

LETTER TO FUTURE ME

Dear future me,

It was inevitable, you knew this time would come. You're stuck, frustrated, and not sure how to proceed. Luckily you have a powerful resource because Udacity had the audacity and the capacity to introduce to you the concept of the *web developers mindset* and also, they cleverly had you write this letter to yourself as the first project in this Nanodegree. I'm not sure how, but I think they knew this might come in handy at some point. :smiley:

I'm confident this letter from you to me will help so here you go.

Remember **Joyce Akiko**'s article "[*How to navigate the up and downs of learning to code*](#)" where she introduces the notion of there being two types of mindsets, the **fixed mindset** and the **growth mindset**. Also, remember that in the article Joyce presents evidence indicating that if someone cultivated the growth mindset that they would encourage, in themselves, action over rumination by embracing failure as a learning experience and that this would ultimately result in greater success.

Then, she graciously outlined three specific tactics for cultivating this mindset:

Try these 3 specific tactics.

Here are some ways you can change your mindset to one that is more conducive to learning, so you can begin surfing those ups and downs of learning to code.

When you hit a problem, check your thoughts. If they sound anything like “I’m so stupid, I’ll never get this” or “Everyone else is lightyears ahead, I’ll never get paid to do this”, change your thoughts to questions instead. For example: what can I learn from this? How can I improve?

Don’t tally up successes and setbacks. Instead, focus on all the things that you learned that day and imagine all the things you will learn tomorrow.

Instead of comparing yourself to people who are farther along, think about how hard those people had to work to get where they are today.

You know this is the right way of thinking for success, at least at the time of writing this letter you knew, so if you haven’t adopted this mindset yet, you know you should **DO IT!**

Assuming you have been cultivating this mindset up to now, you know that you haven’t failed, it’s just that you haven’t succeeded **YET!** So chin up, the solution to your problem is right around the corner.

Maybe it's time to take a break, give yourself some space from this problem. Hopefully, you can remember that other great article titled "[*My first month coding: An emotional roller coaster*](#)" by "**Cathy Bechler**" wherein she describes her tactic to "**Walk away!**"

3.5 Walk away!

I didn't include this in my initial post in the community, but it's important enough to deserve its own .5 stage. To "walk away" could be to get a cuppa tea, do a different task, anything really as long as you Walk Away. Sometimes, I won't even look at the project until I've gotten a good night's sleep. Walking away gives me enough distance to calm myself from my frustration, it gives some distance. More importantly, it gives me the fresh eyes that are essential for debugging and approaching the project in a different light.

You know this is sometimes very necessary and maybe this is exactly what you need to do right now. Once you've had some time, come back to your project with the "*fresh eyes*" you need to move forward.

In her article, Cathy also described some possible next steps to take once you've returned to your project with a new perspective.

4. Go back, research, ASK QUESTIONS

Sometimes I'll get an epiphany around a specific concept just as

I'm dozing off. Other times, taking a break will help me catch those missing brackets, quotation marks, semicolons - they are so darn sneaky! But most of the time, walking away just isn't enough. I'll have to research more and ask someone a question.

I'm lucky enough to have a personal mentor & student community here to help me past this stage. But for someone not enrolled in an online program or a coding bootcamp, you're still never alone! Even if you don't have any techie friends, you can attend meetups, browse Stack Overflow, and engage in IRC channels. Codenewbie and r/learnprogramming, in particular, have wonderful communities. They're all more than willing to share their knowledge - don't be afraid to ask for help. I find it hard to ask questions, but I'm getting better at it. Sometimes I'll get just enough insight from asking the question, that a resolution will hit me like a bolt.

Since I know you so well, I know that you've already done exhaustive amounts of research and tried all the possible solutions you could come up with prior to taking your break so, if you find yourself still stuck after returning, the only reasonable next step is to **ASK QUESTIONS**, or more specifically, ask for help from the Udacity community via the course forum! This will no doubt result in either receiving the solution directly or being pointed in the right direction for the discovery of the solution you need.

Hopefully, that helped set you back on the right path again. I truly do hope you continue to press on with this programming stuff because

frankly, my future depends on it!

Sincerely,

The you of old

BRIEF STATEMENT TO SHARE GOALS

When I started this adventure into the coding world it was out of pure curiosity. I started investigating and poking around at behind the scenes of mobile apps, web pages, and stuff and I was intrigued as to how this stuff all worked. Honestly, that still is what's driving me to delve deeper. I can sense the focus of curiosity switching, though ever so slightly, from how does all this stuff work to what will I be able to create once I get good at this stuff. It's super exciting, to say the least. I absolutely love spending my time working the code. I have literally spent days with my head buried deep in my laptop working through some seriously stubborn noob problems. When I finally look up and take a breath, I realize days have passed and think, "*maybe I should take a break*" but that thought soon passes and I find myself drawn back in.

Reflecting on this, It's clear that I have found my passion and that this is how I should be spending my time. So, given the fact that I'm currently employed full-time in a completely different field, one of my goals is to be able to do this for a living. I want to do this. I **NEED** to

do this.

I also want to get good at this stuff, so good in fact that I get the opportunity to work on projects with companies that are at the forefront of technology and get the opportunity to work on the newest and most cutting edge stuff.

Although I'm confident I will make a career transition, at this point in time, I'm not exactly sure at how this will go. I would love to hear from you if you have any insight or suggestions regarding this?