



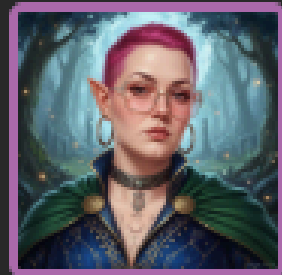
INTELLIGENCE IS MY DUMP STAT:

How I Got Into Cybersecurity Anyway

"A Neurodivergent's Guide to Leveling Up"

By Liz Gore

DEEP LORE



Liz Gore

Elf Bard 1
Level 1

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA
+0	+2	+1	-1	+2	+2
10	14	13	8	15	15

Liz Gore

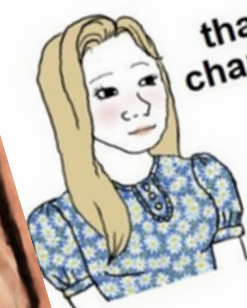
Age: 40

AuDHD: Late-diagnosed

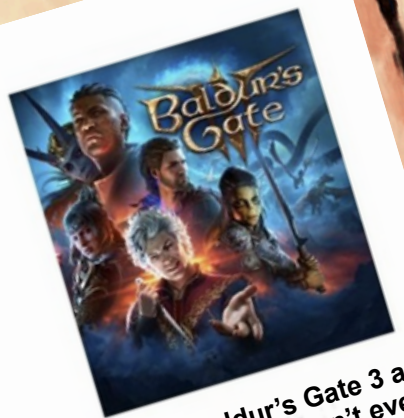
Director of IT & Operations

GFACT, GSEC, & GCIH ✓

Baldur's Gate 3: 700+ hours



thank you for
changing my life



i'm literally
Baldur's Gate 3 and
you haven't even
finished the game

THE CHALLENGE

Infinite Paths
Conflicting Advice
Imposter Syndrome
Analysis Paralysis



“What If I Could
Build My Career Like I Build
A D&D Character?”



WHY THIS FRAMEWORK EXISTS

MY BRAIN NEEDS STRUCTURE:

My ADHD Executive Dysfunction --> Needs external scaffolding

My Autistic Monotropism --> Loves deep focus & clear categories

WHAT MAKES THIS WORK:

- Bounded complexity (not infinite)
- Leverages existing knowledge (special interest)
- Reduces cognitive load (external structure)
- Reframes deficits (dump stats vs. flaws)



WHY DUNGEONS & DRAGONS? ☆

There is no "wrong" character.

Every character has:

- Strengths (your highest stats)
- Challenges (your lowest stats)
- A class (your role in the party)
- A unique background
- Tools and skills



ABILITY CHECK

The Six Stats of Cybersecurity

STR (Strength) = Hands-On Execution

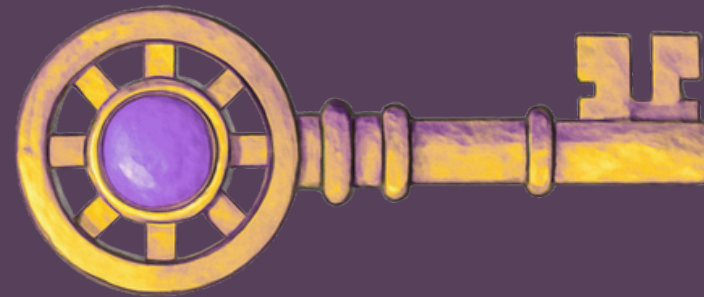
- Practical application
- Running labs
- Implementing solutions
- Brute forcing problems

CON (Constitution) = Persistence

- Persistence
- Hyperfocus stamina
- Resilience & endurance

INT (Intelligence) = Tech Knowledge

- Deep technical expertise
- Retaining information
- Systematic Frameworks
- Theory



WIS (Wisdom) = Pattern Recognition

- Intuition
- Anomaly Detection
- Insight from Experience

CHA (Charisma) = Communication

- Explaining Findings
- Collaboration
- Teaching and Presenting

DEX (Dexterity) = Adaptability

- Quick Thinking
- Pivoting tools/contexts
- Response speed

Your neurodivergent traits map to these as **STRENGTHS**.

CHARISMA

Communication

Making Security Make Sense

- Technical writing
- Presentations
- Security awareness

Neurodivergent Directness = Competitive Advantage

THE BARD BUILD:
"You don't need to max STR if you can convince the Fighter to handle the combat for you."





THE DRUID BUILD:
“The intuitive leap that comes
from subconscious pattern
recognition”



WISDOM

Pattern Recognition

The Neurodivergent “Superpower”

ADHD: Intuitive leaps, connecting disparate data

“Something feels wrong about this email...”

Autistic: Exceptional attention to detail, long-term pattern memory

“This domain pattern matches that APT from six months ago...”



INTELLIGENCE

Technical Knowledge

- ✗ Retaining technical information
- ✗ Following frameworks systematically
- ✗ Learning theory before application
- ✗ Recalling protocol details from memory
- ✗ Step-by-step methodical study

THE WIZARD BUILD:

“Wizards approach problems through accumulated knowledge and documented procedures.”

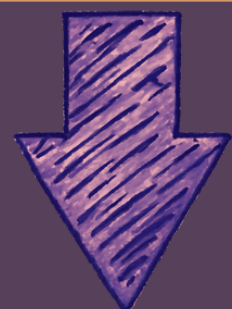
STRENGTH

Hands On Execution

When Doing Beats Knowing

Learn by DOING, not by reading:

- "Let me try it and see what breaks"
- Trial and error until it works
- Muscle memory over memorization
- Google the error, fix it, move on



ADHD/Autistic advantages:

Hands-on learning > theoretical study
Hyperfocus on active problem-solving
Comfortable with trial-and-error iteration

THE BARBARIAN BUILD:
"When everything's on fire,
you charge in with hands-on
action and raw resilience."



DEXTERITY

Adaptability

Context-Switching as Competitive Advantage

ADHD Strengths:

- ✓ Natural context-switching ability
- ✓ Interest-driven exploration across domains
- ✓ Thrives in dynamic, changing environments
- ✓ Novelty-seeking = breadth of knowledge

THE ROGUE BUILD:
“Pivoting quickly and
landing on your feet.”



CONSTITUTION

Focus & Endurance

Harness Hyperfocus

Work **WITH** your interest-based nervous system, not against it. Use **QUEST** to leverage dopamine triggers to help with task initiation and completion.

Quest - Your personal mission or passion
Urgency - Time pressure that triggers hyperfocus
Epic - Novel, unprecedented challenges
Stakes - Meaningful consequences/collaboration
Thrilling - What captures your interest

THE FIGHTER BUILD:
“Use action surge to push yourself beyond normal limits, persistent to the end.”

Prevent Burnout

WARNING SIGNS:

Physical: Getting sick on weekends, chronic fatigue, skipping meals
Cognitive: Executive dysfunction worsens, can't enjoy usual interests
Emotional: Emotional flatness, increased irritability, can't mask anymore

- Schedule rest like meetings (if not scheduled, doesn't happen)
- Set timers during hyperfocus - it's not infinite
- Body scan regularly - catch it early
- Dopamine menu by energy level (high/medium/low/emergency)
- Unmask time in safe spaces
- Permission to stop when tired, not when "done"



THE REAL INT PROBLEM

Why Low INT Almost Stopped Me

THE TRAP:

A lot of beginner cybersecurity career advice assumes high INT.

- Study networking fundamentals before anything else
- Master theory before practicing
- Memorize protocol specifications
- Follow certification roadmaps in order

THE TRUTH:

High STR + Low INT is a valid build.

It's okay to DO things without perfectly KNOWING them.

Your learning path should match YOUR stat spread.



YOUR CHARACTER SHEET

Assess Your Stats (1-20)

STR

Strength

HANDS-ON
EXECUTION

DEX

Dexterity

ADAPTABILITY

CON

Constitution

FOCUS
ENDURANCE

INT

Intelligence

TECHNICAL
KNOWLEDGE

WIS

Wisdom

PATTERN
RECOGNITION

CHA

Charisma

COMMUNICATION

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Where do I naturally excel?

What do people compliment me on?

What tasks feel effortless vs exhausting?

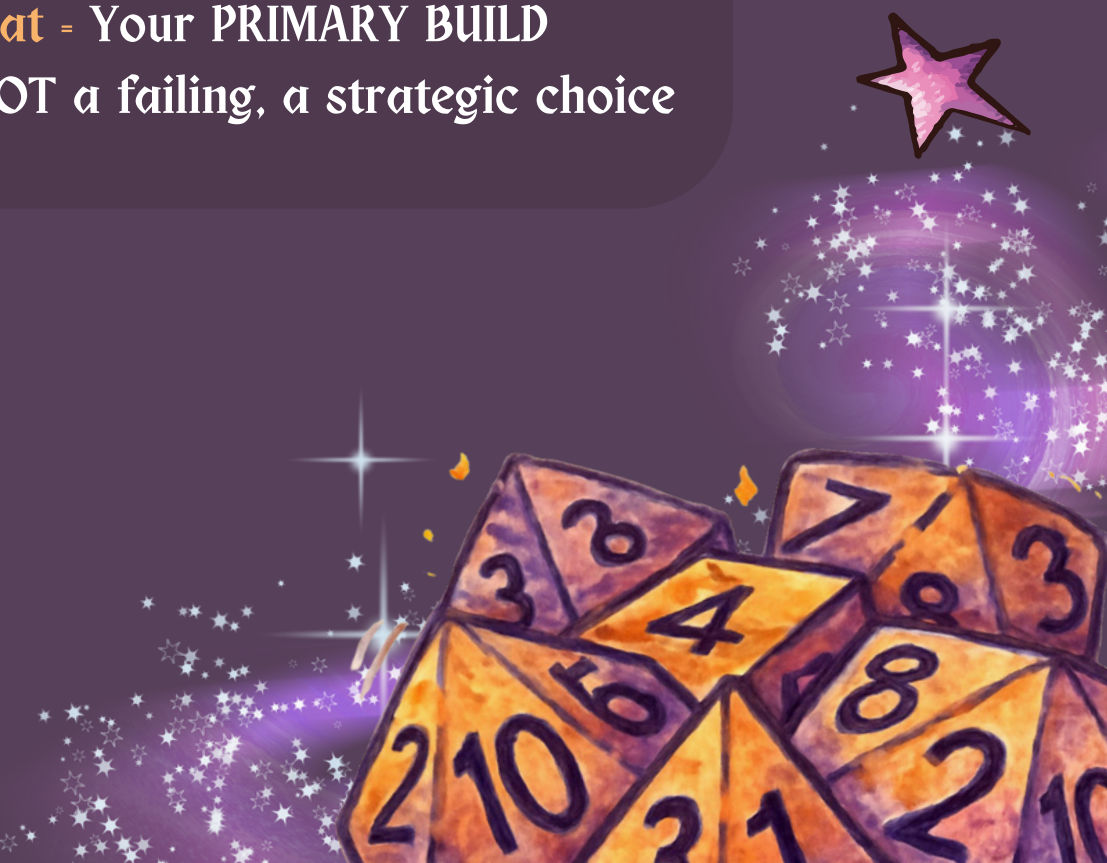
When do I lose track of time?

What "weaknesses" might actually be dump stats?

Your highest stat = Your PRIMARY BUILD

Your lowest stat = NOT a failing, a strategic choice

What's YOUR build?



ALL 13 D&D CLASSES

SORCERER → Security Researcher

Primary Attributes: Hands-On Execution (STR), Persistence (CON), Adaptability (DEX)

Role Description: You have innate curiosity and hands-on intuition for finding vulnerabilities and discovering new attack techniques. You learn by breaking things, not by reading about breaking things.

WARLOCK → Purple Teamer / Security Consultant

Primary Attributes: Adaptability (DEX), Technical Knowledge (INT), Hands-On Execution (STR)

Role Description: You bridge red & blue teams, gaining specialized knowledge from multiple sources. You're the translator between offense & defense, with both practical skills & technical understanding.

PALADIN → Security Architect / CISO

Primary Attributes: Communication (CHA), Technical Knowledge (INT), Hands-On Execution (STR)

Role Description: You uphold security standards with conviction, leading by example and defending organizational security posture. You combine technical credibility with leadership.

WIZARD → Digital Forensics Analyst

Primary Attributes: Technical Knowledge (INT), Persistence (CON), Pattern Recognition (WIS)

Role Description: You study artifacts methodically, piecing together what happened through careful analysis and research. Deep technical knowledge and patience are your power.

RANGER → Threat Hunter

Primary Attributes: Pattern Recognition (WIS), Persistence (CON), Technical Knowledge (INT)

Role Description: You track adversaries through the digital wilderness, following traces others miss. You know the terrain of your network better than anyone & can spot when something doesn't belong.

FIGHTER → SOC Analyst

Primary Attributes: Persistence (CON), Technical Knowledge (INT), Pattern Recognition (WIS)

Role Description: You're on the frontlines, monitoring alerts, responding to incidents, and maintaining defensive posture day after day. Discipline and versatility are your strengths.

BARBARIAN → Incident Responder

Primary Attributes: Persistence (CON), Adaptability (DEX), Hands-On Execution (STR)

Role Description: When everything's on fire, you charge in with hands-on action and raw resilience. Crisis is when you thrive, responding through practical execution and instinct rather than perfect knowledge.

ROGUE → Pentester

Primary Attributes: Hands-On Execution (STR), Adaptability (DEX), Pattern Recognition (WIS)

Role Description: You think like an attacker, finding vulnerabilities before the bad guys do. Stealth, creativity, and hands-on exploitation are your weapons. You learn by doing, not by reading.

MONK → Security Engineer

Primary Attributes: Persistence (CON), Technical Knowledge (INT), Pattern Recognition (WIS)

Role Description: You're on the frontlines, monitoring alerts, responding to incidents, and maintaining defensive posture day after day. Discipline and versatility are your strengths.

DRUID → Threat Intelligence Analyst

Primary Attributes: Pattern Recognition (WIS), Adaptability (DEX), Technical Knowledge (INT)

Role Description: You understand the ecosystem of threats, adapting to the ever-changing threat landscape and predicting how threats evolve through pattern recognition and knowledge accumulation.

CLERIC → Compliance / GRC Manager

Primary Attributes: Technical Knowledge (INT), Pattern Recognition (WIS), Persistence (CON)

Role Description: You serve the higher purpose of regulatory compliance and governance, bringing order to chaos through deep framework knowledge and organizational healing.

ARTIFICER → Security Engineer / Tool Developer

Primary Attributes: Hands-On Execution (STR), Technical Knowledge (INT), Persistence (CON)

Role Description: You build the weapons and armor for your team—automation scripts, security tools, detection rules. You see how things work and make them better through practical implementation.

BARD → Security Awareness / GRC Analyst

Primary Attributes: Communication (CHA), Pattern Recognition (WIS), Adaptability (DEX)

Role Description: You translate complex security concepts for non-technical stakeholders, build security culture, and bridge technical and business perspectives. You don't need deep technical knowledge if you can learn enough to communicate effectively.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



IF D&D DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU:

- Pokemon (types, evolution, moves)
- Music (theory, instruments, genres)
- Ecosystems (niches, food webs, symbiosis)
- Transit Maps (routes, connections, hubs)
- Periodic Table (elements, groups, properties)

The tool doesn't matter.
The principles do.

RESOURCES + NEXT STEPS

TAKE ACTION

START WITH ONE STAT

Which one is your highest? Focus there first.



FREE RESOURCES BY STAT:

STR: TryHackMe, HackTheBox, picoCTF, shart.cloudCTF

DEX: Security+ Roadmap, CISSP domains

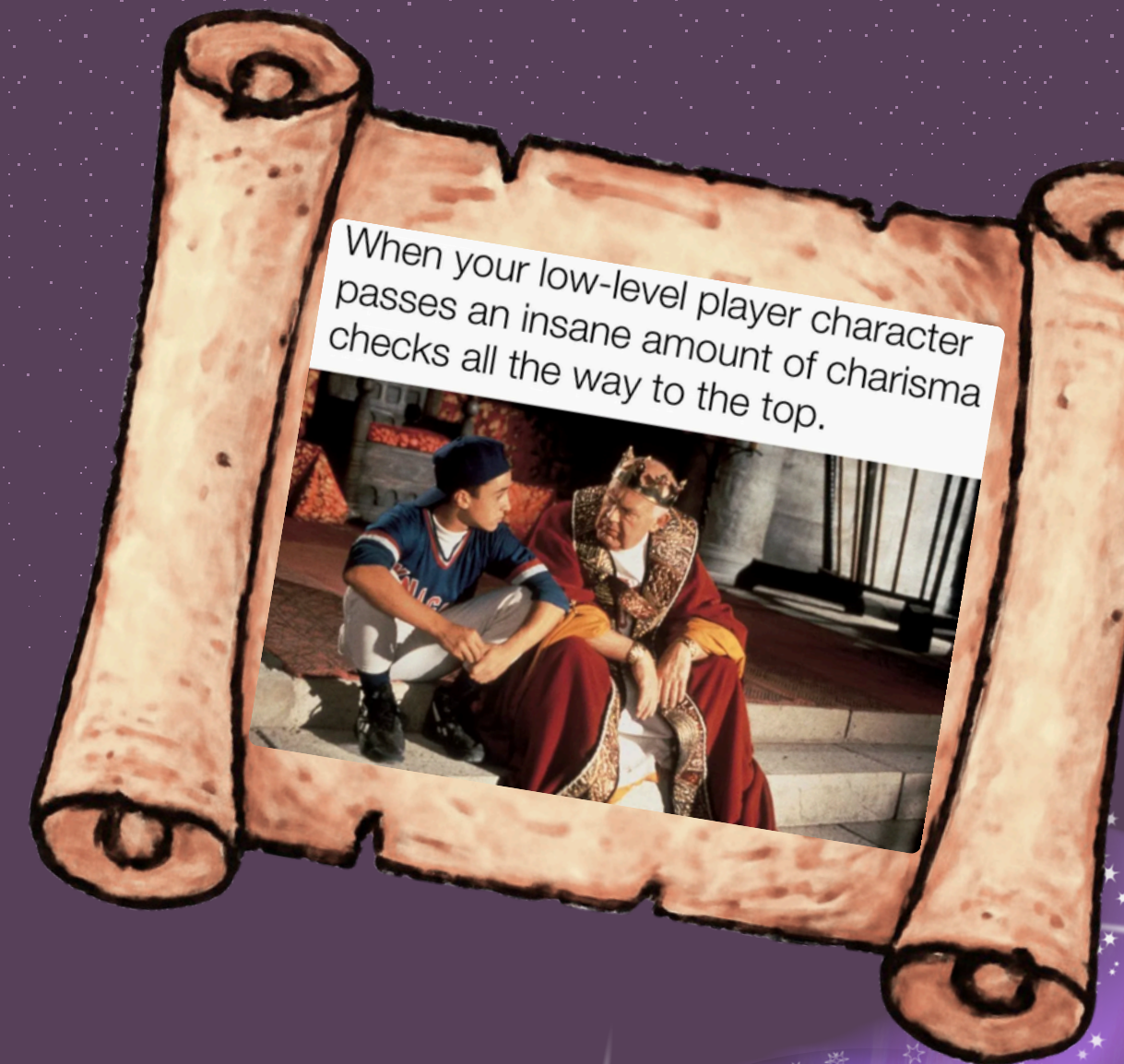
CON: Deep Work (book), Focusmate (body doubling)

INT: MITRE ATT&CK, NIST CSF 2.0

WIS: Splunk Fundamentals, OSINT Framework

CHA: Toastmasters, Hemingway App

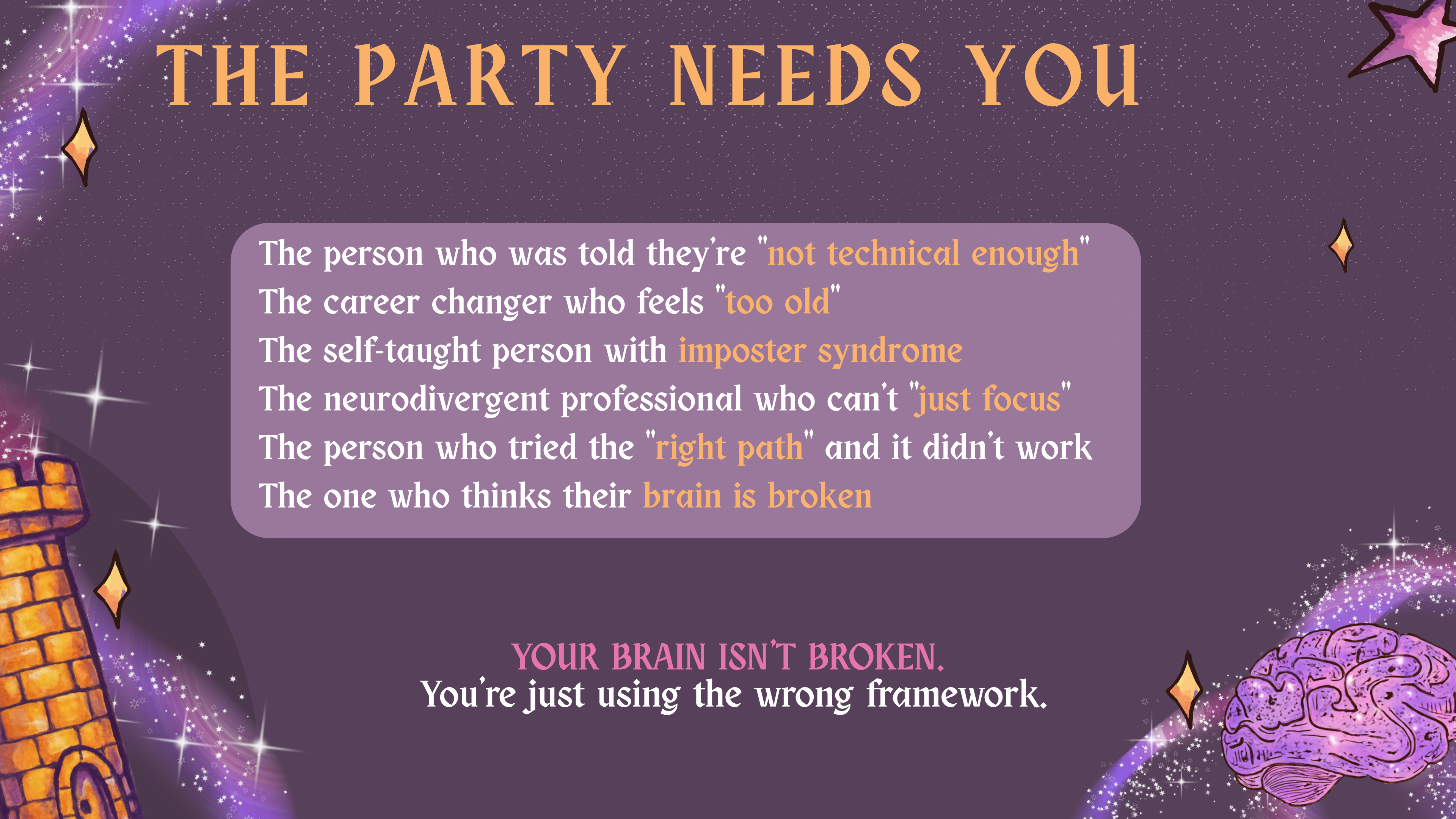
Links available at lizgore.com/resources



THE PARTY NEEDS YOU

The person who was told they're "not technical enough"
The career changer who feels "too old"
The self-taught person with imposter syndrome
The neurodivergent professional who can't "just focus"
The person who tried the "right path" and it didn't work
The one who thinks their brain is broken

YOUR BRAIN ISN'T BROKEN.
You're just using the wrong framework.



THANK YOU!

Liz Gore, AuDHD & Der 



accidental.it.guy



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[accidental-it-guy](https://accidental-it-guy.github.io)

For more resources, go to lizgore.com

And remember: You don't level up by fixing your dump stats.
You level up by maximizing your neurodivergent strengths.

