Imposter Syndrome: Why Bootcamp Grads Have It

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Imposter syndrome is that nagging feeling you have no idea what you're doing, and you're afraid of being found out as a fraud. This accompanies the feeling that you're the only one in the office that feels this way.

You constantly think: *Am I good enough for this job? Do I belong here? Am I meant to be a developer? Am I capable of catching on?*

Imposter syndrome is very common in software engineering. According to a Blind report, 58 percent of employees at Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, and Google report that they sometimes feel they don't deserve their job despite their accomplishments.

A Salesforce employee said they felt like a fraud even after 14 years of working as an engineer.

The software engineering field, in particular, is full of people feeling like they are imposters. A bootcamp grad may not realize their feelings in their previous industry aren't going to come as easily in this field.

Web development in particular is evolving daily and there is much to learn and choose from when finding a solution.

As a frontend developer, you can create something that looks and works just as was asked of you. But, your manager might say you didn't chose the best code-based approach for this problem. Your already-low self-esteem will be affected.

As a coding bootcamp grad, who completed a Software Engineering Immersive program at General Assembly two years ago, imposter syndrome is inevitable. Bootcamps generally last 12 weeks, and prepare you for the job market alongside computer science majors with four year degrees. Naturally, not only are you doubting yourself, but so are other people.

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Imposter syndrome for bootcamp grads isn't all internal. In many work environments there is a negative view of bootcamps. Some hiring managers at tech companies do not hire bootcamp grads, as they do not believe in the quality of education provided.

Even if hiring managers aren't consciously ruling out bootcamp grads, subconsciously they are likely to hire someone who reminds them of themselves. Most hiring managers have a traditional computer science degree, and are likely to hire someone who went to the same school as them, has the same look as them, and is the same gender as them. This is why some companies end up not having diversity.

It can be awkward to hear a group of people talk about how bad coding bootcamps are, and to ponder if you should come clean and break the news that you attended one.

Or, if you are the token bootcamp grad in a team, you might feel added pressure to produce work that is above-expectations. If you don't do a great job — will they give another one a chance?

Bootcamp grads face stiff competition amongst themselves, alongside computer science graduates, as they are flooding the job market. In 2019, 23,000 students graduated from a coding bootcamp, according to Course Report. Bootcamp grads are often treated as second-class applicants.

Furthermore, bootcamp grads are known for being too inexperienced, too hard to train and too much of an investment to bring on in a company. After all, how can you compete with an applicant who has been coding since he was eight?

Essentially, as you go through your tech career, it is important to recognize that imposter syndrome is inevitable for everyone in the tech industry, whether they attended a bootcamp or not. You have to learn to be comfortable with this feeling and continue to move forward. Do not let this feeling sabotage. If you think you aren't good enough for too long — your thoughts will manifest. Keep at it.

I finished a coding bootcamp two years ago, I've worked at two companies since. I felt most comfortable on a team where everyone was diverse. My team had people who had also done

career pivots, were of all ages, were from different parts of the country and came from different family backgrounds. At that time, I did not feel like an imposter.