

BUILDING A NEW LIFE AFTER BURNOUT

Non Binary in Tech · London · July 29th, 2017





Damien Senger • hiwelo.

UX / UI Designer

Accessibility advocate

hiwelo.co • @iamhiwelo



Raccoon

my own web studio

raccoon.studio

BUILDING A NEW LIFE AFTER BURNOUT



28 years old,
2 burnouts.



So I will tell you
two stories.



Two different experiences
in **two** really different
environments.





1.

**Working as a campaign manager
for a political electoral campaign**



Yeah in the trash



A quick overview of a campaign manager job

- ▶ A final **deadline** you can't change.
- ▶ A lot of **responsibilities**:
I was ~~babysitting~~ in charge of 12 candidates.
- ▶ A **lot of skills involved** in a workday:
strategy, communication, administrative and legal stuff, PR, human resources management, etc.
- ▶ Work hours: 9am – 10pm the good days,
 7am – 2am the bad days.





1.

**Working as a campaign manager
for a political electoral campaign**



2.

**Working as a front end developer
in a small French web agency**



3?

I hope this slide will stay empty.

Two different experiences...
but one unique pattern.



How can we
detect these situations?



Listen to yourself!
**Your body can give you
a lot of clues.**



- ▶ Less performant
- ▶ Less focused, lack of memory
- ▶ Working more than the regular hours
- ▶ Fatigue, useless holidays
- ▶ Unstable mood, irritability
- ▶ Loneliness and exclusion
- ▶ Musculoskeletal disorders
- ▶ Risk behaviours



Three main things to watch:
**Resignation, exhaustion,
inefficiency.**



Burnout is hell. 🔥



Burnout is hell. 🔥
But it's not your fault.



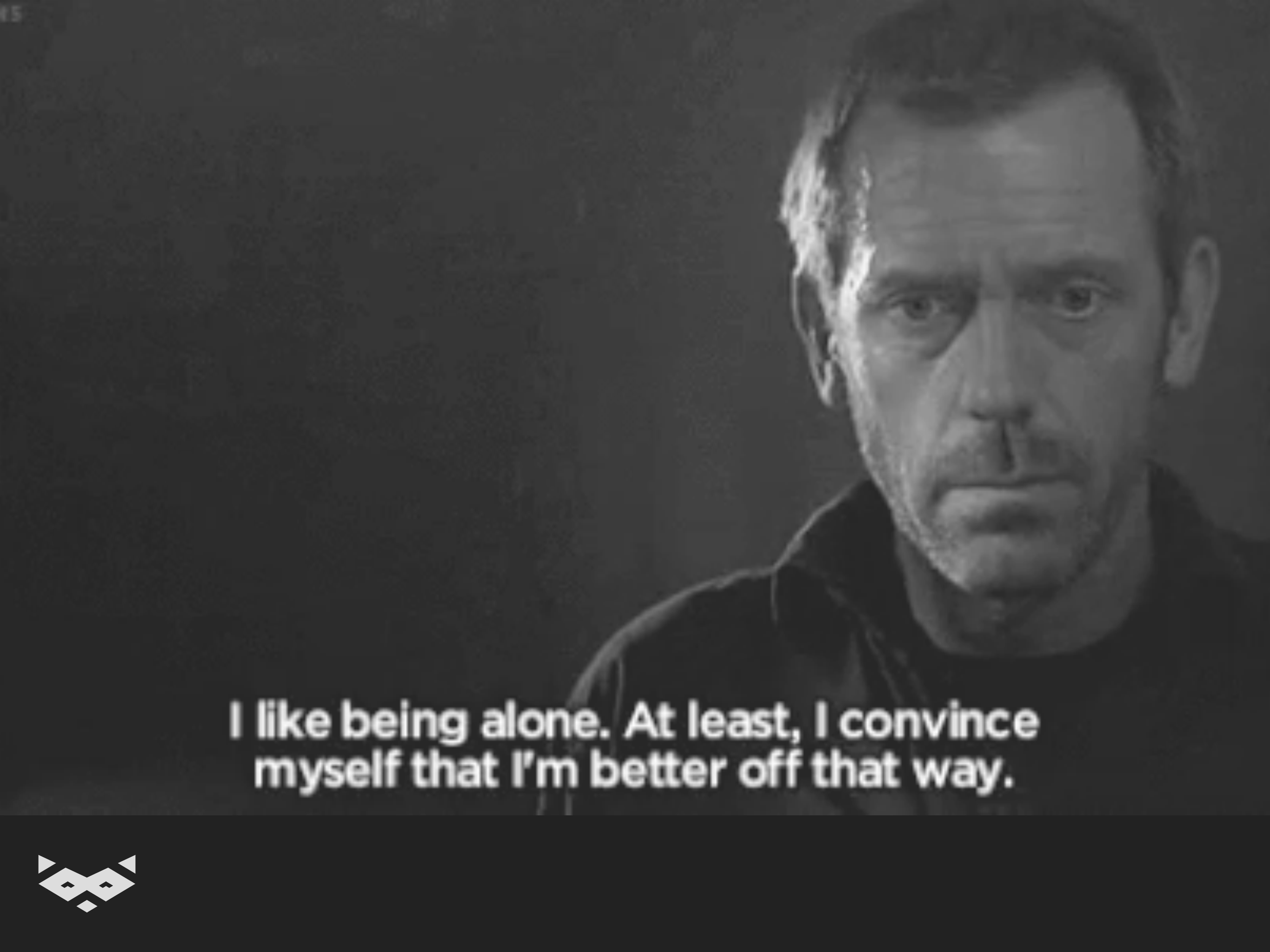
Burnout is hell. 🔥

You must do something against it.



Burnout is hell. 🔥
It will not resolve itself.





I like being alone. At least, I convince myself that I'm better off that way.



How can we
recover from a burnout?





1.

**You need to *accept your condition:*
this is a real disease, ask for help.**



2.

**You need to take your time,
and sometimes to make choices.**



3.

You need to
adjust your environment.

Reduce stress.



There is no good stress.



**Stress is a natural body reaction,
designed to be temporary.**



**Stress over time
turns into exhaustion.**



Three main things to watch:
Resignation, **exhaustion**,
inefficiency.



Fighting stress is the best solution against exhaustion.



I moved to a more peaceful city: Amsterdam.

Reduce fear.

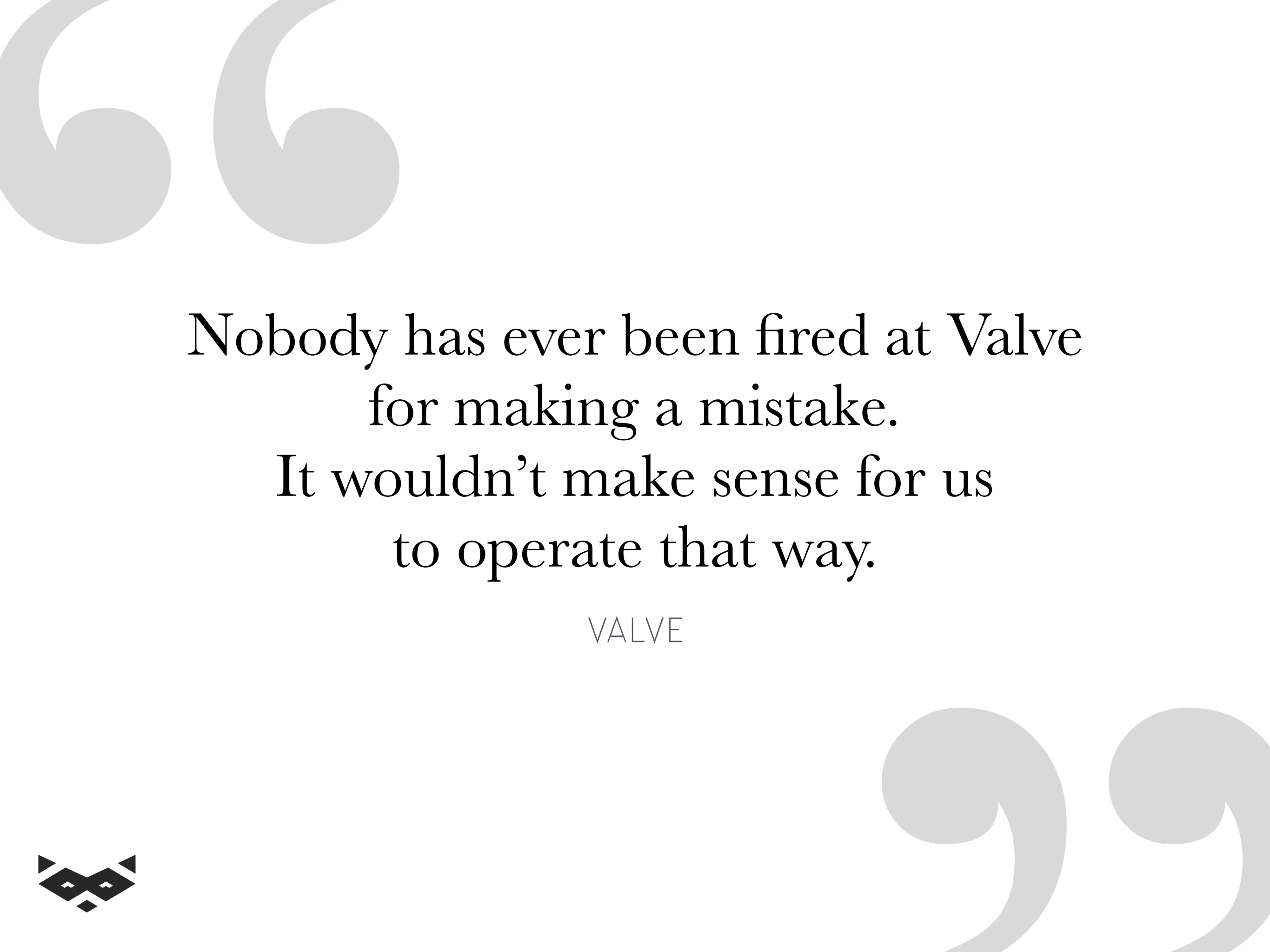


**At work, we have fear...
of everything.**



Judgement, failure, ratings, errors...
Is our work this much scary?





Nobody has ever been fired at Valve
for making a mistake.
It wouldn't make sense for us
to operate that way.

VALVE



**Failure is part of
the human process.**



**We can learn more from our
failures than our success.**



To fight fear, we need **more trust**
and **more independence.**



**Trust and independence are
needed to increase
self-confidence.**



Three main things to watch:
Resignation. exhaustion,
inefficiency.



Reducing fear is the best solution against resignation.



I chose to focus my job on my main interests:
accessibility and improving users' web experience.

Find help.



**Burnout involves one person.
This person is not responsible.**



**Burnout involves one person.
But it's a collective responsibility.**



**We need to find a better
work-life balance.**



**Don't hesitate to take
sick leave when needed.**



Ask for more breaks.
Ask for more research time.



**After a sprint, you need a break.
For your brain, it's the same!**



Say thank you.



If needed, ask for a new team.



Look for new opportunities.



**A more inclusive workplace
is needed for a good mental health.**



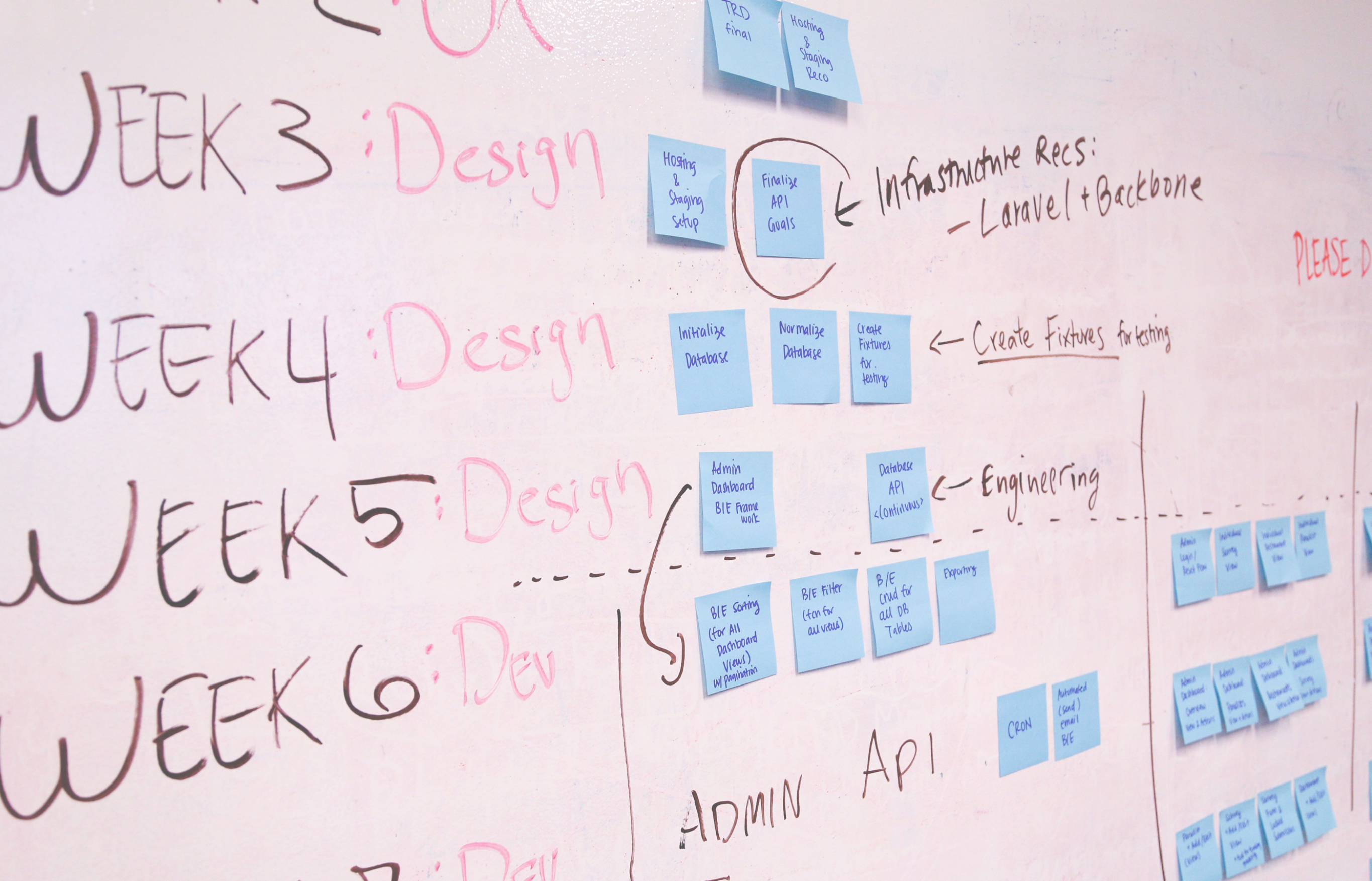
**Fight for yourself,
and for everyone else!**



Three main things to watch:
Resignation, exhaustion,
inefficiency.



Asking for help is the best solution against inefficiency.



Feeling over-whelmed, few days ago I asked for a new planning and different tasks: it worked well!

How can we
avoid these situations?



**We have
no super power.**



**We are no ninjas, gurus,
unicorns, rockstars or whatever.**



We are professionals.
We deserve respect.



We must say no.



No.



Say it.
Say it over and over.
Never stop saying it.




Nope.



**Listen to yourself.
Learn from yourself.
Watch for your limits.**





I just talked with William,
I know you are no backend developer but
we have this emergency.
Can you fix it for tomorrow morning?

Your project/product manager at 5pm.



A man in a dark blue suit and red patterned tie is sitting at a desk. He has a frustrated expression, with his right hand raised palm-up in a 'stop' or 'no' gesture. On the desk in front of him is a laptop, a glass of water, and several papers, including one with a diagram of a person. The background is a plain wall.

Nope, nope & nope.





Do I get bonus points if I act like I care?



**If you work on unknown things,
you need time. Ask for it.**



**We must control
our plannings.**



**Tasks, deadlines, schedules:
tell your limits and ask for help!**



**Switching often between tasks
is highly exhausting for our brain.**



**And no, I mean, NO task ever takes
only five minutes!**



We are not our work.

We are more.



Thank you!
(and please pardon my French!)



damien@raccoon.studio • @iamhiwelo