



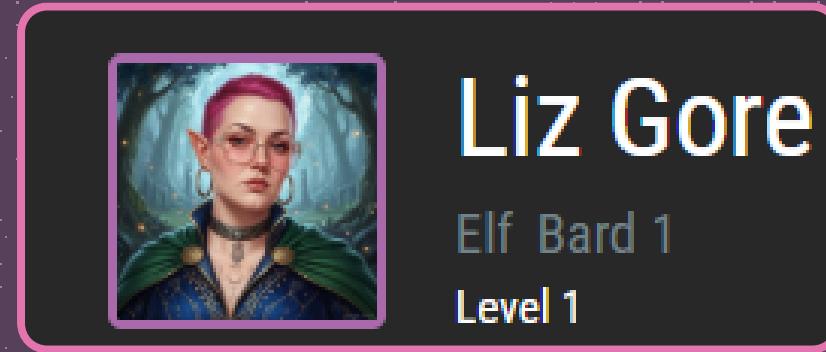
# INTELLIGENCE IS MY DUMP STAT.

How I Got Into Cybersecurity Anyway

"A Neurodivergent's Guide to Leveling Up"

By Liz Gore

# DEEP LORE



## Liz Gore

Age: 40

AuDHD: Late-diagnosed

Director of IT & Operations

GFACT, GSEC, & GCIH ✓

Baldur's Gate 3: 700+ hours



# THE CHALLENGE

Infinite Paths  
Conflicting Advice  
Imposter Syndrome  
Analysis Paralysis

What if I'm  
not smart  
enough?

Where do  
I start?

I don't have  
a technical  
background.



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



# WHY THIS FRAMEWORK EXISTS

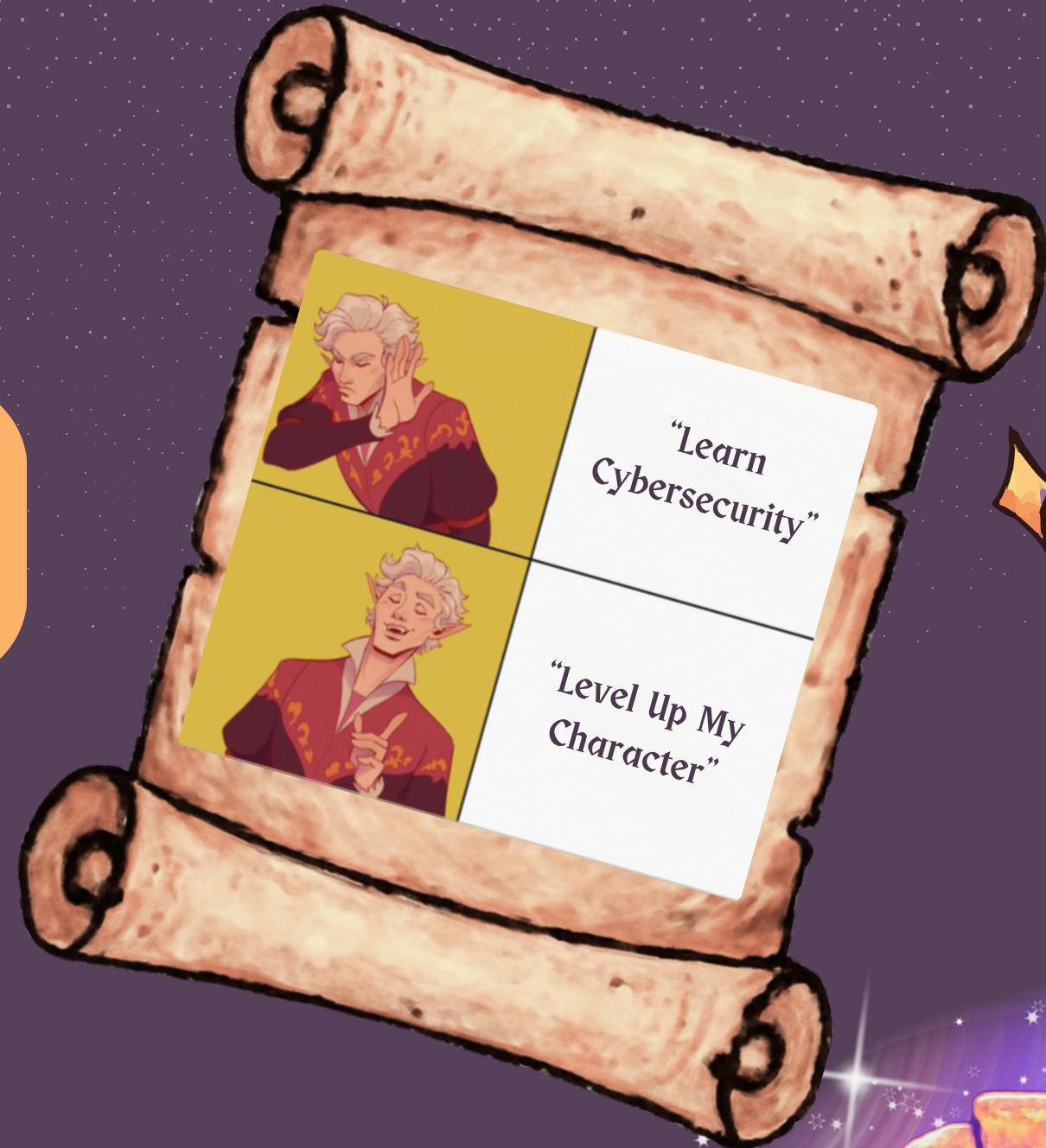
## MY BRAIN NEEDS STRUCTURE:

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."

# 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...”

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

# 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."*



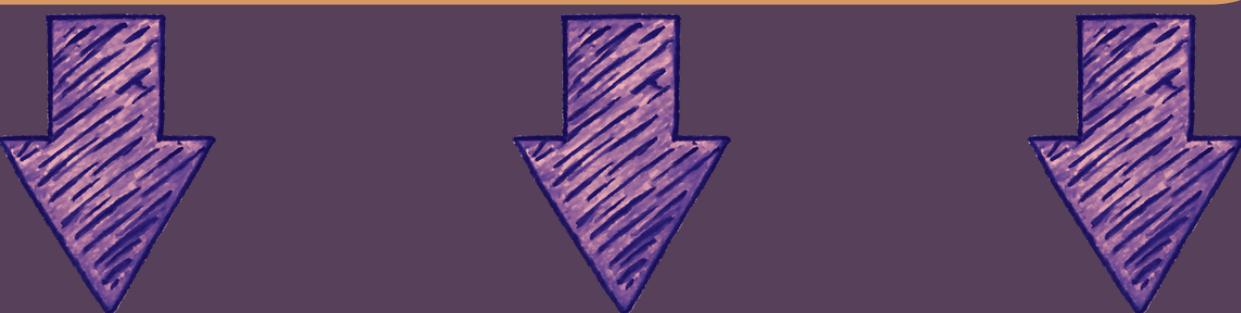
# STRENGTH

## 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.

**Q**uest - Your personal mission or passion

**U**rgency - Time pressure that triggers hyperfocus

**E**pic - Novel, unprecedented challenges

**S**takes - Meaningful consequences/collaboration

**T**hrilling - 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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)

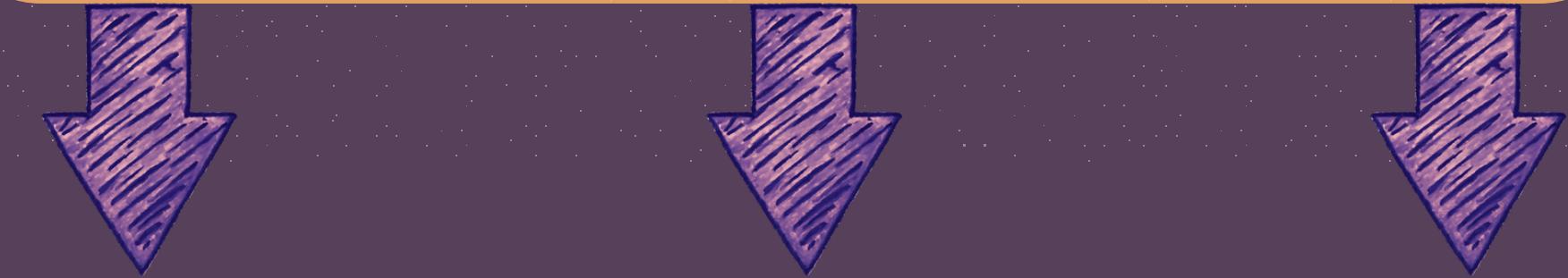
The tool doesn't matter.  
The principles do.

# 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

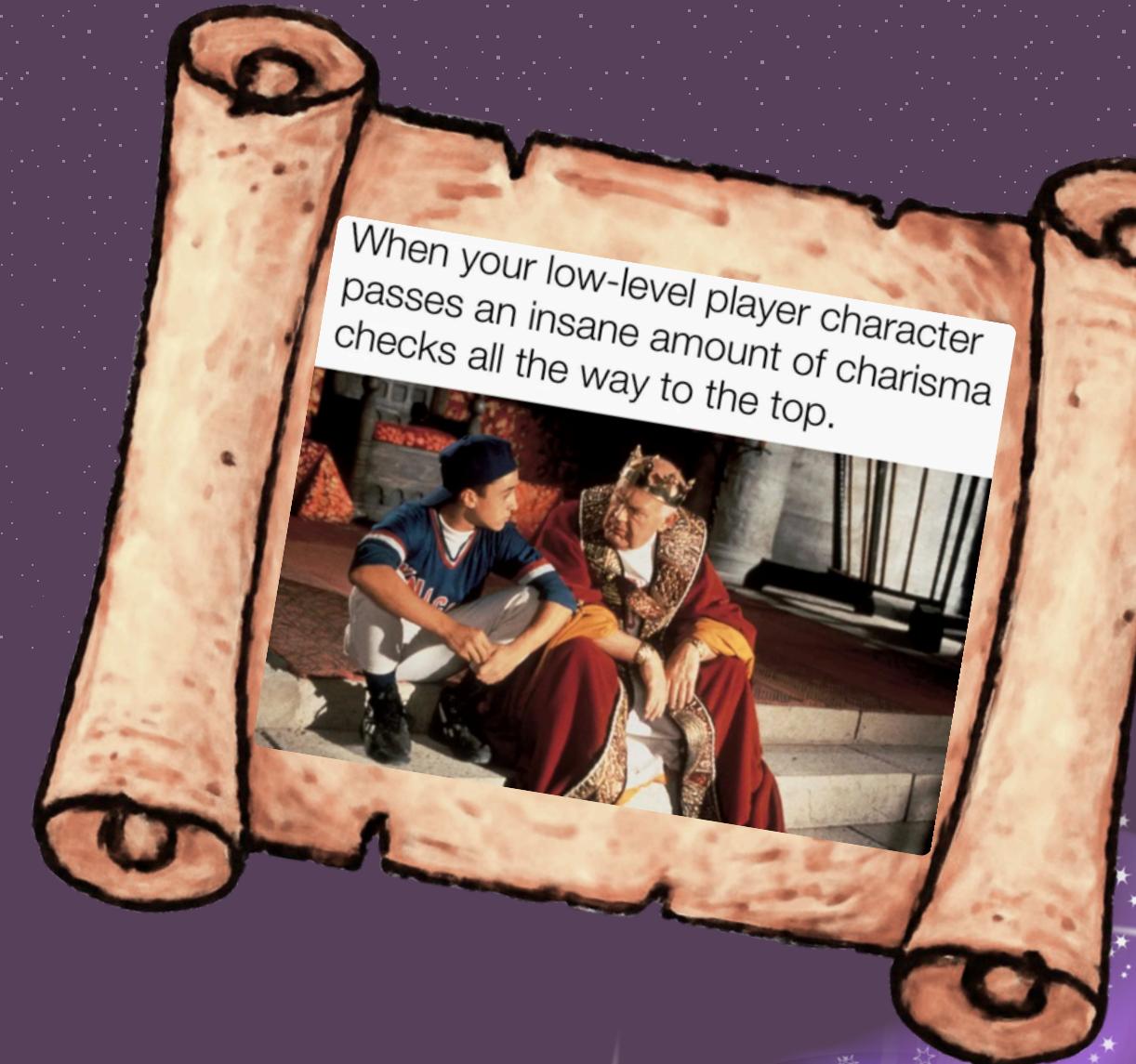
**CON:** Deep Work (book), Focusmate (body doubling)

**INT:** MITRE ATT&CK, NIST CSF 2.0

**WIS:** Splunk Fundamentals, OSINT Framework

**CHA:** Toastmasters, Hemingway App

Links available at [lizgore.com/resources](http://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



elizabeth-gore



accidental-it-guy

For more resources, go to [lizgore.com](http://lizgore.com)



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