

*and i knew i was a teacher when*

An artist lecture written for and performed during “Faculty Lunch Talks”

Columbus College of Art & Design

April 4th, 2019

(words written in **bold** throughout corresponded to revealing next image on classroom projector)



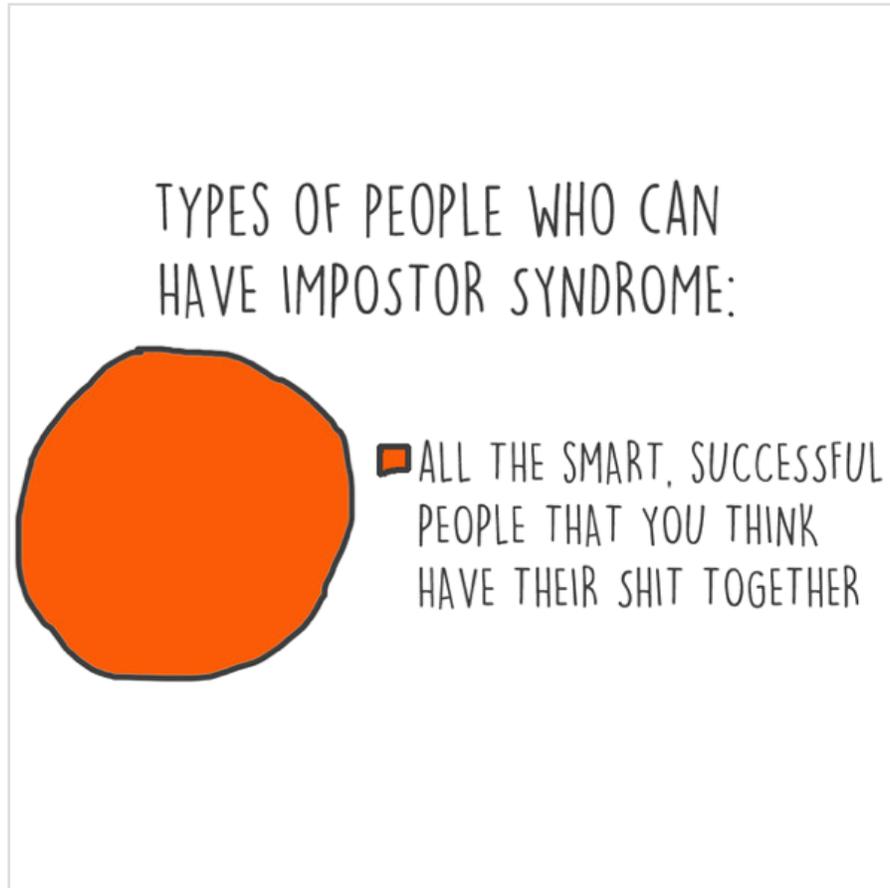
For those of you who know me well, you probably know that I love to talk, or at least enjoy the activity as opposed to dreading it. I love to talk and to laugh even more, hoping to have others laughing at some point in our interaction throughout the day no matter the length of time we're together. If you are or have been one of my students, you know I like to send very long-winded emails of which I try to warn at the beginning will be long-winded...something about the opportunity to type out everything happening the next class really gets my word count cranked to level *ridiculous*. And for those of you that may not know me at all, hello, I hope something from this lecture resonates with you; better still, makes you laugh.

The outfit I'm wearing is actually a pair of vintage clown coveralls. In March of last year, on a quest for furniture to go with my thesis work that I later ended up eliminating, I went thrift shopping in Clintonville. More like vintage antique shopping by the time I saw the prices, but still cool to look around nonetheless. Ironically hunching my 5' 11" frame over in the low-ceiling basement of one of these shops, I saw these pair of coveralls hanging from the ceiling, ironically disturbing and hilarious. What were the chances this thing would fit me? Pants don't fit me, leggings are almost always too short, and under my arms get into an absolute choke hold whenever I try most jackets on at the store. Something about these coveralls though...I snapped 'em up for a steal of \$18, tried them on when I got home, and realized they could look even cooler by simply cuffing the legs up.

Sometimes you have to make things work. But just because I put on something to wear doesn't make me the associated occupation of the outfit. Or does it? At the very least, it's pretty funny, and helps me remember that I already am me.

So keeping the idea of funny in mind, lets start with something hilarious...

## Imposter Syndrome



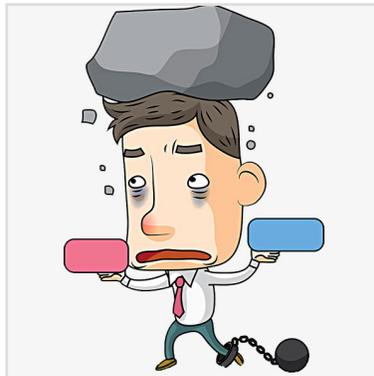
How many of you have heard of this term?

It's a wicked monster, also known as *imposter phenomenon*, *impostorism*, *fraud syndrome*, or *the imposter experience*. It's a vicious, psychological thought pattern in which a person doubts their accomplishments and has a persistent internalized fear of being exposed as a "fraud".

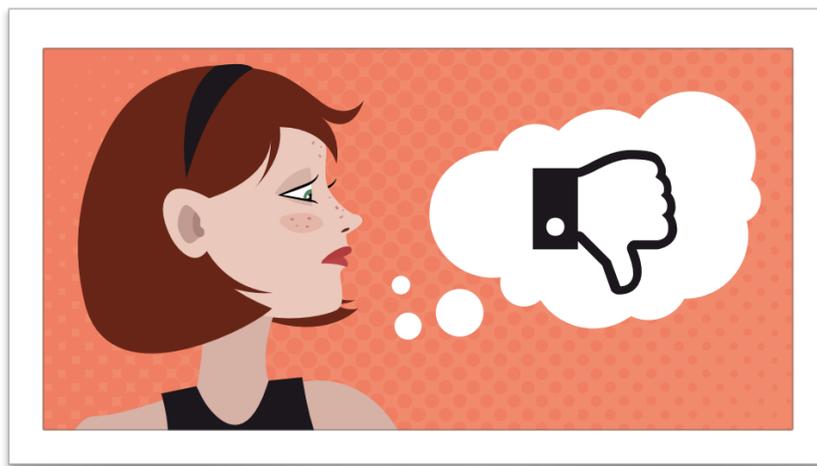
How do you know if you have imposter syndrome? Well, according to the academia-rich website [fairygodboss.com](http://fairygodboss.com) – signs include a lack of **self-confidence**,



**anxiety,**



doubts about your **thoughts**,



**abilities,**



**achievements,**



and **accomplishments,**



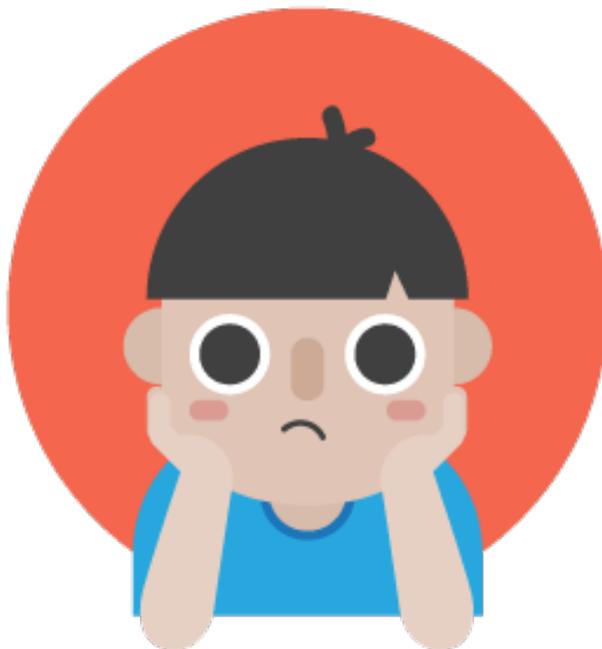
**negative self-talk,**



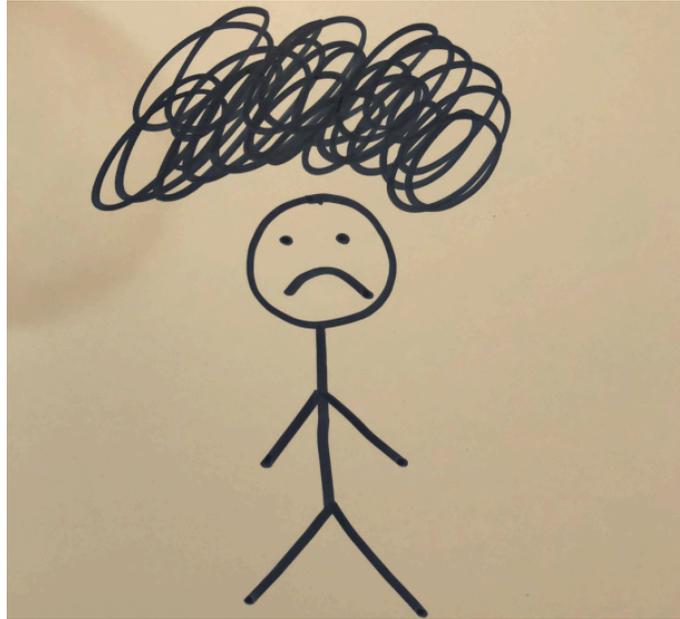
feelings of **inadequacy**,



as well as **dwelling on past mistakes**



and **not feeling good enough**.



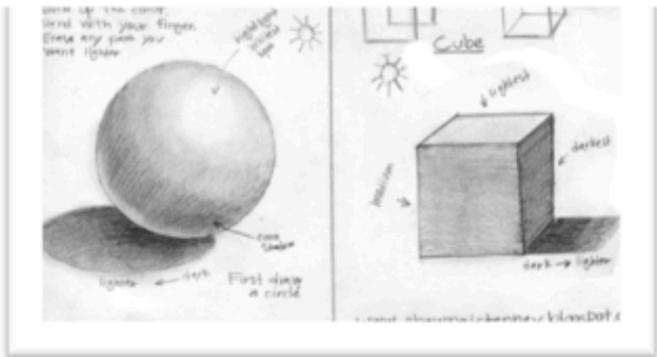
Basically me at least five times a day – most especially when trying to figure out how to write the parameters of a project into some kind of cohesive handout. Although **this** is an exaggerated version of what one of my first handouts looked and sounded like, it's pretty close to what felt like the truth.

↓ **AWFUL** ↓

Shapes. Big shapes. Little shapes. Shapes are great ways to start up your drawing skills. Make sure to include shadows and highlights. Shapes...a circle is a shape. So is a square. Do 4 of them in stipple, 3 of them in cross hatch...make those triangles. 54 of them should be rendered. You should fill up a sketchbook page, but not each time. You can group things, but I rather you didn't. And use all of your pencils. Label each pencil you use in the drawings. Welcome to Drawing Methods, I promise I know what I'm doing.

Things eventually **improved**.

**MUCH BETTER**



The image shows two hand-drawn sketches. The left sketch is a sphere with a shaded top and bottom, and a shadow cast to the left. It includes handwritten notes: 'press up the corner', 'blend with your finger', 'erase any pen you want to show', 'lighter', 'First draw a circle', and 'dark'. The right sketch is a cube with a shaded top and right side, and a shadow cast to the right. It includes handwritten notes: 'Cube', 'lighter', 'darker', and 'dark -> lighter'.

- Cross hatch, stipple, and gradient render a single cube.
- Cross hatch, stipple, and gradient render a single cylinder.
- Cross hatch, stipple, and gradient render a single sphere.
- Choosing your favorite method, fully render the group of all three shapes.

With three different renderings of each shape and one group of shapes rendered in your choice of value style, you should have 10 drawings total. All drawings should be done in your Drawing Methods sketchbook, each taking up the majority of one page for 10 pages total. You are welcome to use pen or pencil, and can make smaller surrounding drawings and notes as shown in the example above.

What can someone experiencing this feeling do to combat the issue? The answers are as long and varied as any search engine result yields or friend has to offer in advice, but I'll let you in on how I do it...

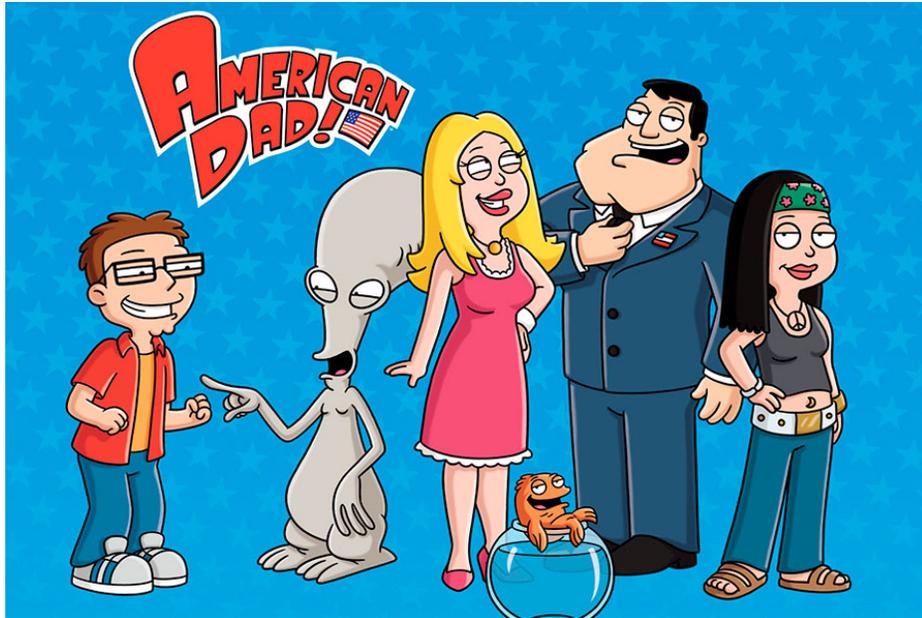
I try at least three things: shift the fear towards **curiosity**,



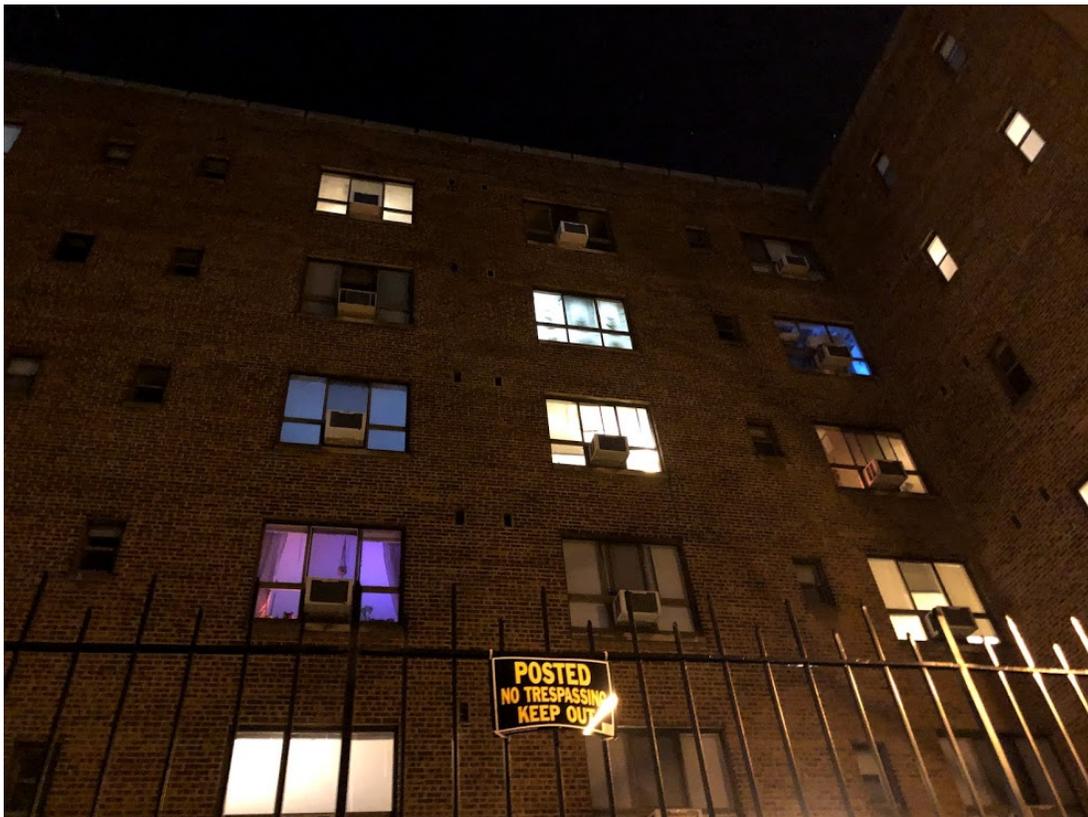
spin anxiety into **energy**,



and watch, read, or listen to something that makes me **laugh**,



teaches me **something**,



or even better, **both**.

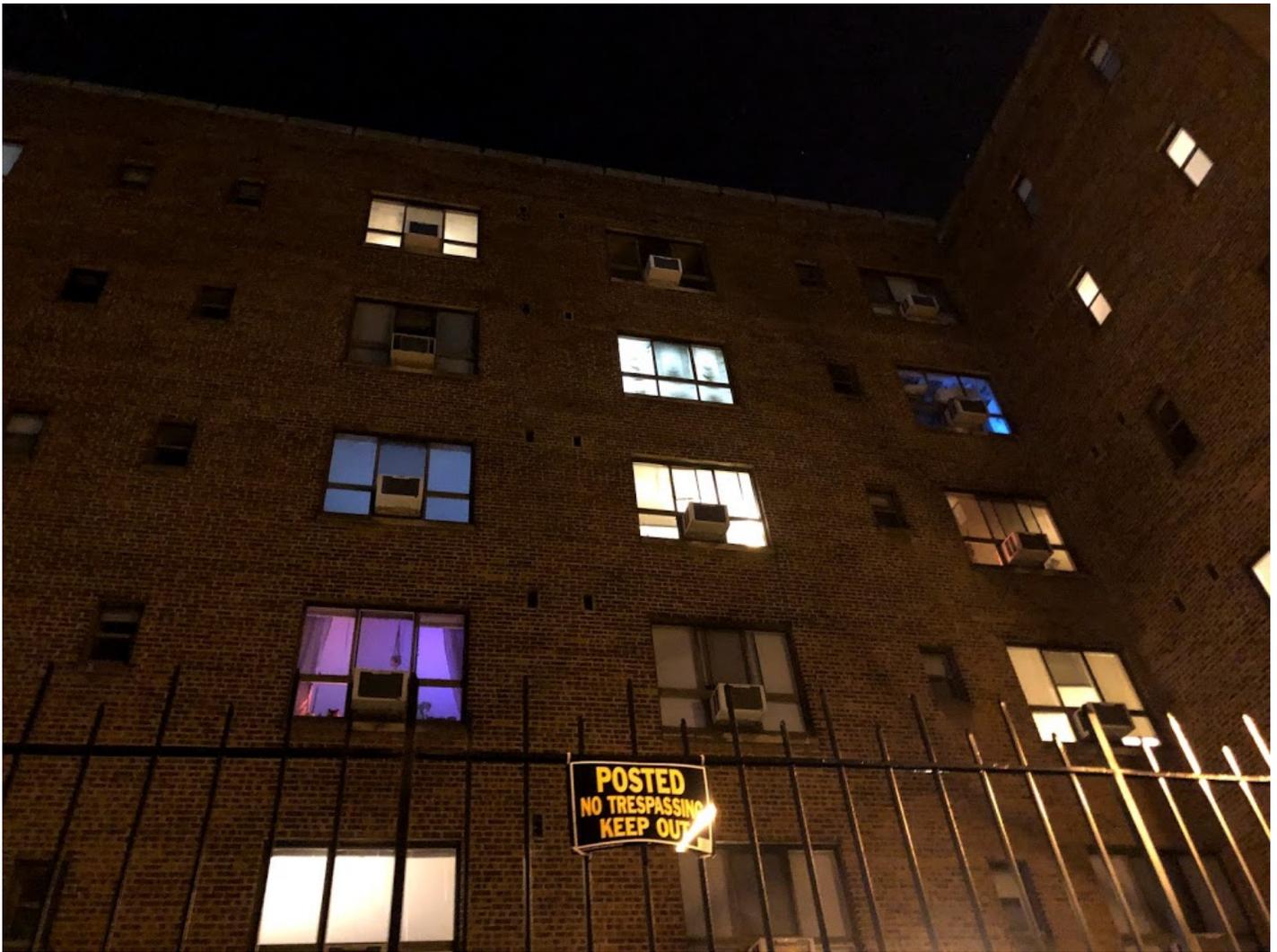


By becoming **curious** about something I'm afraid of or stomach-churningly-nervous about, say, the very lecture I'm giving right here, right now, I allow more room for other thoughts and ideas to join. Note the word choice of *join*, and that the idea isn't to try and stuff down the feeling of fear and nerves, as that usually results in them gaining more clout.



Much like the way coal crushes down into a diamond, I try to take the friction in anxiety and compact it down into energy I can actually use. Back in my native town of South Bend, Indiana, it used to drive me absolutely insane when neighbors wouldn't take the time to match all the bulbs in their exterior light fixtures.

**Passing** by my own apartment complex at night, I now find myself fascinated by all the variety of color and glow my neighbors live within, neat little squares of pastel and fluorescent in a wall of brick.



As for my third trick – I truly believe laughter is one of the most helpful, beautiful, sincere, and dynamic ways to combat any kind of doubt.



*play clip up to 0:24 mark:*

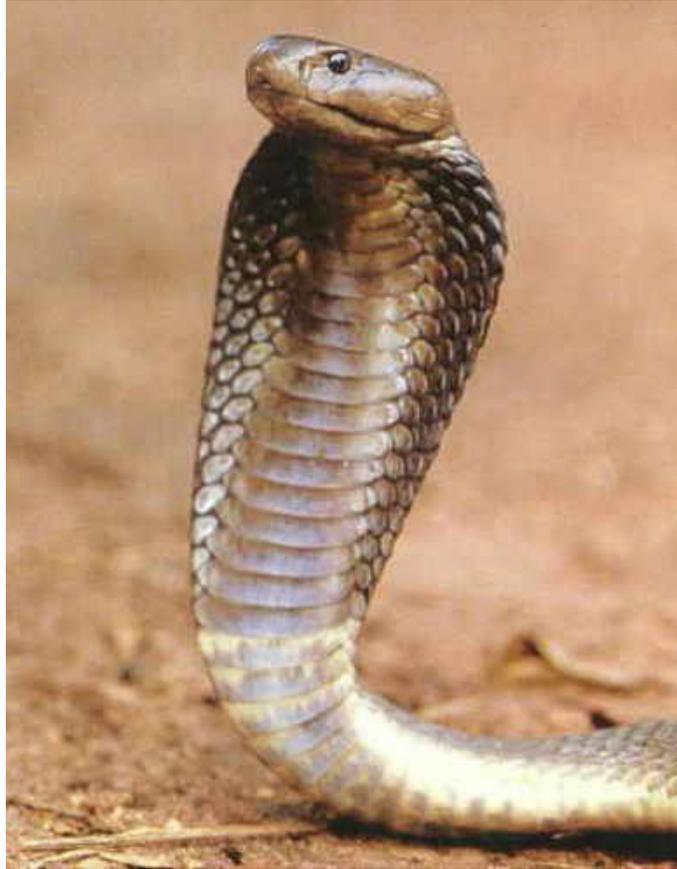
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTRtH1uJh0g>

Laughter can often be done without much thinking, but I also rely on it and utilize it as a tool in times where I can't seem to find the spark I'm looking for. This was especially helpful in the days leading up to my first time teaching on my own.

Before delving into that experience, how about I teach you all something right now? Something you can use in your daily routine, whether you're a teacher, student, or forever striving to be both as I do. First, a little overview: in the animal kingdom, all animals big or small, will open their **bodies**,



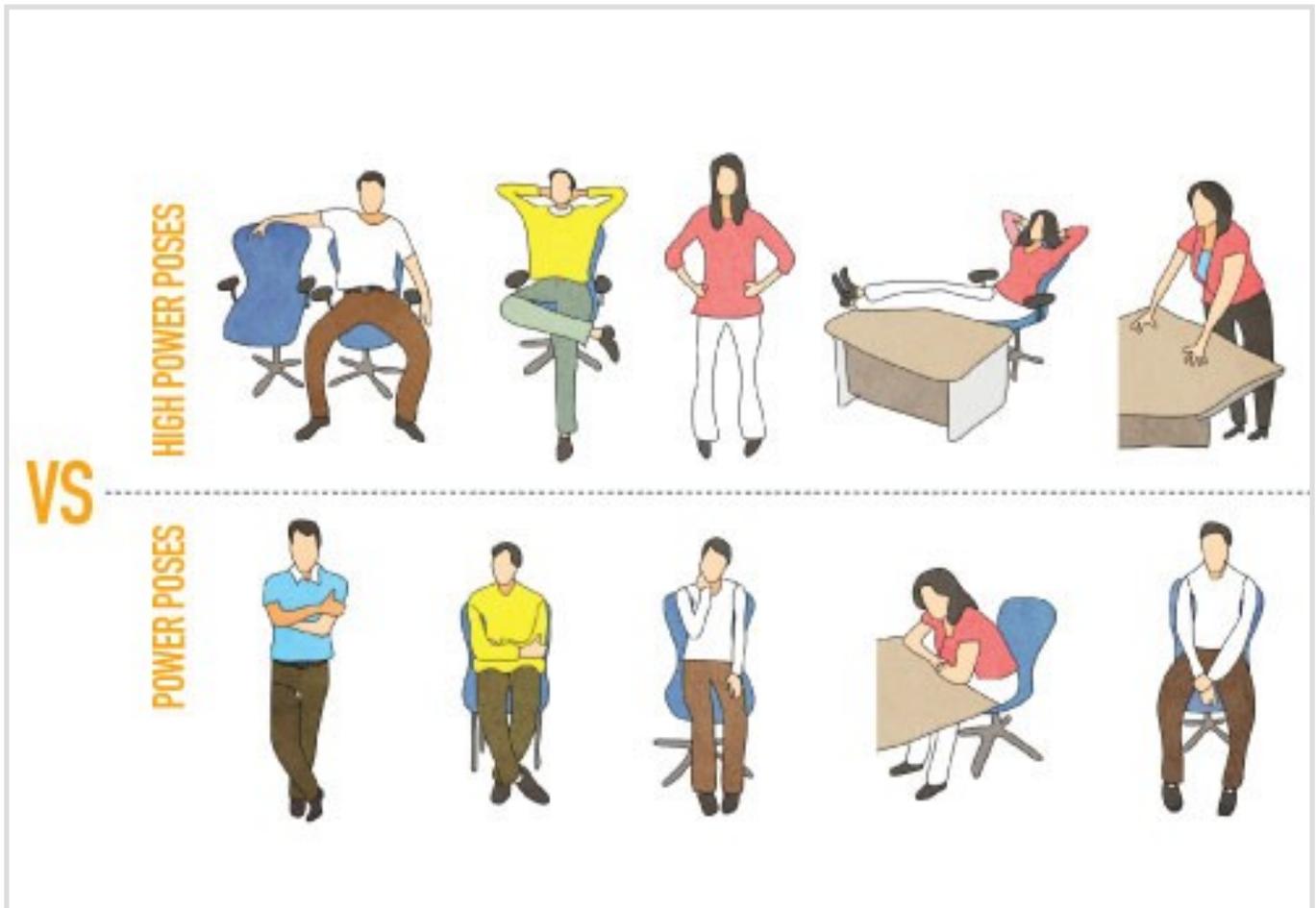
**gills,**



**and wingspan**



as wide and tall as possible when wanting to appear the alpha and as dominating as possible to other animals and potential predators. It's an intrinsic body language, referred to as "non-verbal expressions of power and dominance", and a kind of communication that **humans** practice too.



***DEMO** wild animal/power posing*

Wow, I feel so much better and empowered already. I hope you do too.

When I graduated from Saint Mary's College in May of 2012, fresh BFA degree now under my belt, I spent what was pretty much the entirety of that summer in a hazy trifecta of postgraduate depression: drinking, crying, and binge watching movies that I actually drove to the only remaining movie rental store in town to rent. Something about the journey over to the 90s land that is Family Video, where I could drive mindlessly, pull into the parking lot, and **gaze** in a sad stupor at all the title options like candy really did something for me. To this day, Netflix menu scrolling still doesn't quite cut it.



I knew I wanted to go on to graduate school for my MFA so that I could continue doing the things that I loved, and earn the degree necessary to teach art at the collegiate level. I didn't exactly know how to go about it...the majority of my friends were gone – either back home or not coming back to their hometown, and all the former access to classrooms, labs, studios, printers...even the paper inside them that was so easy to steal... every point of access was now gone. **I was back to the basement studio**



I'd proudly set up for myself in middle school; cassette-equipped boom box, flickering fluorescent lights, spiders, and every color tube of acrylic paint under the sun, now just as dry. I had always planned to cleave my time neatly - wait exactly one year, and return to school in the fall of 2013. I would end up waiting three, an unexpected health hiccup

pushing it to a fourth (another artist talk, another day...),



until I finally began my MFA journey here at **CCAD** in the fall of 2016.



A little earlier that same summer, as I was preparing to move out of my home for the first time ever, I went into an absolute tear around the house. I had lived there all my life, and it made perfect sense to me that every single drawer, cabinet, box, closet, shelf, and other means of stowaway must be overturned so that I didn't "forget anything". I wound up reorganizing all the family photos and albums, running out to Target for proper bins with lids to store them neatly into the foyer closet, away from the eroding threat of moisture and mildew the basement had posed in their former home.

*"Active Procrastination..."*

She's a cheeky little bastard that still gets me to this day. Instead of carefully packing things into boxes and covering clothes with garment bags, I went combing through my entire family history, mesmerized by how many people somehow related to me had changed or were now long gone. **(SLOWLY CLICK THROUGH NEXT 5 IMAGES)**



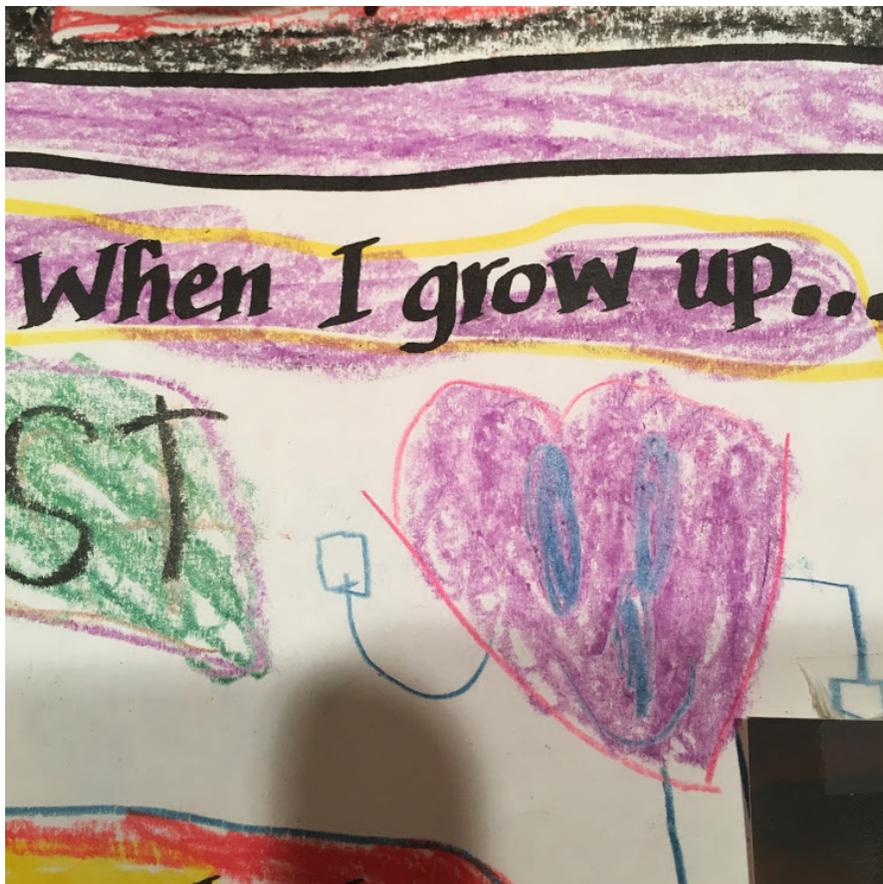
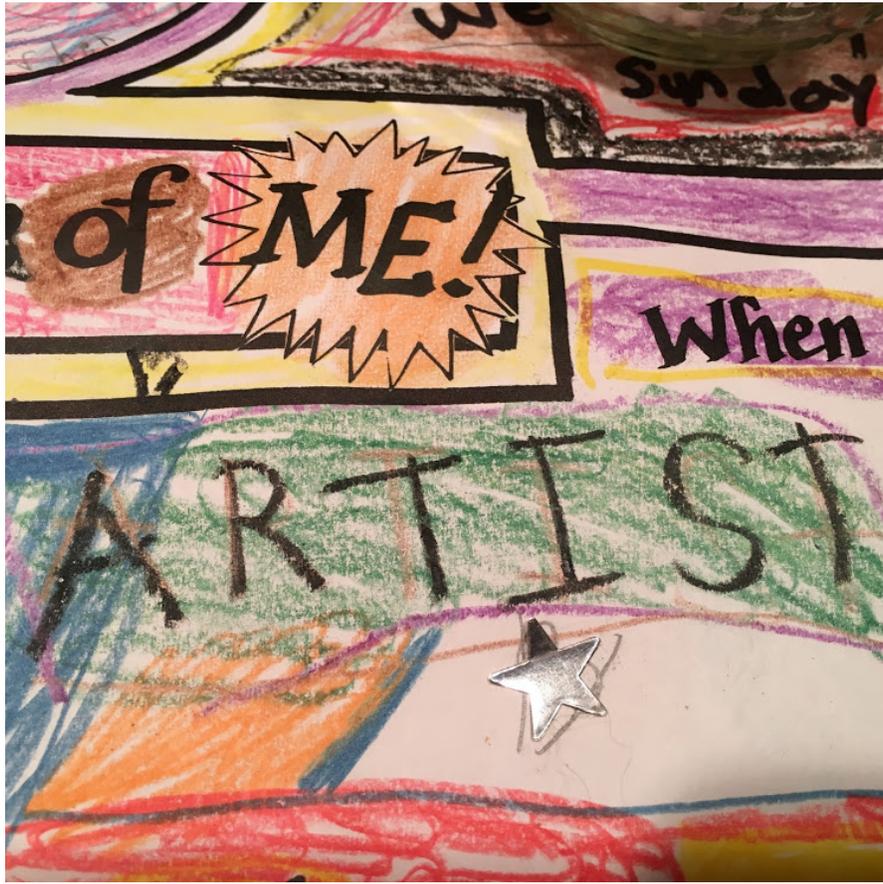


My very last night at **home**, before it was time to journey forth to Columbus, Ohio, I



stumbled upon a gem from 1996 – my first grade **“Star of the Week”** poster. Very much like this talk I’m giving today, I got to take a blank, poster-sized questionnaire home over the weekend prior to the week all about me, and make it my own with every answer pertaining to my likes, interests, goals, family, friends, and so on.

One of the “finish this phrase” questions put it simply – “When I grow up...” to which my seven-year-old left hand delightfully chicken scratched in all caps... **“ARTIST”**.



With that cosmic sentiment noted, a 4am panic session of throwing things into boxes wherever they fit and shoving clothes into garbage bags, **I set off** for the Capital City the next day.



Throughout my life, I have had twenty, first days of school. From waddling into “Friends” preschool and daycare center, to eagerly but bittersweetly beginning my final year in the masters program here at CCAD, the day possessed a unique combination of feeling nervous, excited, nostalgic, and little bit bizarre. Not a single one of them can compare to the amount of nerves I had on my first day of teaching. My **first day** **lqqk** was inspired by a combination of **Frankie** Bernstein of the show “Grace and Frankie” and **Miss Lippy**, from the 90s classic “Billy Madison.”





I had moved into a new apartment just a few weeks before, and walked to school, not thinking the insurmountable gallons of sweat that would get produced because of this. Approaching campus, **I remember** the “Art” sign suddenly looking so different to me. I’d casually snapped a couple dozen pictures of it throughout the years before, but now it seemed a shift had occurred...was it redder? Taller? Wider in wingspan? Something about sign and signifier for sure...



I had prepared, over-prepared, receded back a little, and over-prepared again. I'd gone to the classroom the night before to arrange things and test the projector. I double-checked and triple-checked GoStudio. I had two years of GAing, two semesters of TAing, a little over one year of RAing, a Red Cross certified "Super Sitter" certificate, and a basketball participation award equipped in my tool bag...but nothing, *nothing* prepared me for the amount of nerves I had as students began filing in that first afternoon. I remember being up at the podium, struggling to actually look up at them, much in the same way I nervously struggle to look up at you today, though you may or may not suspect it or notice it.

Through the door, one, after the other, after the other, after the other – 20 bodies, 40 sets of eyeballs, and one internally-screaming stomach. I told them I was going to go refill my water bottle and "we'll get things started when I come back!" as if I knew what the hell I was talking about. I never thought about turning and running away, but damn...yer girl B Funk was *SHOOKETH*.

I had typed out fastidious notes on my laptop of how the class period would go – breaking down the 3+ hours into separate segments. Here are the very first few lines of notes from August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018:

Introductions – have the seats set up in a circle for names/discussion about course and syllabus overview → first and last name, intended major, favorite band/musician in middle school (favorite color or food if you get stuck) – this should roughly take a hour+ so 15 minute break once finished

It took approximately 2 and a half minutes, another teacher suddenly coming in with an additional student to my class that was actually a part of my Tues/Thurs section, and fiery panic as I could hear the students continue to rattle off their names and My Chemical Romance over and over. This had been my go-to-secret-weapon to get their names and faces memorized, and I'd just missed 90% of them.

Nothing can or will go exactly the way you plan - *welcome to teaching.*



When I got back to my apartment that evening, late summer sun still out and shining, I immediately grabbed a bag of Kroger's generic peanut-butter-filled and far too over-salted pretzels, an ice cold Elvis Juice, went out to our complex's pool, had me a sit with my feet dipped in, and stared...What in the whipsawfuckery was *that*? I eventually went back inside, and flopped down onto my queen-sized air mattress, unpacked boxes still surrounding, and passed out harder than I had in my entire life. When I woke from my nap/coma, it was completely dark out. I was exhausted, but elated too.



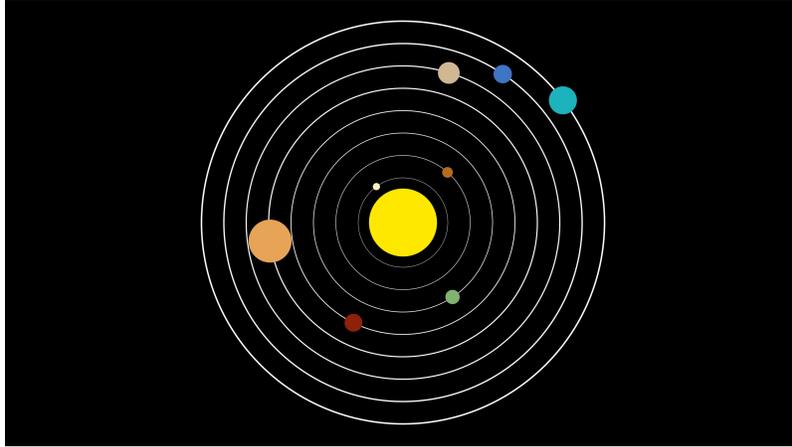
Why did I want to teach at the college level? It's a question I usually rely on my trusty elephant memory to recall, but the exact memory **isn't there**. I can recall wanting to be a teacher at different points throughout my school years, and more specifically honed in on collegiate level by high school. Again...how? How did I know I wanted to teach college if I hadn't even experienced it yet?



By the time I started Saint Mary's College, the goal was beyond set in stone. I loved the environment, constantly learning and trying new things, the professors (*most of them*), the access to materials and readings, the artist talks, the idea of sabbatical, the weekly schedule, the summers "off" – on and on it seemed like becoming a college art professor would be the perfect venue to bridge both my loves of creating art and teaching art too. I naively forgot that by the time I would be qualified to teach college students, I would more times than not be far removed from them in age. In fact, when I began here last fall, many of my students were born **in the year 2000**.



I know you hear a lot about aging when you're young, when you're middle-aged, even when you're old, people keep talking about getting old. As if a **lap around the sun** is crime.



I've always told myself that I would never waste time with the idea of hating that I was aging, or fixate on any kind of number. But that very first day, these students unknowingly held up a glaring mirror, and I not only saw, but felt the difference. Funny enough, divulging into old photos for this very artist talk, **I came upon this one**, where I'd just finished my spring portfolio review, and am roughly around the same age of the students I now teach.



To date, I have only almost wrapped up my second semester of teaching. I hope for many more, in all different kinds of art subjects, practices, and places. My teaching philosophy, another thing I had to create without the actual experience, hinges on the idea that teaching itself is never without its own recourse of learning. The best teachers I ever had never stopped learning, and I hope to follow, if not waddle in their footsteps. In any episode of doubt or nostalgic reflection, always remember there is something in there to be discovered. So waddle eagerly.

My name is Katie B Funk.

I'm an artist, a writer, comedian extraordinaire, and I knew I was a teacher when

