

It's not Easy, but You're not Alone Feeling That Way

It's the middle of [#vDM30in30](#) right now, and that means most of the participants in our 30 blogs in 30 days challenge are about to hit the proverbial wall. Why does that happen? Some call it writer's block, and most of the folks reading this have faced it at some time.

Regardless of what we do, it's not easy. If you push yourself to the "next level" with anything, it's not easy. It's not supposed to be. The important thing to realize is that you're not alone in feeling that way.

The worst thing that anyone can ever say to another person is "it must be so easy for you", because it's not. It's just different levels of difficulty and managing that difficulty. I wanted to take a few moments and share some quick things that stand out for me on this.

Impostor Syndrome

I won't go on long about [impostor syndrome](#), but it's very real for a lot of people, especially in IT based on my interactions with the community. I've faced some bouts of it myself on more than a few occasions.

Take some time out to speak with your colleagues and peer community. If you look around at an event, especially on stage at the presenter, you're going to find someone who has been struck by the feeling themselves as well. At the start of every bike race, every live gig I did with my bands, and every time I have to present at a technical conference, there is always a moment where a little fear sets in. What we get better at over time is being able to get through those moments more easily and comfortably.

Writing and Diagramming

Creating content regularly is something that I happen to do for a living. It ranges from general thought leadership to deeper technical content. Looking back at how much content has been created can be a little overwhelming sometimes. It's even more overwhelming when you look ahead at what needs to be done.

While writing this, I'm looking in my Evernote at 10 partially written articles or blog titles. I hit the wall and needed a break, but sometimes those breaks can be longer than healthy, and we don't know how to take them or come back from them. I'm incredibly lucky and inspired by my family every day to give me that extra push, but these are some quick tips on breaking out of the writer's block moments with writing and creating diagrams.

The biggest thanks go to [@vmiss33](#) on these tips:

- Pick an outside topic and just write a quick couple of paragraphs to warm up the engine.
- Can't get the diagrams from your mind to Visio? Write it out on paper and take a picture.
- Write for someone else to help them. When it's not your deadline, you may find it unlocks the writing engine.
- Read. The best writers are good readers. Find inspiration and content from others.

VCDX from the Sidelines

VCDX is the VMware Certified Design eXpert certification for those not already familiar. Having just witnessed the VCDX process that [@vmiss33](#) completed successfully as VCDX #236, it is a humbling process to watch unfold. There are countless hours that go into planning, diagrams, install guides, presentations, lab work, study, and much more.

Watching the mock defence sessions is also incredibly humbling. If you take any expert on any technology and then put them on the other side of the table and ask deep technical details about technologies, you can find that even the most comfortable technologists can hit the wall. It's much easier to imagine going through it when you're not being hit with the questions.

Get involved with the VCDX study groups and watch how they work. It is humbling and impressive. The VCDX designation is one that is well deserved when it's achieved.

Troubleshooting and Taking Breaks

My specialty is troubleshooting. Using techniques that I've picked up over years from my peers and managers, I've worked very hard to be able to deal with stressful situations. In fact, I find them to not be stressful in many cases. When things are in disarray, I have been able to create a sense of calm for myself and my team which helps to center us in those difficult situations.

One trick that I learned along the way is to take mini breaks. It's as simple as literally getting up and walking around the office floor for a few minutes, or taking the elevator downstairs to walk around the building and back in. Those routine processes of getting up and using your muscle and process memory to step away from things can be enlightening, often giving you that "aha!" moment as you take a break from staring at the computer screen trying to find the issue.

Don't just leave without telling anyone though, but make sure to let the team know that you need a few minutes to take a break. We are in IT, not surgery. You can take a few minutes to refresh. There is a reason that we come up with some of our best ideas in the shower. It's a few minutes where you have nothing else to deal with and it frees your mind to solve things, even in a few short minutes.

And the next time that you hear someone say "it must be so easy for them" about someone else, you can smile a little inside because you know that it isn't easy, they just have gotten through some tough moments and made it look easy. Also, take some time to share your story with others. There is an incredible comfort that comes which is often met with the reply "wait, so it isn't just me that feels that?"

If it was easy, it wouldn't feel as rewarding ☐