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# MILWAUKEE

# CODE CAMP

**The Dating Game – Steve Zobrist**

Saturday, November 16 2019 | 1:45 PM - 2:45 PM

Room: Chemistry 170

# A bit about me.



## Hi! I'm Steve Zobrist

A Wisconsin native who graduated with a Software Engineering degree from MSOE in 2006. Since then, I've worn just about every hat possible in the industry.

Nowadays I focus on the development of digital strategies and solutions, and helping teams understand and improve their methodology for doing so.

I currently work for Brilliance Business Solutions as an Architect, performing Digital Agility transformations around B2B eCommerce, largely with Episerver and inRiver.

I also advocate for digital humanism and agile mindsets through both writing and speaking engagements.

# THE DATING GAME

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or: How to identify interview red flags and stop working for bad employers.

# THE DATING GAME





**I understood that reference.**

Image © Walt Disney Studios

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# Interviewing



...is hard

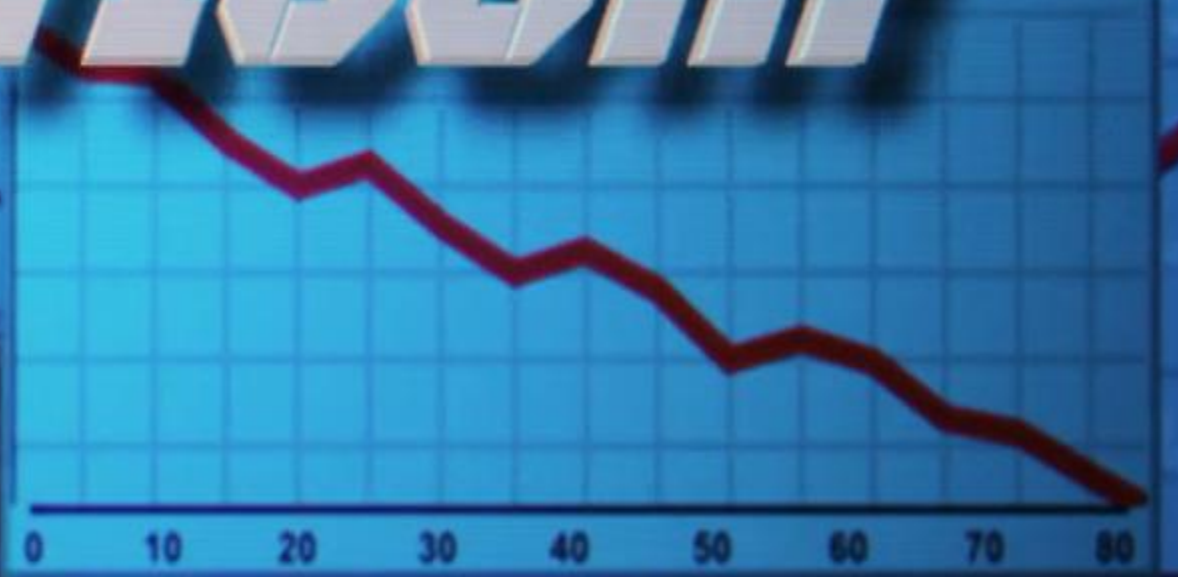


Image © DreamWorks Pictures

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# STATISTICS!!!

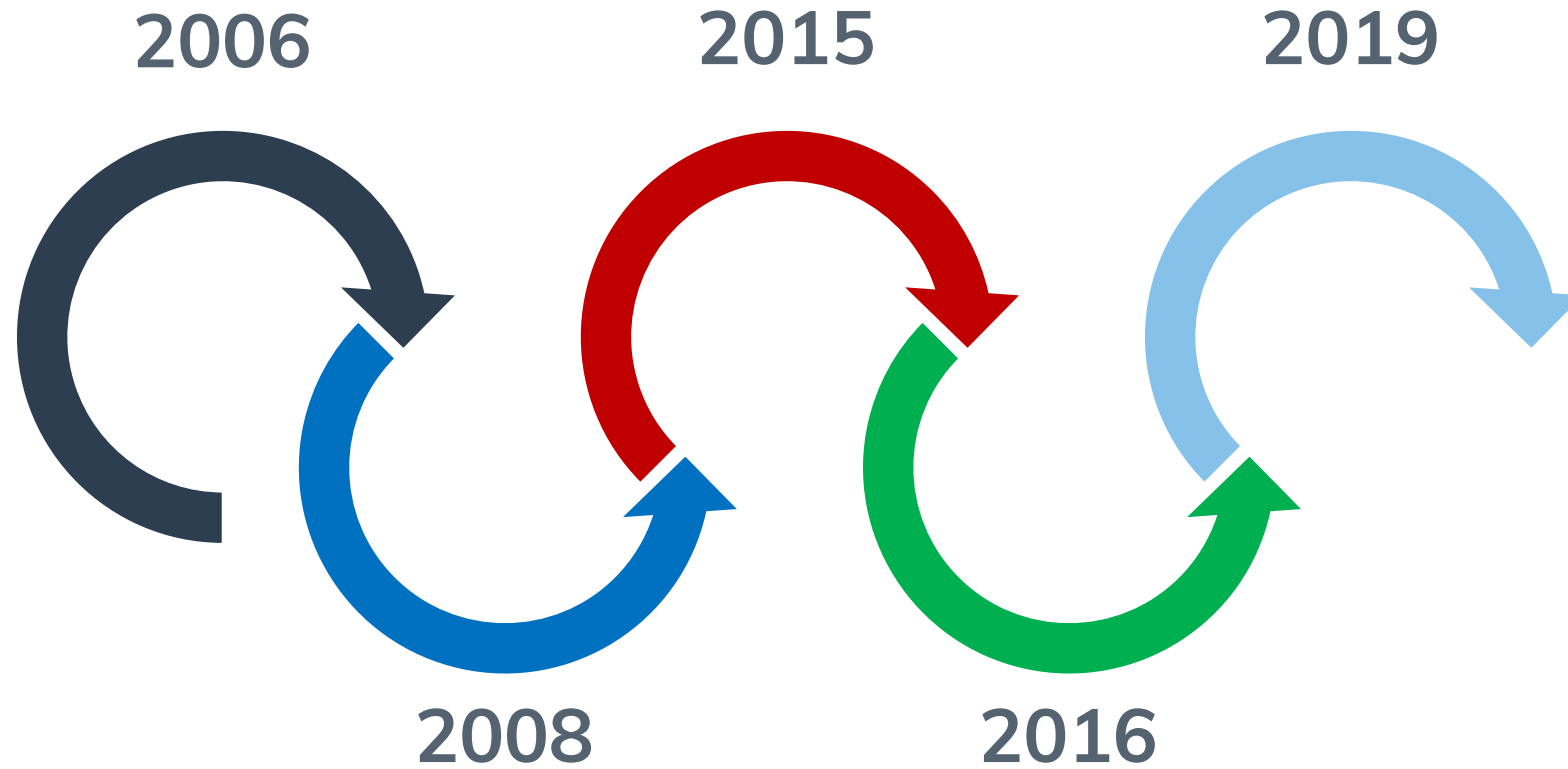


# Turnover Statistics

- 51% of employees are currently considering a new job.
  - Gallup Business Journal, 2015
- Companies lose 25% of all new hires within the first year.
  - Allied Workforce Mobility Survey, 2017.
- “Cultural Misfit” is often a factor in employees leaving.
  - Center for Management & Organization Effectiveness, 2019.
- Bad leadership makes employees 4x-5x more likely to quit.
  - Udemy Research, 2018.

**So what do we do?**

# My Career Journey



**What have I learned?**



# Body Language

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**What to look for:**





**POSTURE**

Closed

**EYE CONTACT**

Disinterested

**EXPRESSION**

Suspicion / Distrust

**GESTURES**

Defensive



Open

Attentive

Positive

Welcoming

# Why is this a Warning?

- Conveys distrust and disinterest.
- Telling you that they don't value you, and likely their current employees.

# What should this look like?



Image © TBS/Conan

- Late night talk show hosts are a great example.

# Culture

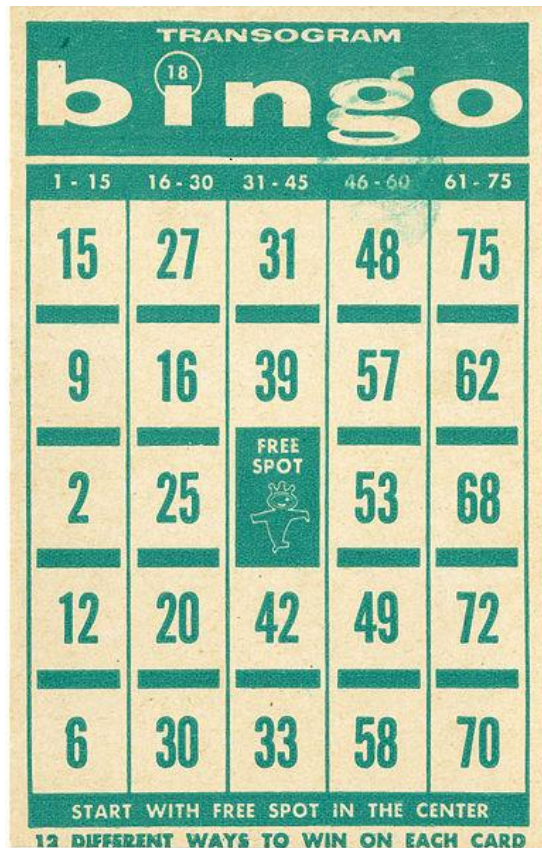


# What Culture is NOT



# Be on the look out for:

## BUZZWORD BINGO

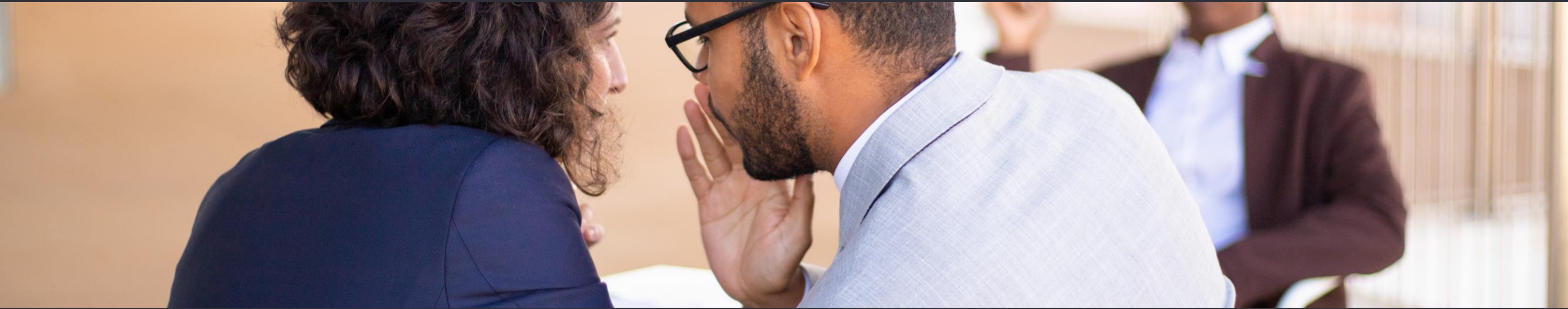


- “Work Life Balance”
- “Work Hard Play Hard”
- “We’re a Family Here”

# Things to Ask:

- What is the average billable/non-admin % for employees?
- How do you focus on employee growth?
- Is career and skill growth part of hours planning?
- How do you know when someone isn't a culture fit?
- How do you take care of employees physical and mental health?

# How they talk about others





# Disparagement

- Putting down current/past employees.
- Talking smack about the competition.
- Belittling other candidates.

# Assessing an Interviewer's Respect for Others:

- If replacing someone, ask what the reason was for them leaving or being let go.
- Or in general, just ask for the last time a person with this position was let go, why?
- Ask “How have the other candidates for this position compared to my skillset or experience?”

# dis-Respect



[ri-spekt]

noun

1. a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements.
2. deference to a right, privilege, position, proper acceptance or courtesy; acknowledgment:
3. the condition of being esteemed or honored:
4. an R&B song re-released in 1967 by Aretha Franklin.

# Signs of Poor Treatment:

- Aggressiveness in the Interview.
- Acting like a firing squad.
- Playing games or making you jump through hoops.

# Companies Show Disrespect By:

- Using fear as a motivator.
- Expecting you to read minds.
- Using pressure to make you feel inadequate.

# Mistrust

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# Red Flags:

- Suspiciousness.
- Pressuring you to “prove yourself” to them.
- Questioning your integrity.
- Putting you on the defensive

# What a Good Interviewer Looks Like:

- Presenting you with a way to show them your abilities.
- Asking what you are looking for in a company, or what makes you like where you work.



# Vagueness or being Unclear

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# What This Looks Like:

- Indefinite language around the role or job.
  - “*necessary hours to complete responsibilities*”
  - “*other duties as required by management*”
- Lack of formally documented expectations.

# The Used Car Salesman

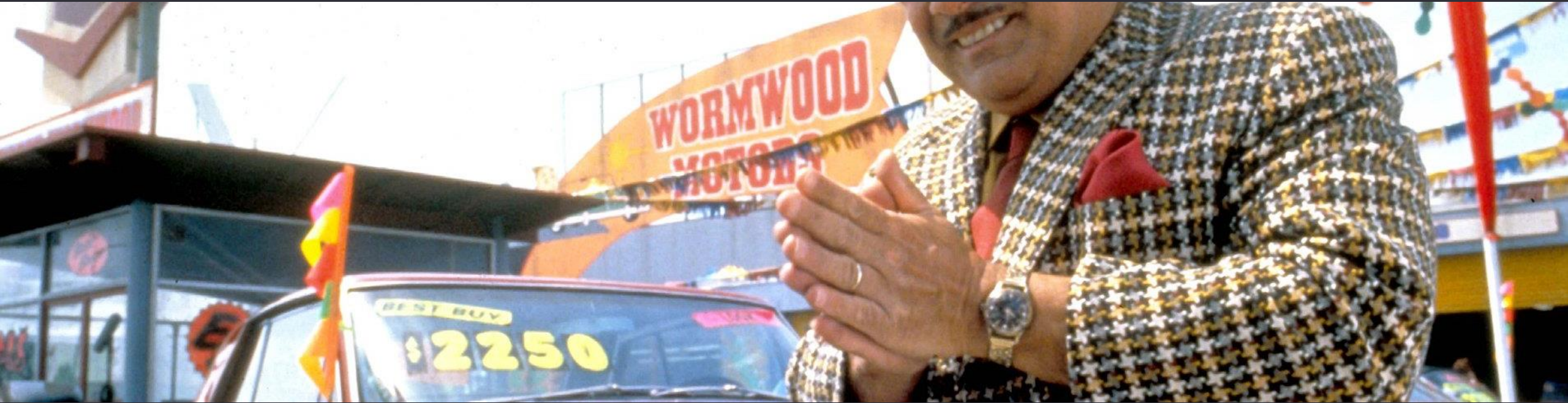
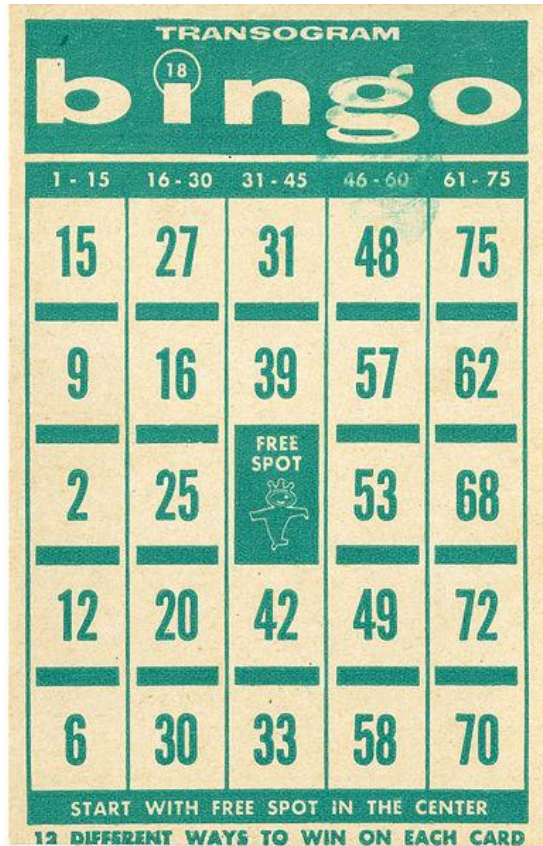


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# Be on Alert for:

## BUZZWORD BINGO



- “This is a great opportunity for the right candidate”
- “We are looking for unique candidates ready to take on big challenges with a smile; you may find you are not the right fit”
- “The job is what you make of it, you're directly rewarded for the work you put in”
- Overly emphatic that “this is an opportunity” or “this job has great potential” or “entrepreneurial mindset required”.



Image © 20th Century Fox

# Dispassion / Disinterest



Image © Lantern Entertainment

# This looks like:

- Acting like you are their 1,000<sup>th</sup> interview today.  
*(without winning a door prize)*
- Being distracted, not paying attention.
- Looking like they have better things to do.
- Clearly not wanting to be there either.

# Lack of Openness & Candor

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# You see this when they:

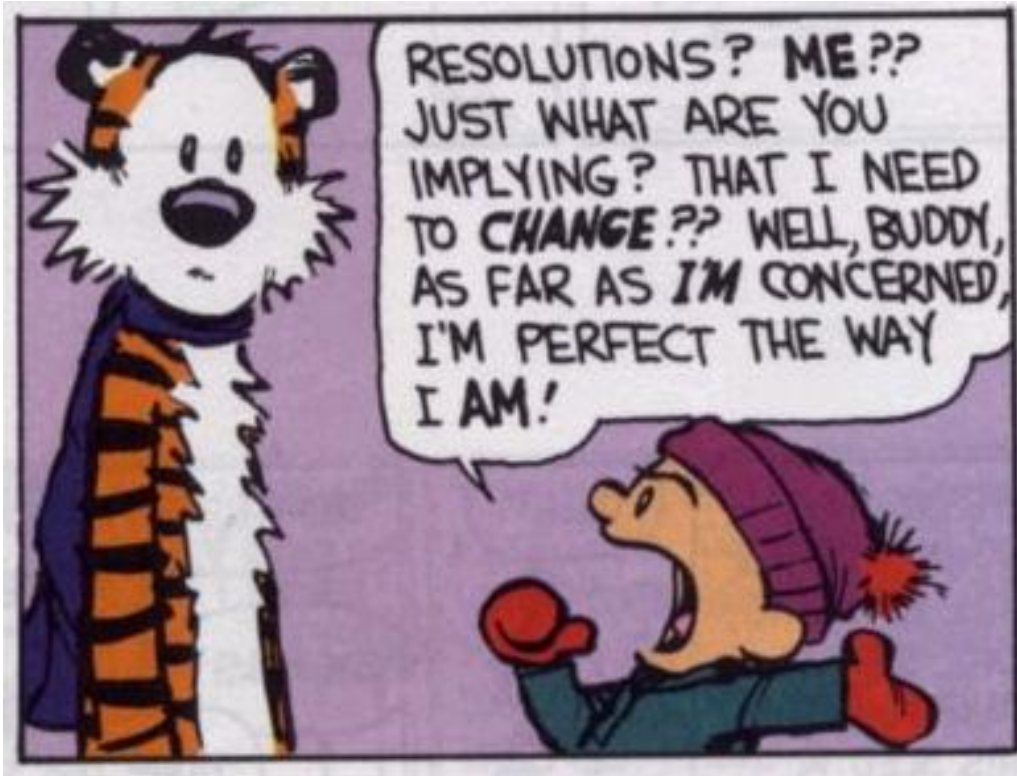


Image © Bill Watterson

- Aren't being honest about difficulties or areas of improvement.
- Shift blame for problems.
- Don't accept responsibility.

# Self-Absorption



Narcissus, mesmerized by his own reflection.

J.W. Waterhouse, 1903. Public domain.

# What this sounds like:

- Interviewer talks **only** about themselves and the company and the role.
- Tries to do nothing but persuade you.
- Asks few to no questions. Other than if you're still interested after everything they just said.
- Never gives you a chance to talk about yourself, or doesn't really listen when you do.

# Disorganized or Rushed



# This is excessive when:

- They're late and/or you're forced to wait more than 10 min.
- They cancel last minute.
- They have to be reminded who you are or what you're interviewing for.
- They're clearly just “winging” it.

# Mismatch of Skill Testing



# Examples of this:

- Questions that are nowhere near the experience level you're there for.  
*"You're a Sr. Architect, show me a bubble sort."*
- Testing knowledge that is wholly unrelated to the role you are looking at.  
*"We need a Front-End developer, how well do you know SAP integration?"*

# Conclusion



"When someone shows you who they are,  
believe them."

-Maya Angelou



# Evaluate the Situation Behind the Scenes

- Remember, you're not just there to be evaluated, but to evaluate them.
- Just like dating relationships, a potential new job opportunity must be evaluated in context.
- If you see something worrying in the interview, it's not going to get better when you start the job.

# Thank you!

This presentation will be available on my website:  
[CamerataDigital.com](https://www.cameratadigital.com)

Feel free to reach out and connect with me on LinkedIn!  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/steve-zobrist/>

# Questions?

or horror stories?

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