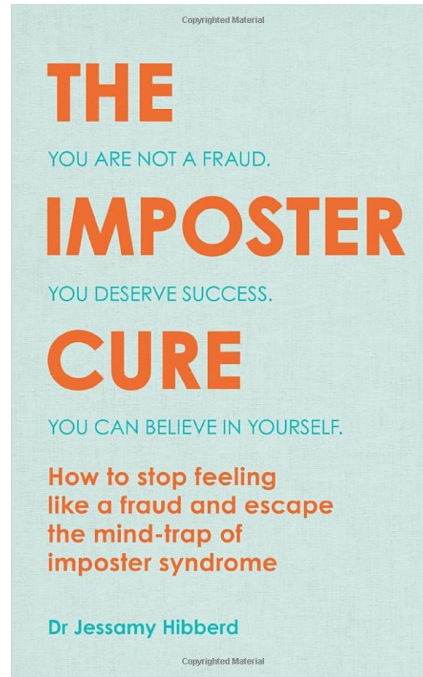
>>> Agenda

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Understanding Impostor Syndrome
- 3 Identifying Impostor Syndrome
- 4 Overcoming Impostor Syndrome

>>> Qualifications?

Q: What makes me qualified to give a presentation on Impostor Syndrome?

- I am an impostor
- I read a book once
- I read some funny memes
- I'm still an impostor



Understanding Impostor Syndrome



“Taking on a challenge is a lot like riding a horse. If you’re comfortable while doing it, you’re probably doing it wrong.” -Ted Lasso



>>> What Is Impostor Syndrome?

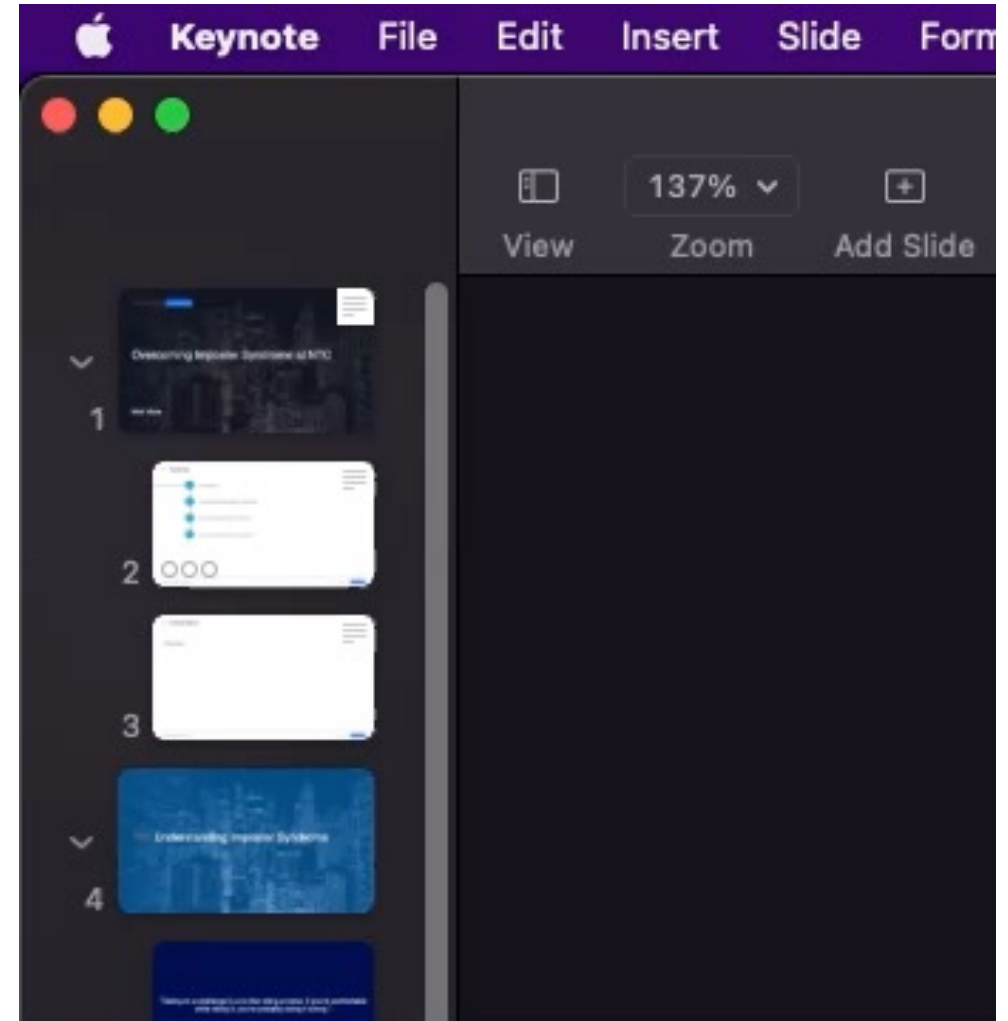
- Most impostors are people pleasers
- Can be triggered by achievement or approval related tasks, feeling insecure about current knowledge or skills
- Exacerbated during **times of transition** or changes such as a **new job or project**
- Feel different from core group partners
- Impostor Syndrome is all about fear
 - Fear of being found out
 - Fear of failure
 - Fear of not being good enough
 - Fear is only a feeling
- **Feelings are not facts!**



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

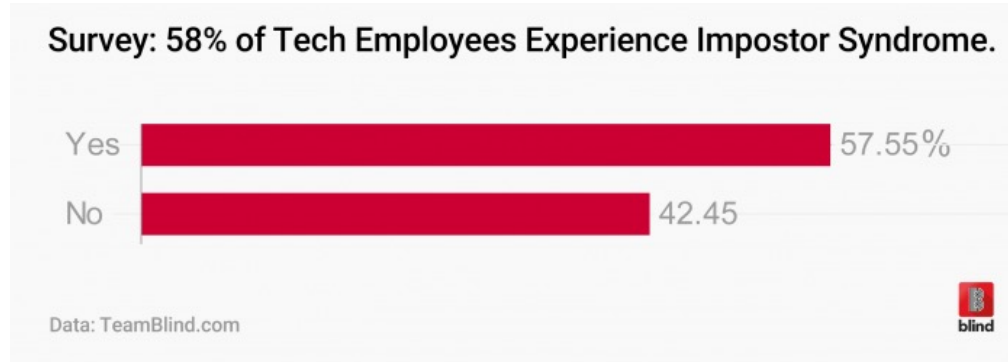
>>> Imagine if someone told you that you had to

- Work from early until late
 - Cut down or cut out your social life
 - Stop doing the things you enjoy
 - Work when you're tired
 - Never take a break
 - Constantly push yourself
 - Keep going even when you feel physically and mentally unable to
- Miss out on time with those you love
 - Work evenings and weekends

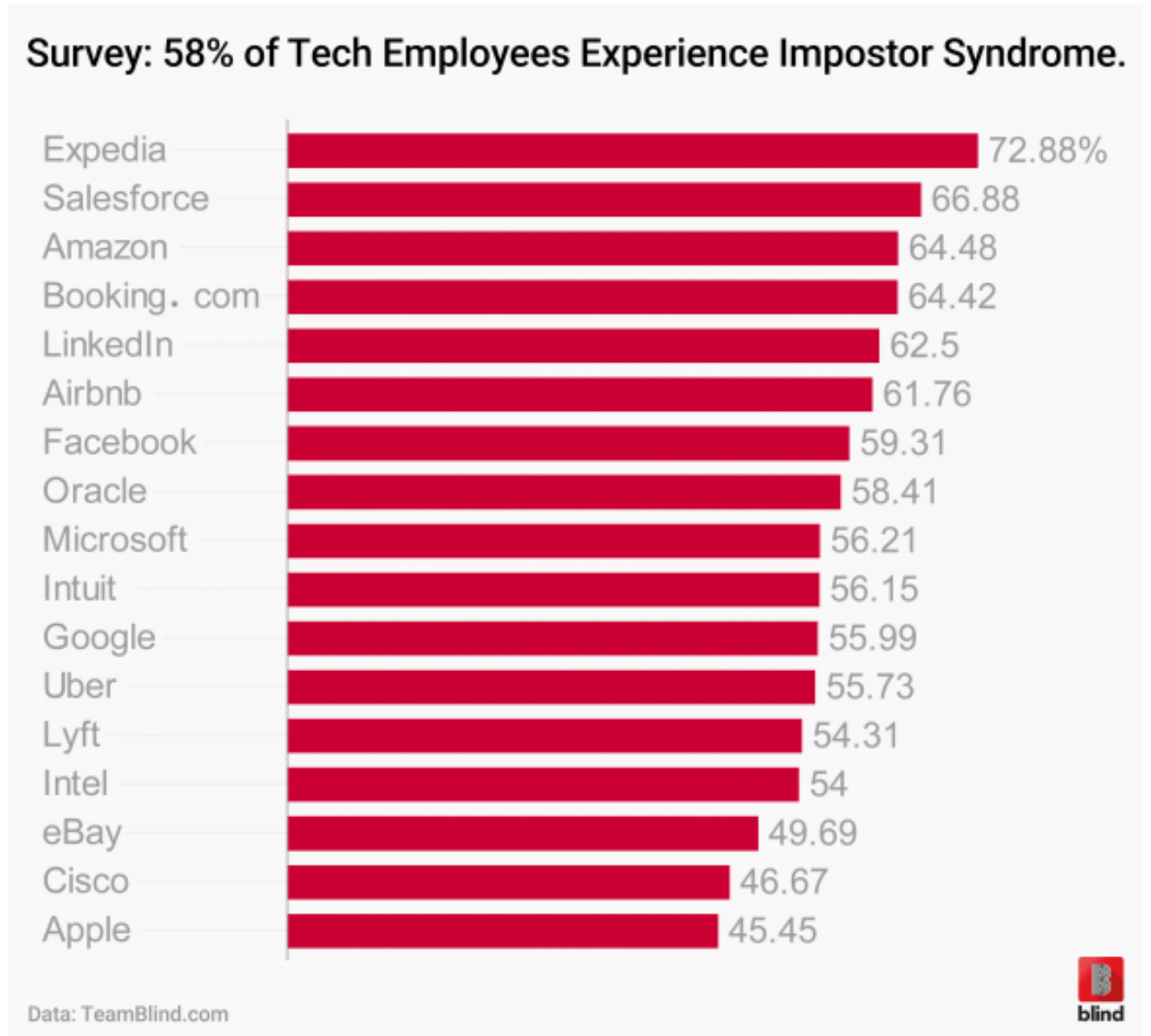


Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

>>> But I Don't Feel This Way



- 10,402 respondents
 - 58% experience imposter syndrome
 - 42% did not experience imposter syndrome



<https://www.teamblind.com/blog/index.php/2022/02/14/impostor-syndrome-work/>

>>> Breaking Down the Impostor Cycle



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

>>> Breaking Down the Impostor Cycle



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

>>> Breaking out of the Impostor Cycle



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019



Adam Grant ✓

@AdamMGrant

Impostor syndrome: "I don't know what I'm doing. It's only a matter of time until everyone finds out."

Growth mindset: "I don't know what I'm doing yet. It's only a matter of time until I figure it out."

The highest form of self-confidence is believing in your ability to learn.

>>> Discomfort

- Responding to discomfort is the **key**
- The problem is not you, it is your *interpretation* of the feeling of discomfort
- Discomfort is a normal reaction to a challenge or unfamiliar situation
- It is *not* an all-inclusive sign that you are an impostor!
- Discomfort does not mean you don't know what you're doing



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019



Impostor



Player



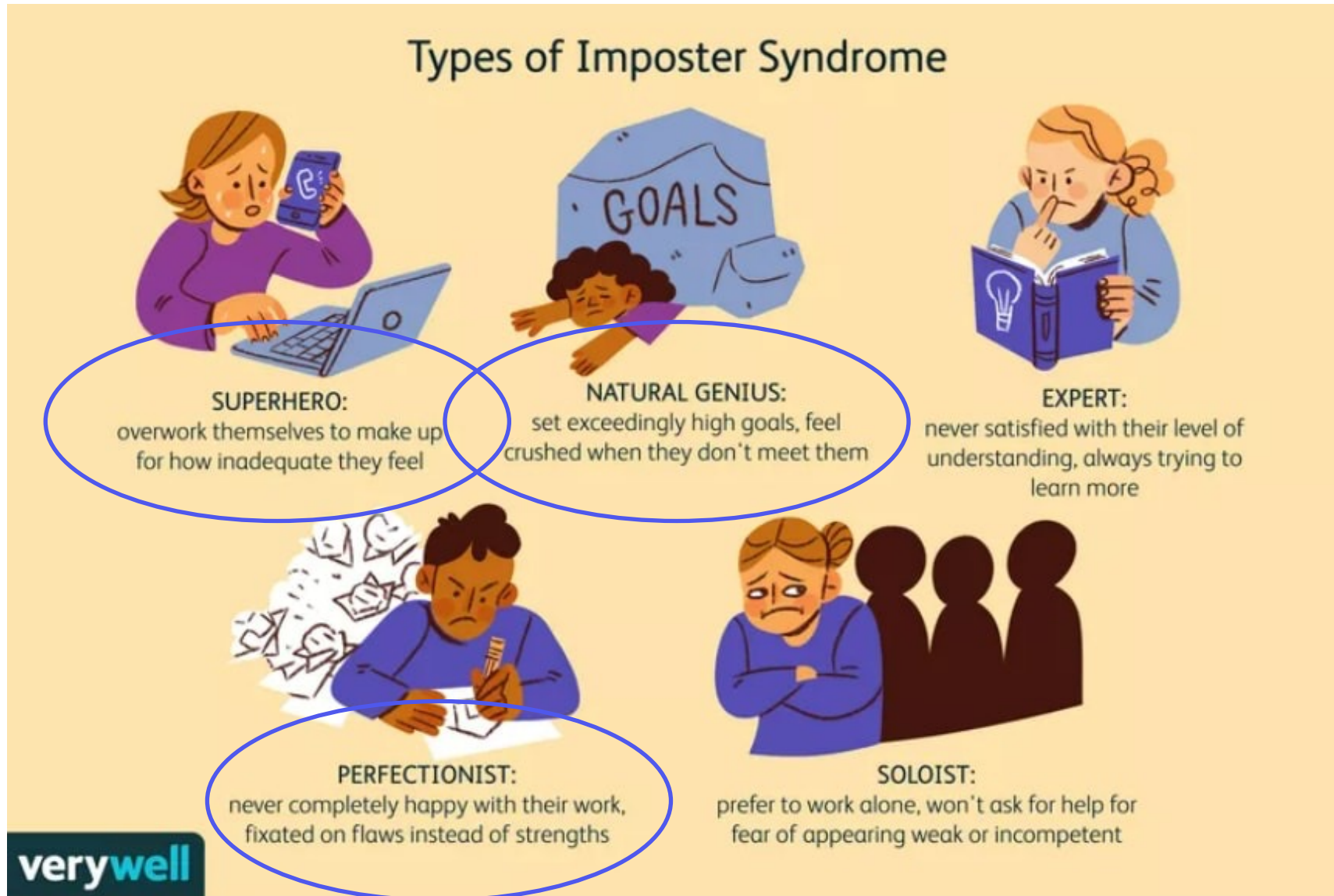
Kinda Sus



leuluchiha

Identifying Impostor Syndrome

>>> Types of Impostor Syndrome



<https://dev.to/janicera2880/how-do-you-overcome-impostor-syndrome-55m8>

>>> Myths of Impostor Syndrome

- It makes me work hard
- It keeps me humble
- It means I aim for high standards
- It motivates me
- It is better to be modest than arrogant
- It keeps me in check

Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

>>> Reasons for Downplaying Successes

- **General:**

- I got lucky or it was a fluke
- I'm a good actor
- I fooled them
- It's because they like me or are being polite
- It was nothing
- It sounds more impressive than it is
- I had a lot of help
- I just worked really hard
- If I can do it anyone can
- I was in the right place at the right time
- They have low standards
- They've made a mistake
- They felt sorry for me
- It's positive discrimination

- No one else wanted to do it
- It's only a matter of time before I'm found out

Getting a Job:

- I had connections
- I'm good in interviews
- I look good on paper
- There were very few applicants

Academic:

- It must have been a weak year
- I was on the reserve list so they didn't really want me
- They mixed up the grades/marks
- They let in the wrong person
- It's an administrative error
- I picked an unpopular course

Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

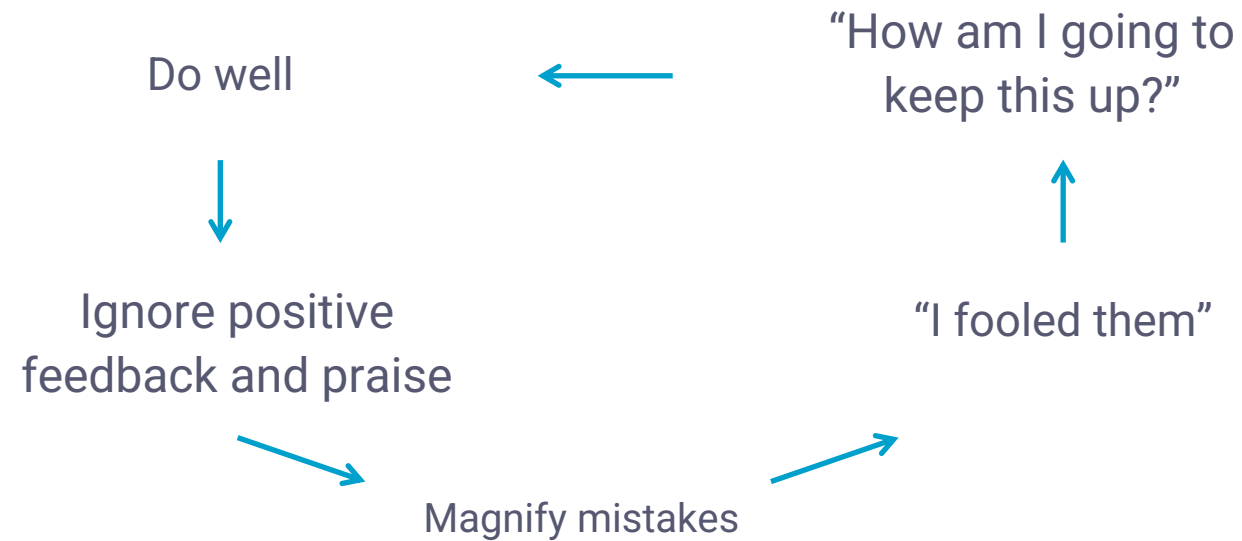
>>> Confirmation Bias

- Tendency to seek out and favor information that confirms our expectations and beliefs
- You are certain you're right and everyone else is wrong
- You will prove them wrong
- Positive information = rejected as untrue
 - Gets dismissed
 - Explained away why they're wrong
 - Minor mistakes or details missed are pointed out instead
- Negative information = accepted as fact
 - Proof you aren't good enough:
 - Constructive criticism
 - Negative feedback
 - Mistakes



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

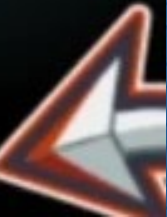
>>> Confirmation Bias Cycle



Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

Overcoming Impostor Syndrome

Victory



>>> Ways to Cope with Impostor Syndrome

9 Ways to Cope With Impostor Syndrome

Know the signs.	Know you're not alone.	Distinguish humility & fear.
Let go of perfectionism.	Be kind to yourself.	Track your success.
Talk with your mentor and a manager.	Say "yes" to opportunities.	Embrace the feeling.



<https://dev.to/janicera2880/how-do-you-overcome-impostor-syndrome-55m8>

>>> Criticism vs Compassion

1. Become aware of what you say to yourself

- Words and tone
- Whose voice is this?
- Is it *actually* helpful?
- Would you say this to someone else's face?

2. Find a new voice for yourself

- Be as kind to yourself as you are to others
- Remember what it means to be human - mistakes are NORMAL!
- Accept yourself
- Have faith in yourself

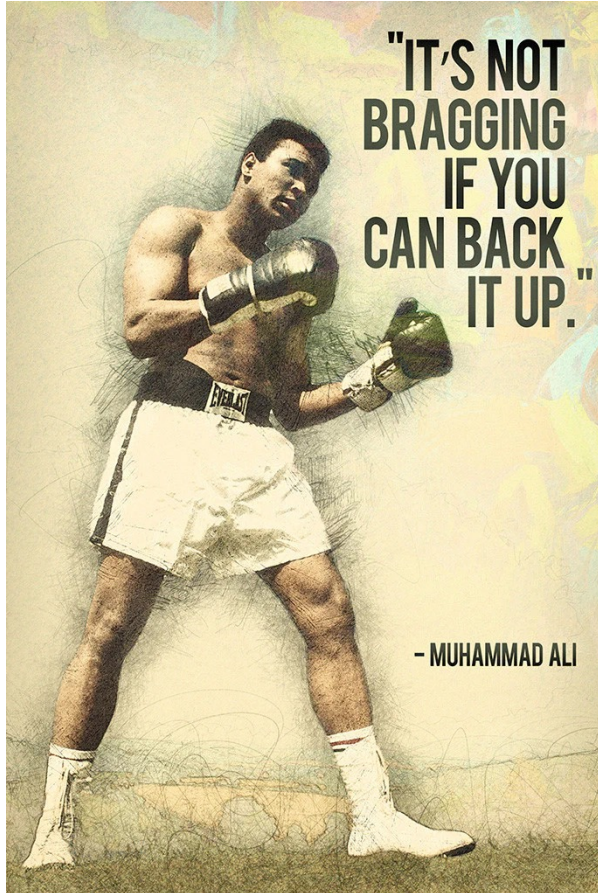
Source: Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019

Self-doubt and insecurity

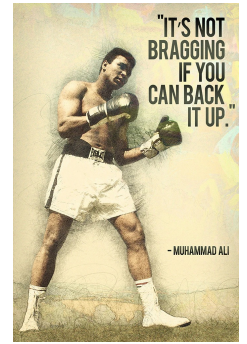


Self-awareness and reflection

>>> Acknowledging your Accomplishments



>>> Gather Evidence of Achievements - My Examples



- NTC
 - Public webinar presentations
 - Multiple internal “knowledge-sharing” presentations
 - Multiple successful customer projects
 - Cisco Live and Ansiblefest booth
 - Various bug fixes
 - Multiple certifications
 - 6+ company blog posts
 - Hackathon winner!
 - Major feature written for Nautobot v1.4
 - **NANOG 87 presenter!**
- Career
 - Network engineer 15+ years
 - Automate new environment deploys
 - PCI auditing automation
 - ChatOps bot and automation
 - Data Center core routing redesign and project plan
 - Multi-campus building redesign
- Personal
 - Open-sourced Python project
 - Married 12 years
 - Father of a 10 year old son
 - Homeowner
 - Friends
 - Lost 70+ lbs

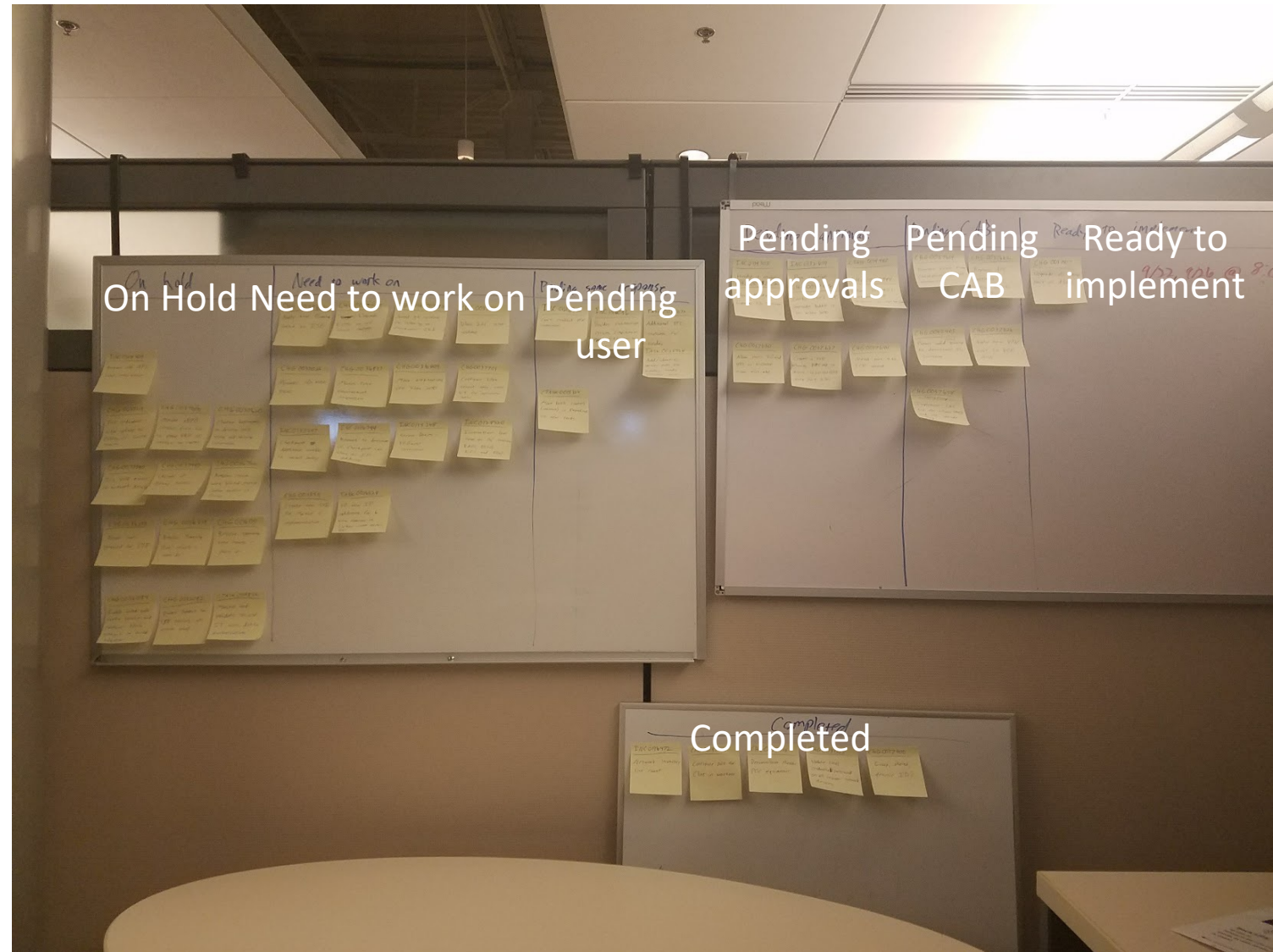
>>> IT Career Specific Tips

- Find a ticket, Git repository, or concept you are interested in
 - Look for any open issues or tasks
 - Bugs, documentation requests, etc
 - Take on one and start tackling it
- If no open issues, or ones you find interesting, update documentation!
 - Updating documentation **forces** you to learn how a system or application works
 - Everyone **loves** updated documentation and **appreciates** documentation work



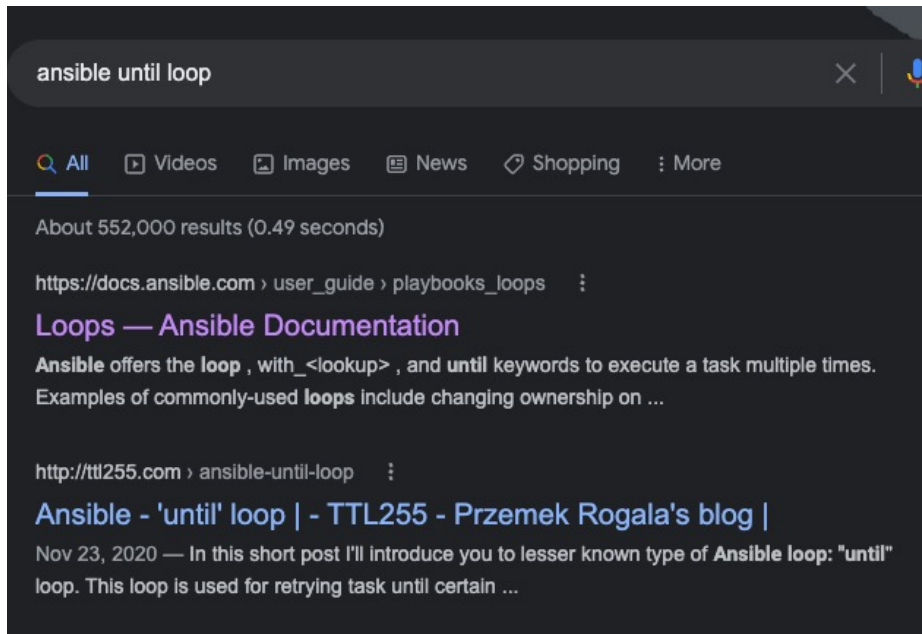
>>> IT Career Specific Tips (cont)

- Talk about it with your friends or peers!
 - Study for and obtain a new certification
 - Try something new in a lab
 - Make a physical list of current tasks
-
- You will have:
 - A sense of pride and accomplishment
 - Learned something new
 - Feeling of competence and satisfaction



>>> Relate With A Peer

- Don't be afraid to ask questions
- Ask for help earlier than you normally would
- Realize you are not alone
- Find a "fake" buddy!

A screenshot of a social media thread on J2Live. The header says "J2Live Online Jinja2 Parser and Renderer". The thread consists of several posts from Przemek Rogala and Matt Vitale. Przemek Rogala posts on Apr 9th, 2021, and May 21st, 2021. Matt Vitale posts on Apr 13th, 2021, and May 21st, 2021. The posts discuss the word "fired" in a humorous context. A green circular badge on the right side of the thread reads "2020 FINALIST Most Educational IT Blog Awards hosted by Cisco".

J2Live Online Jinja2 Parser and Renderer

Przemek Rogala – Apr 9th, 2021
Przemek Rogala 10:34 AM
maybe we won't get **fired** too soon after all haha

Przemek Rogala – Apr 13th, 2021
Matt Vitale 11:06 AM
Hopefully I'm not **fired** before then ahaha

Przemek Rogala – May 21st, 2021
Przemek Rogala 11:00 AM
but yeah, gonna have to put down some goals, apart from "not getting **fired**"

Przemek Rogala – Apr 9th, 2021
Przemek Rogala 10:39 AM
so didn't want to get **fired** before that 😊

Przemek Rogala – May 21st, 2021
Matt Vitale 10:46 AM
Same, getting better. I don't feel like I'm going to **fired** every day, so that's an improvement! 😊

2020 FINALIST
Most Educational
IT Blog Awards
hosted by Cisco

“Be curious, not judgmental.” -Ted Lasso



Final Thoughts



Jen Heemstra
@jenheemstra



What impostor syndrome says to me: You don't deserve to be here.

What I've learned to say back: Do any of us really deserve to be here? Probably not. I'm thankful for the opportunity and I'm choosing to make the most of it. So there.



>>> Thank you



1. Hubbard, Dr. Jessamy. *The Impostor Cure*. Aster, 2019
2. Munroe, Randall “Impostor Syndrome” by XKCD, <https://xkcd.com/1954/>
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4. Hackernoon “Imposter Syndrome: A Personal Take on the Workplace Epidemic” by Blind, <https://www.teamblind.com/blog/index.php/2022/02/14/impostor-syndrome-work/>
5. Alecha, Janice “How Do You Overcome Impostor Syndrome?” *dev.to* 22 June, 2022, <https://dev.to/janicera2880/how-do-you-overcome-impostor-syndrome-55m8>
6. Watterson, Bill “Calvin and Hobbes” by GoComics, 28 September, 1992, <https://www.gocomics.com/calvinandhobbes/1992/09/28>
7. “The Diamond Dogs.” *Ted Lasso*, Created by Jason Sudeikis, Bill Lawrence, Brendan Hunt, and Joe Kelly, season 1, episode 1, Apple TV+, 2020
8. “Pilot.” *Ted Lasso*, Created by Jason Sudeikis, Bill Lawrence, Brendan Hunt, and Joe Kelly, season 1, episode 8, Apple TV+, 2020