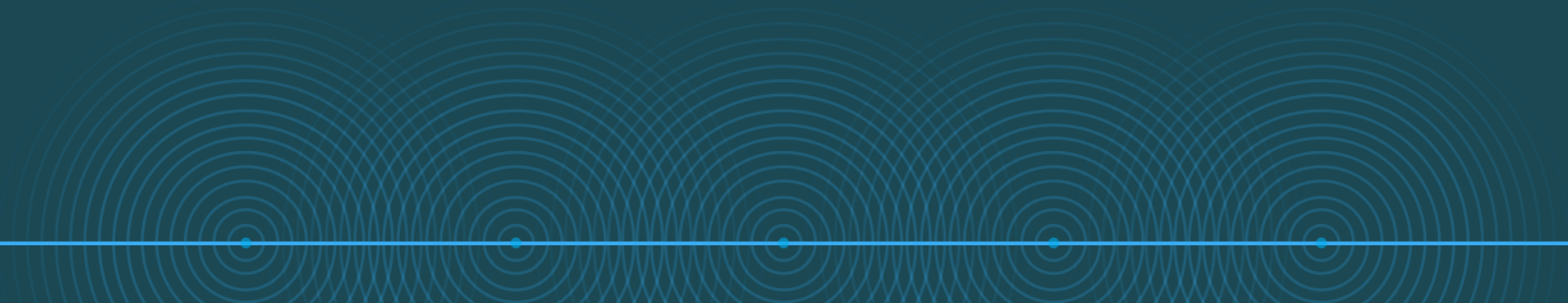


# Staying well in research

Managing mental health: dealing with imposter syndrome and more

Hugh Kearns: [www.ithinkwell.com.au](http://www.ithinkwell.com.au)

23 November 2018



Hugh Kearns

Thinkwell

[www.ithinkwell.com.au](http://www.ithinkwell.com.au)

Flinders University,  
Adelaide, Australia



@ithinkwellHugh



A Twitter profile card for Hugh Kearns. At the top, there are four overlapping circles in blue, purple, pink, and green. Below these is a circular profile picture of a man with short grey hair, wearing a black shirt, with his arms crossed. To the right of the profile picture, the name "Hugh Kearns" is displayed in bold black text, followed by the handle "@ithinkwellHugh" in a smaller, grey font. At the bottom, there are three statistics: "Tweets 7,683", "Following 34K", and "Followers 35.4K". The numbers are in a large, bold, blue font, while the labels are in a smaller, grey font.

Tweets	Following	Followers
7,683	34K	35.4K

# Mental Health Warning

**WARNING: A RESEARCH DEGREE  
CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR  
MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental illness

Mental health

Staying well

# The Secret Life of the Researcher



# Diminishing Returns

# Diminishing Returns

Work  
late





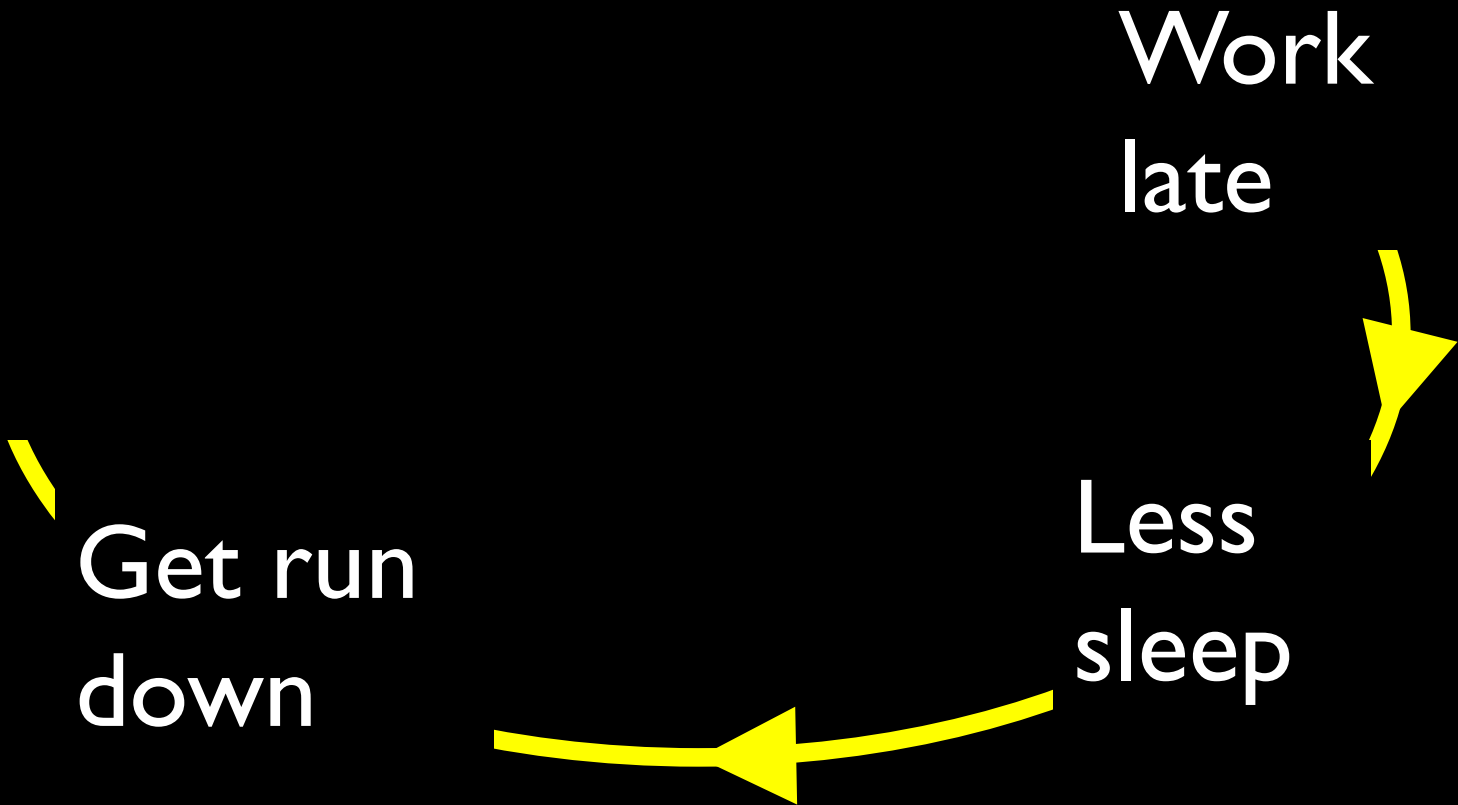
# Diminishing Returns

Work  
late

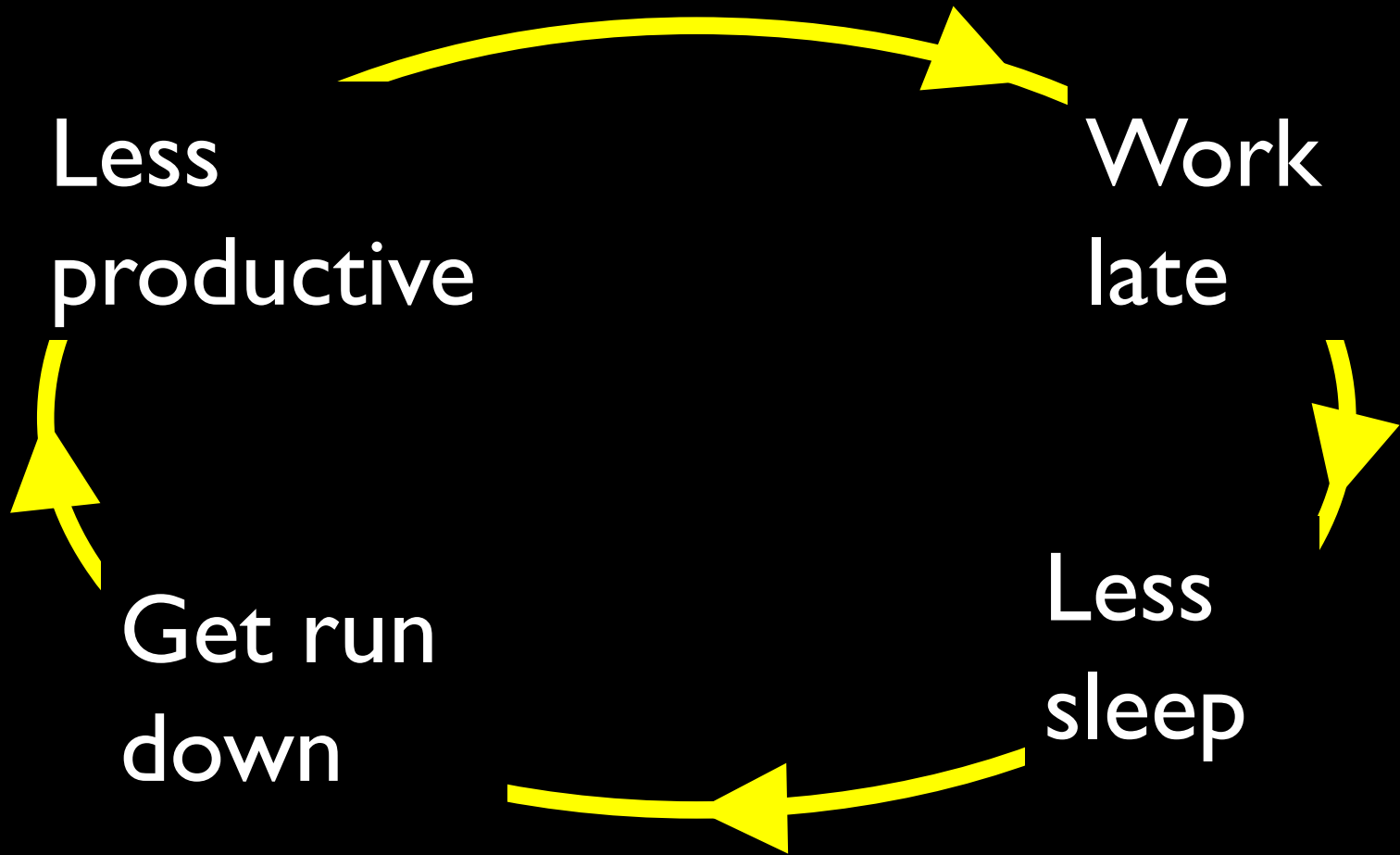


Less  
sleep

# Diminishing Returns



# Diminishing Returns



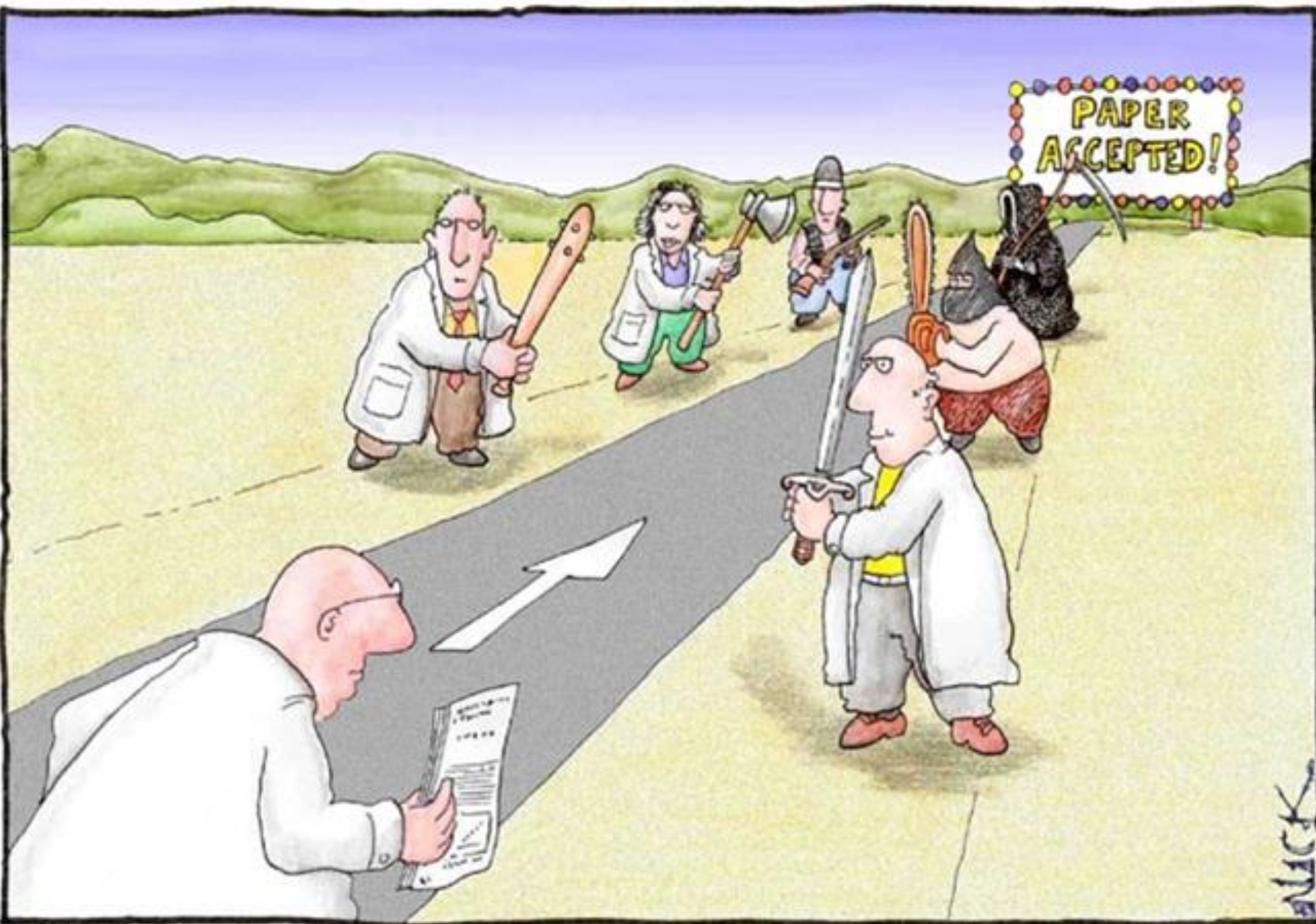
# Diminishing returns





Isolation

Photo from Unsplash by Carlos "Grun"



NICK



“When we are tired, we are  
attacked by ideas we  
conquered long ago.”

Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher, 1844-1900





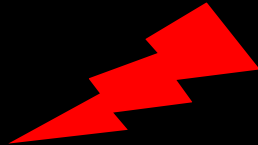
# Making Time

[ithinkwell.com.au](http://ithinkwell.com.au)



# PARETO PRINCIPLE

20



80

# PARETO PRINCIPLE



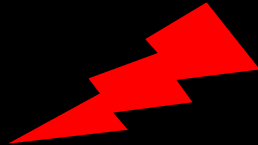
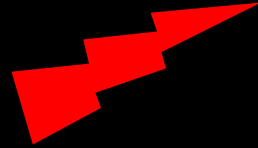
# PARETO PRINCIPLE

**Trivial  
Many**

**20**

**80**

**Vital  
Few**



# Multi-tasking



## Multi-failing

Doing several things at the same time and doing them all less well.

[www.ithinkwell.com.au](http://www.ithinkwell.com.au)

Don't check emails:

First thing in the morning

Last thing at night

# Multi-tasking

Untick all  
of these



When new messages arrive:

- ☒ Play a sound
- ☒ Briefly change the mouse pointer
- ☒ Showu an envelope icon in the taskbar
- ☒ Display a Deskutop Alert





# Multi-tasking



~~Guilt!~~

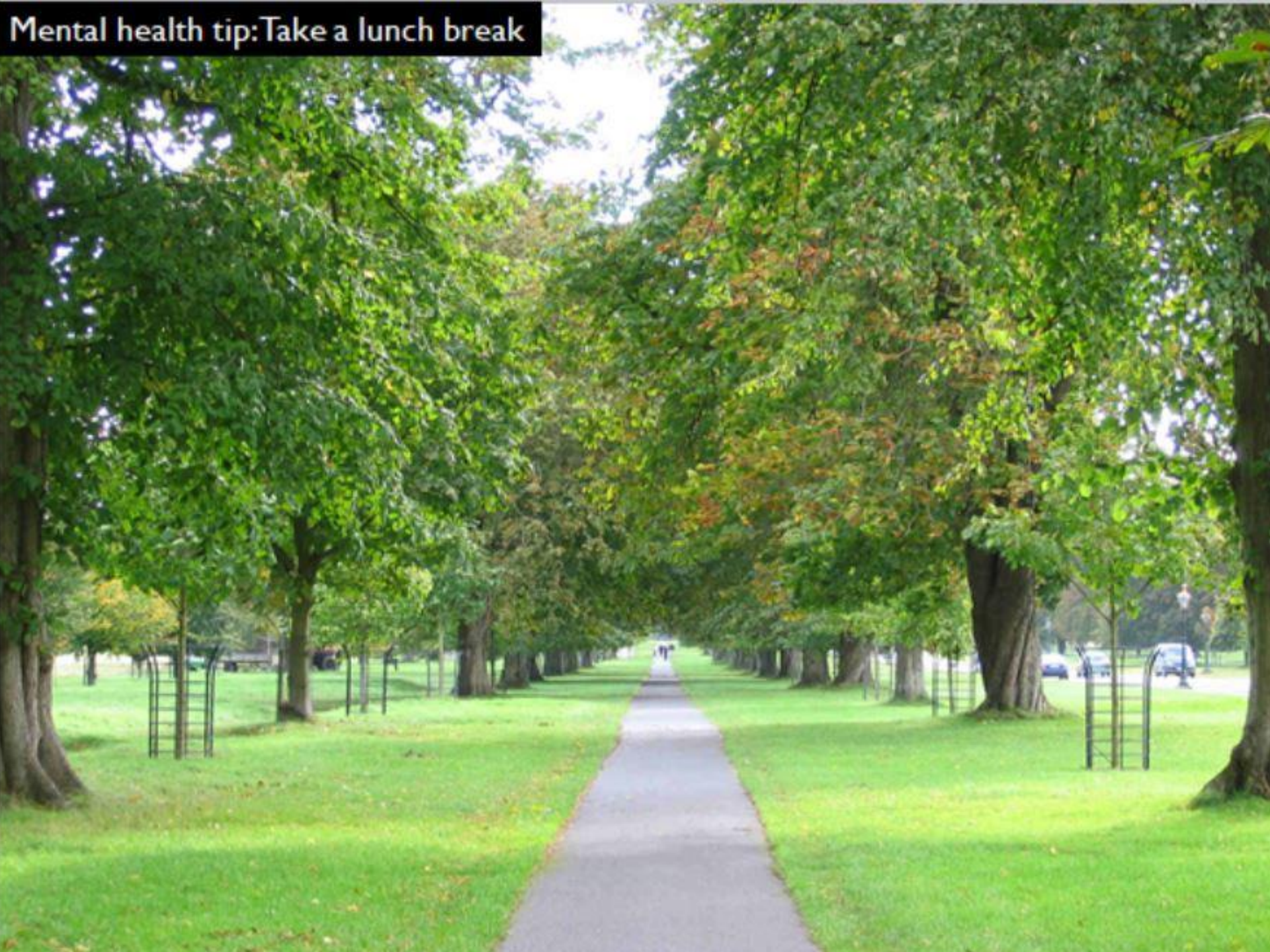


# Limits





**Mental health tip: Take a lunch break**















Run

TV

Paint

Creative writing

Friends

Swim

Movies

Pottery

Pets

Yoga

Voluntary work

Read

Travel

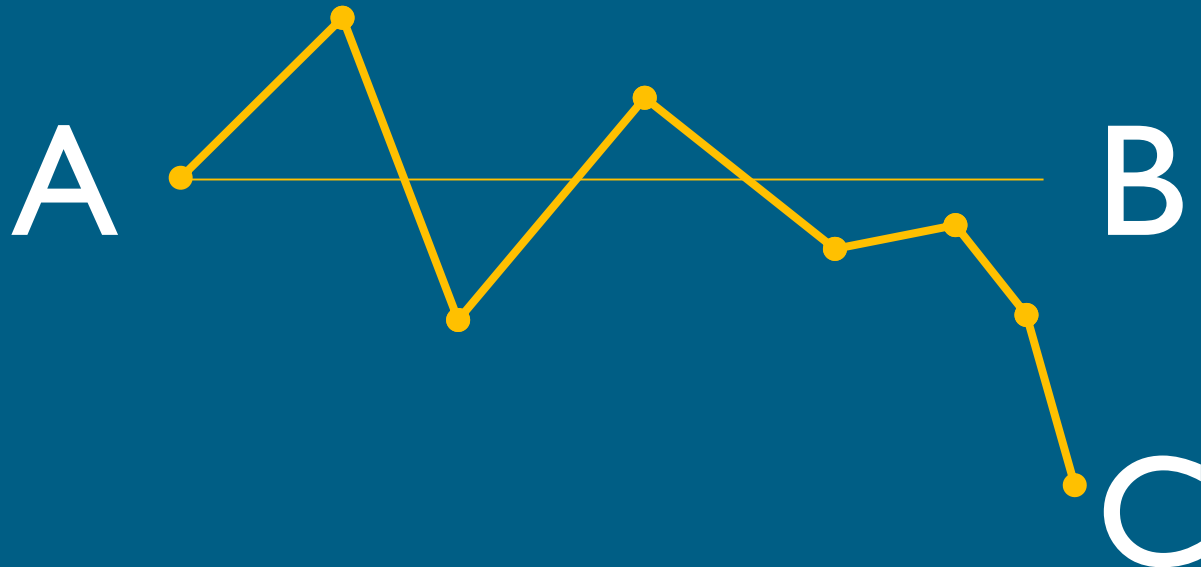
Walking

oops!

If you knew the answer  
before you started it  
wouldn't be called

Research

# Research



**Cat...as...troph...is...ing.**

# Catastrophising

## ANXIETY GIRL!

able to jump to the worst conclusion  
in a single bound!



“Our greatest glory consists  
not in never falling, but in  
rising every time we fall.”

*Oliver Goldsmith, (1730-1774), Irish writer*

**Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.  
Try again. Fail again. Fail better.**

---

*Samuel Beckett, Worstward Ho*



# Re-planning

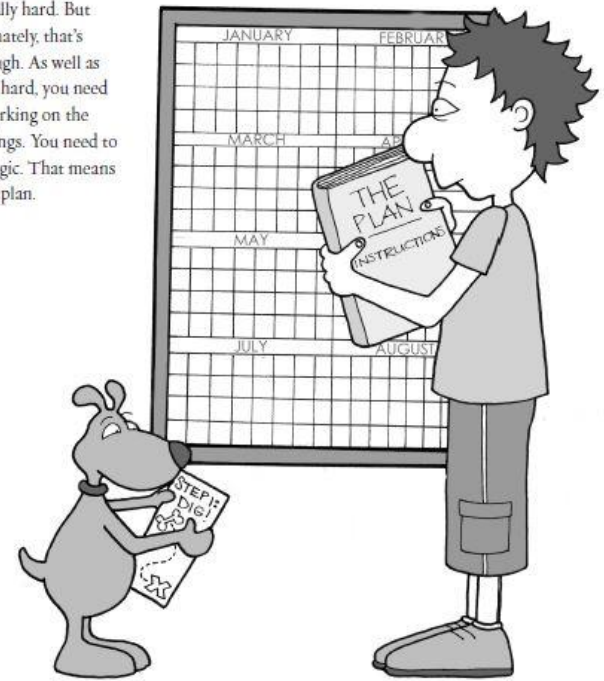
When things go wrong  
don't throw out the  
plan.

Revise the plan.

## 6. PLANNING

**'PLANS ARE USELESS, BUT PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL.'**  
-DWIGHT EISENHOWER

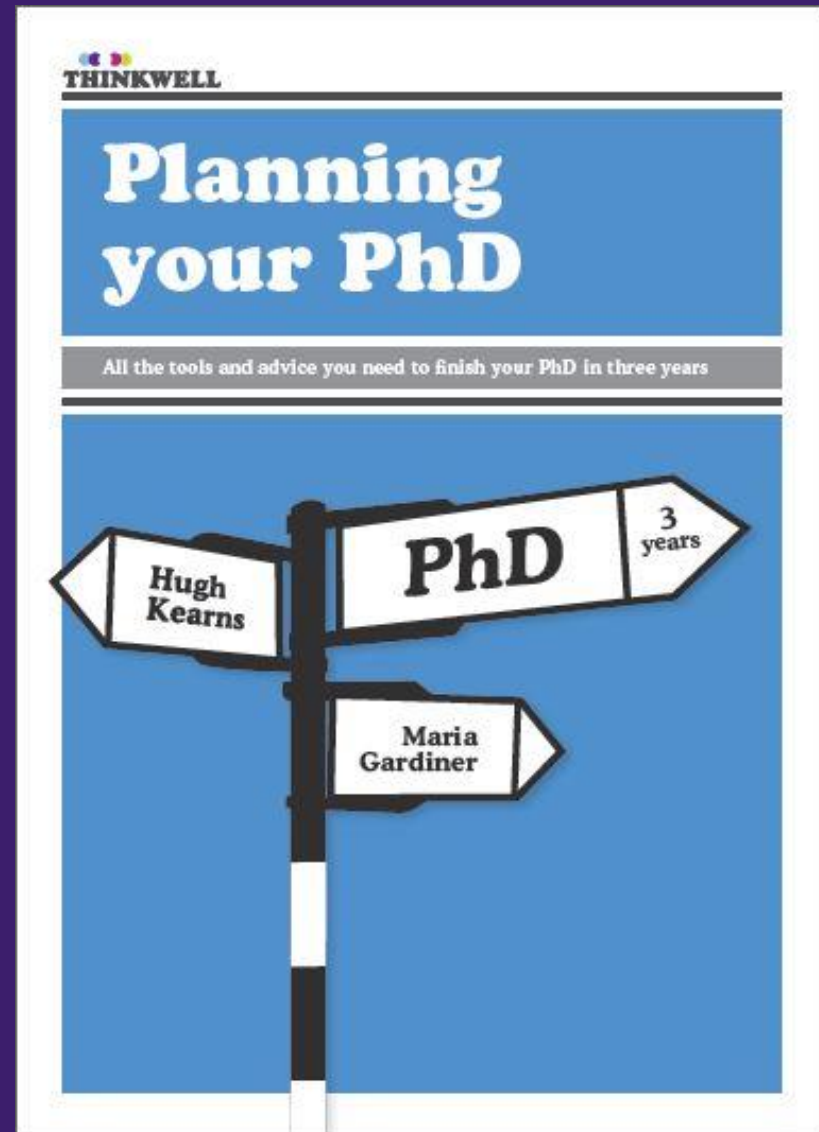
Most researchers work really hard. But unfortunately, that's not enough. As well as working hard, you need to be working on the right things. You need to be strategic. That means having a plan.



# Re-planning

Tools, planners,  
templates.

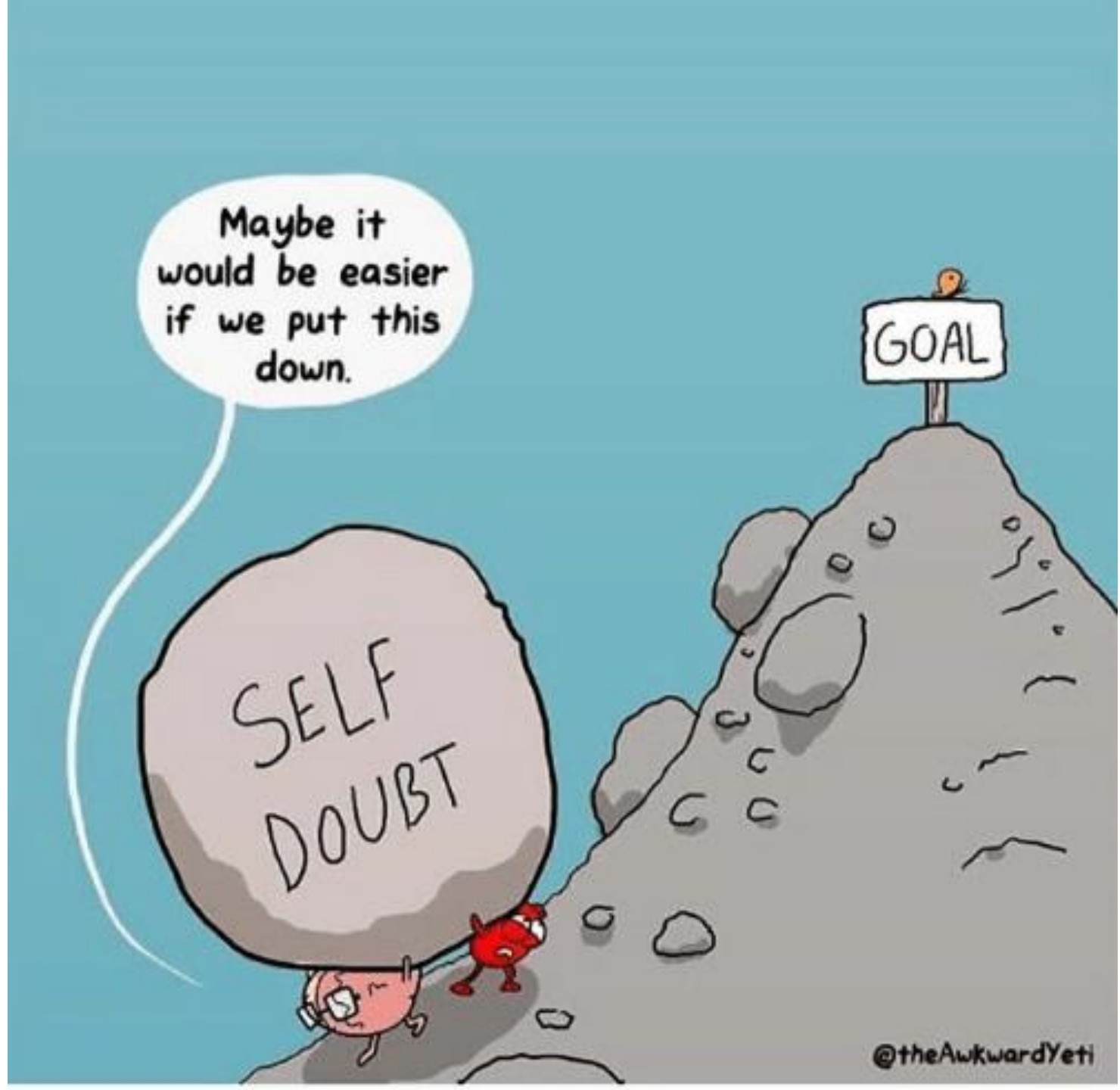
[www.ithinkwell.com.au](http://www.ithinkwell.com.au)



Maybe it  
would be easier  
if we put this  
down.

SELF  
DOUBT

GOAL

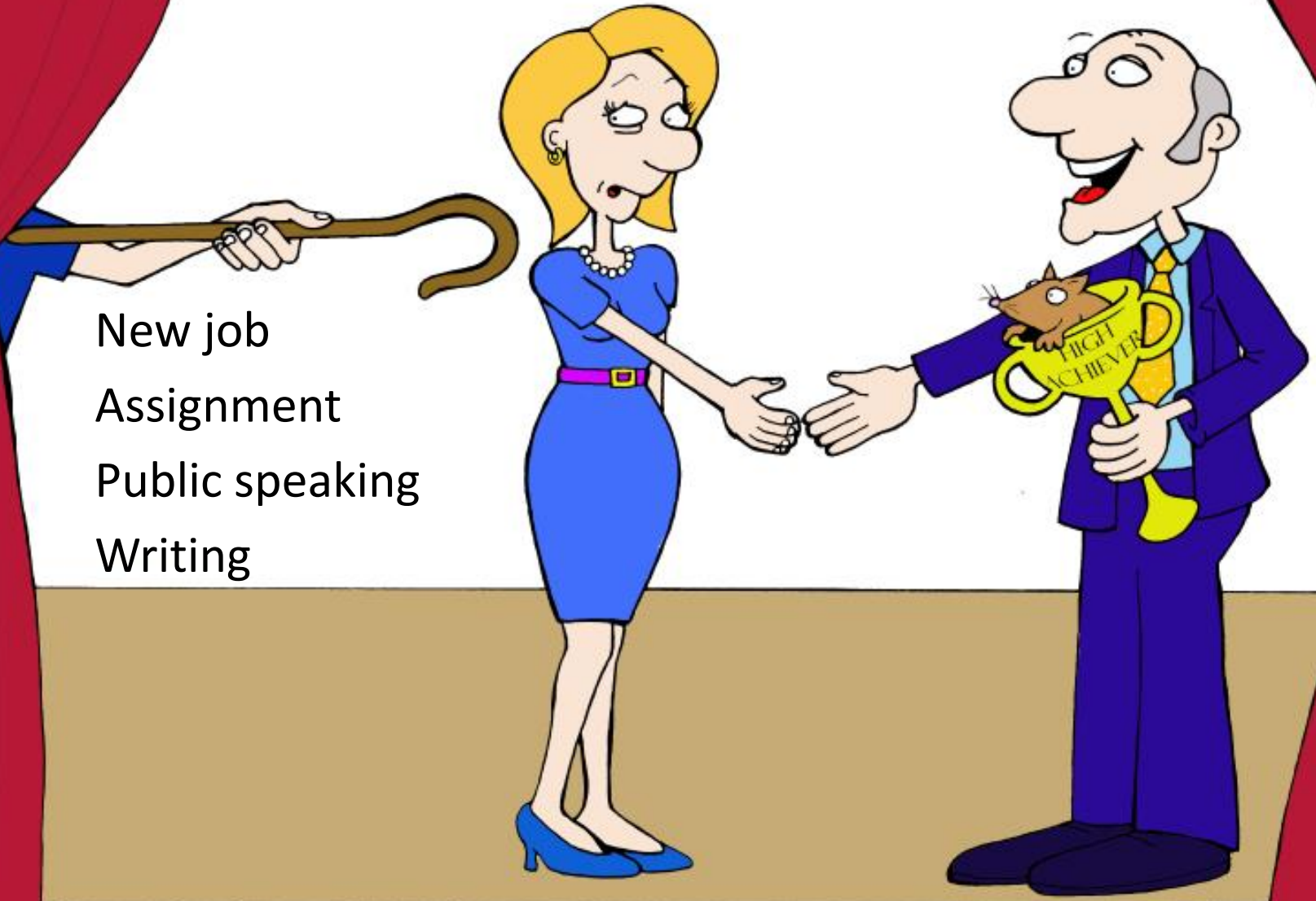




# THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME

# That Nagging Feeling

New job  
Assignment  
Public speaking  
Writing





A feeling that you will be exposed  
That they will find out what you are really like



You occasionally feel like a fraud

even though there is **evidence**  
that you are not.

A white curved arrow originates from the yellow oval containing the word "evidence" and points towards the list of qualifications below.

Qualifications  
Expertise  
Experience



70%

occasional feelings

30%

consistent feelings

# The Imposter Syndrome

The thoughts, feelings and behaviours



I can't do this

I will be found out

Who am I to be doing this

I just got away with it this time

The next time they will find out

# The Imposter Syndrome

The thoughts, feelings and behaviours



I feel like a fraud

Anxious

On edge

# The Imposter Syndrome

The thoughts, feelings and behaviours



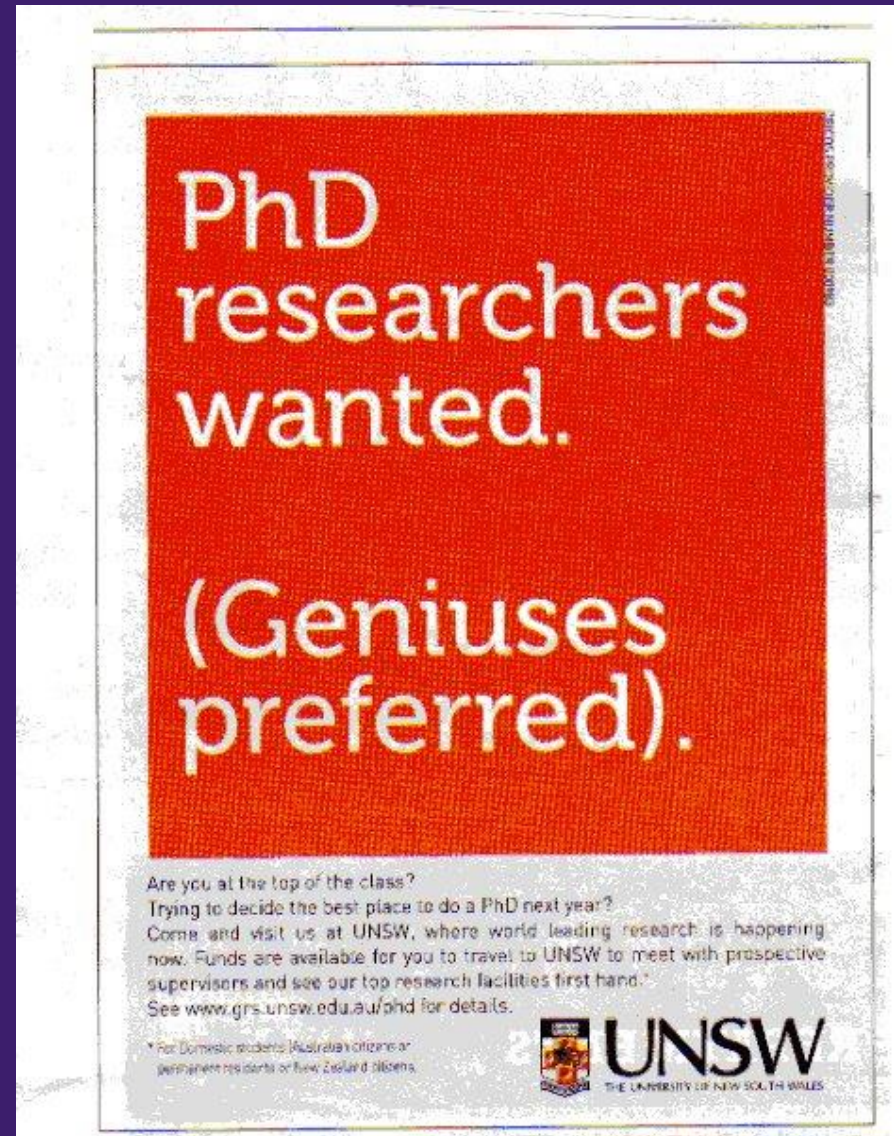
Over-working

Avoidance

# The Imposter Syndrome

Particularly common  
when we are being  
evaluated:

- Sport
- Academia
- Research
- Promotion
- Transitions




PHD  
researchers  
wanted.

(Geniuses  
preferred).

Are you at the top of the class?  
Trying to decide the best place to do a PhD next year?  
Come and visit us at UNSW, where world leading research is happening  
now. Funds are available for you to travel to UNSW to meet with prospective  
supervisors and see our top research facilities first hand.  
See [www.grs.unsw.edu.au/phd](http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/phd) for details.

\* For Domestic students (Australian citizens or  
permanent residents or New Zealand citizens)

 **UNSW**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Success is attributed to:

- Luck
- Just being nice
- Easy task
- Other people
- That was then  
- this is different
- Worked hard



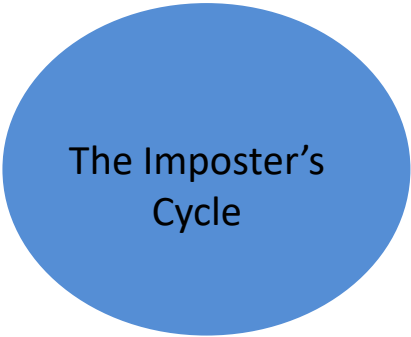


# How people respond

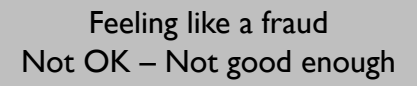
Work hard

Avoid

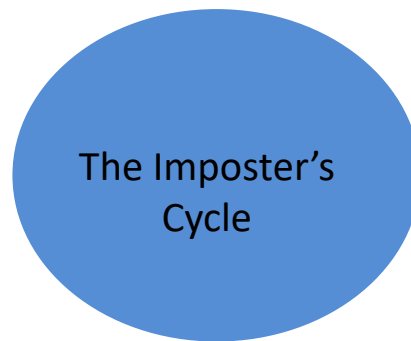




## The Imposter's Cycle



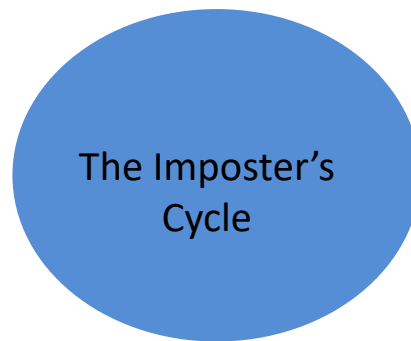
Feeling like a fraud  
Not OK – Not good enough



Feeling like a fraud  
Not OK – Not good enough



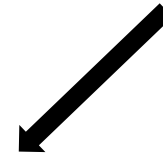
WHY?  
Looking for a reason



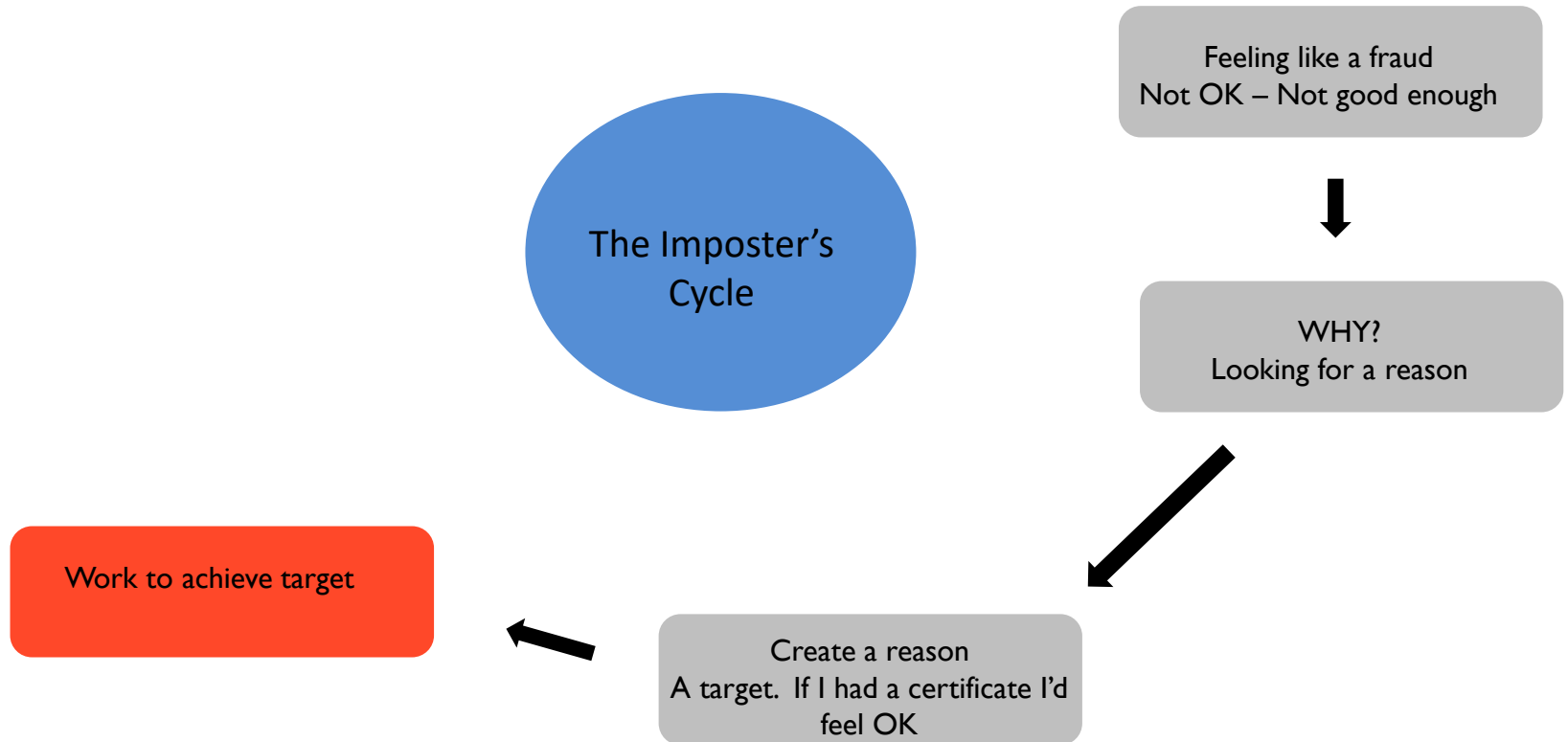
Feeling like a fraud  
Not OK – Not good enough

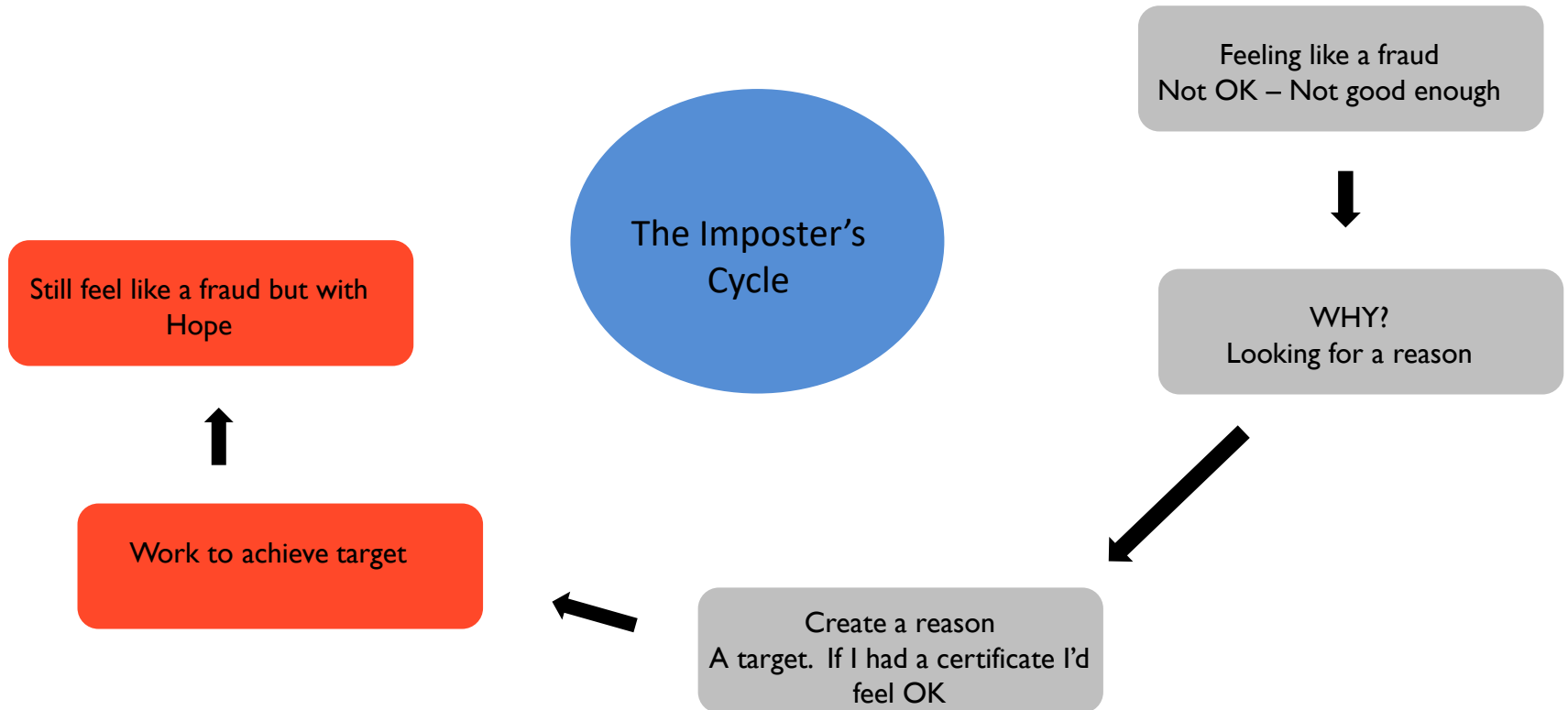


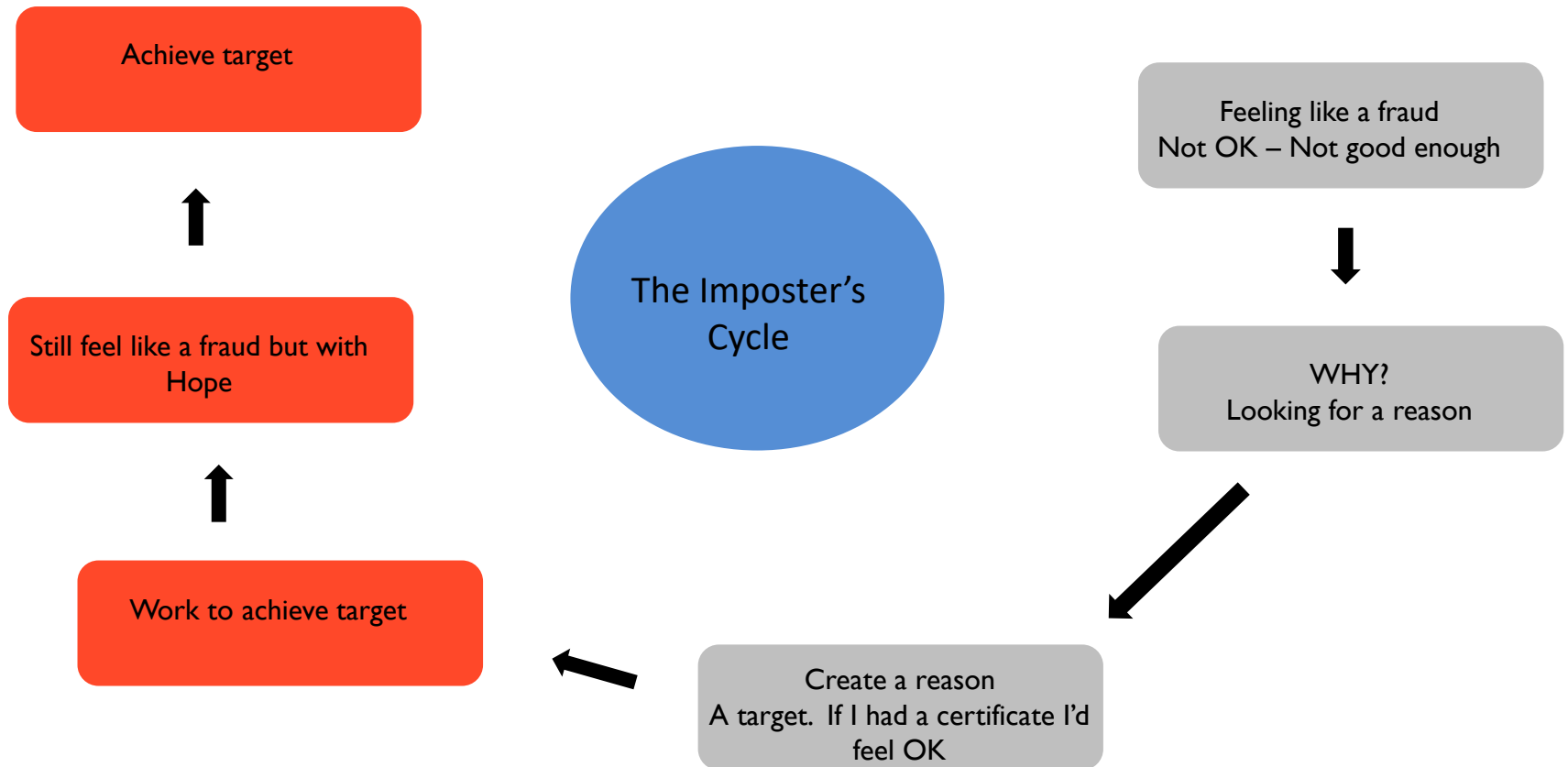
WHY?  
Looking for a reason



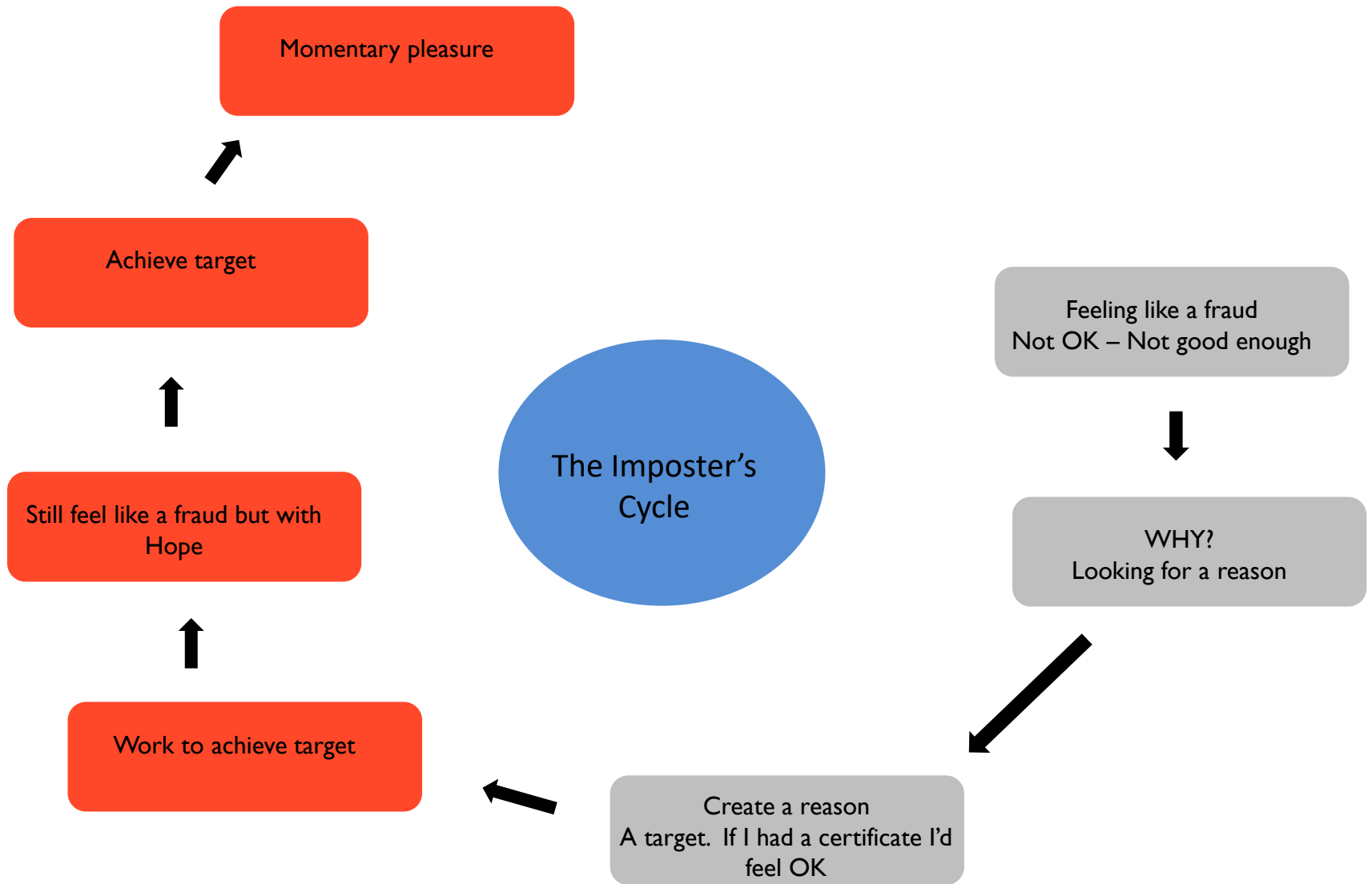
Create a reason  
A target. If I had a certificate I'd  
feel OK

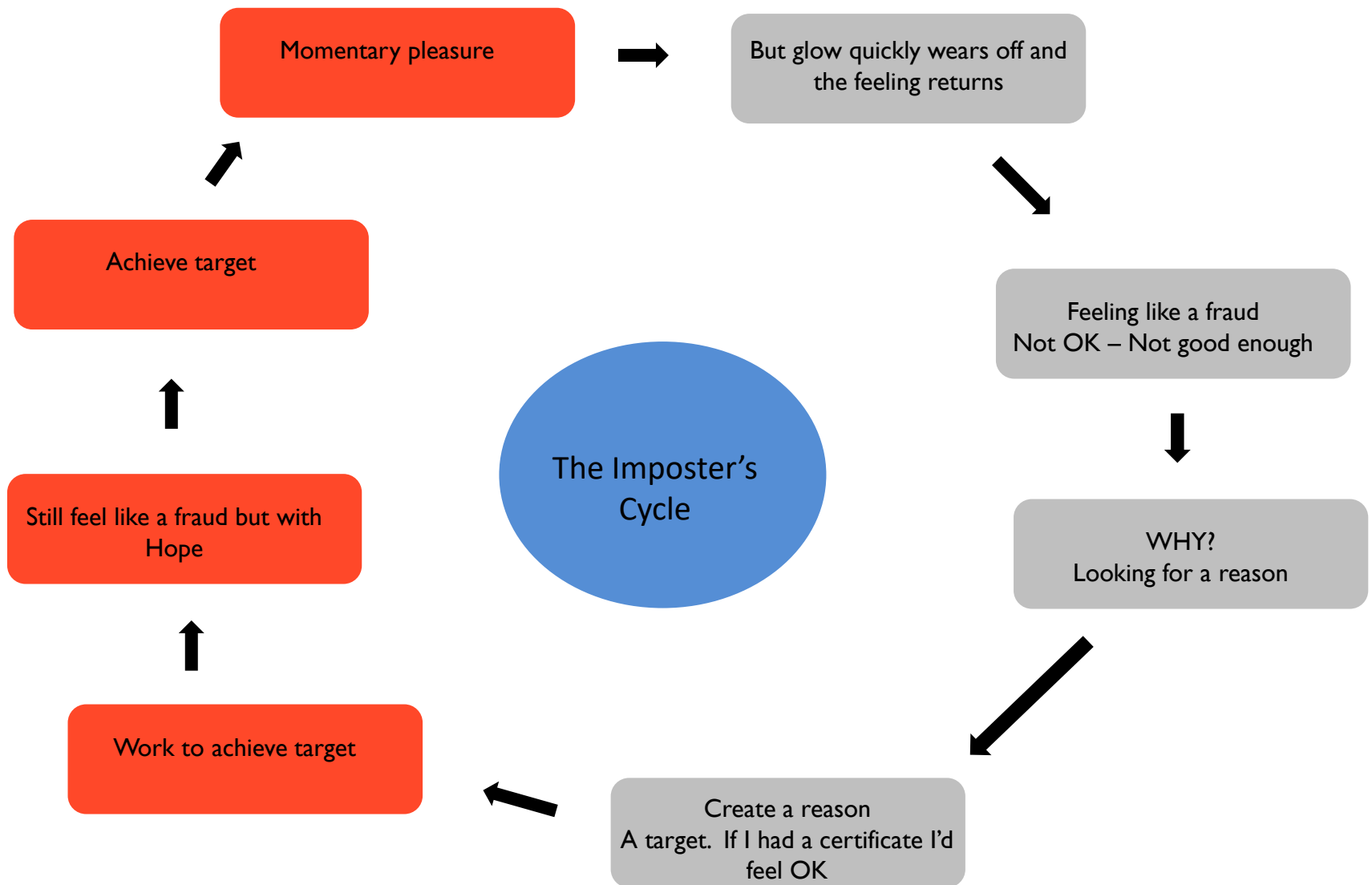


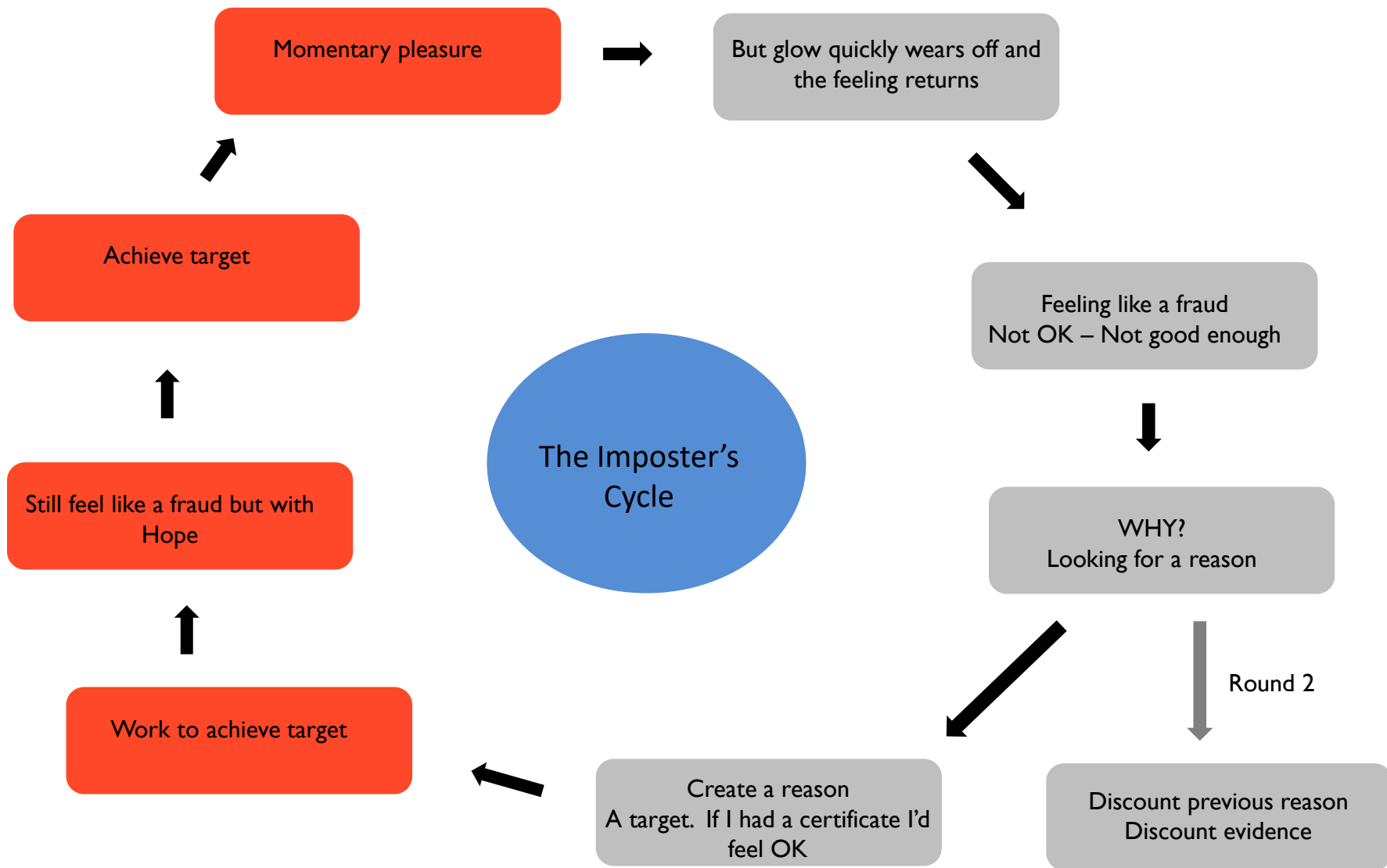


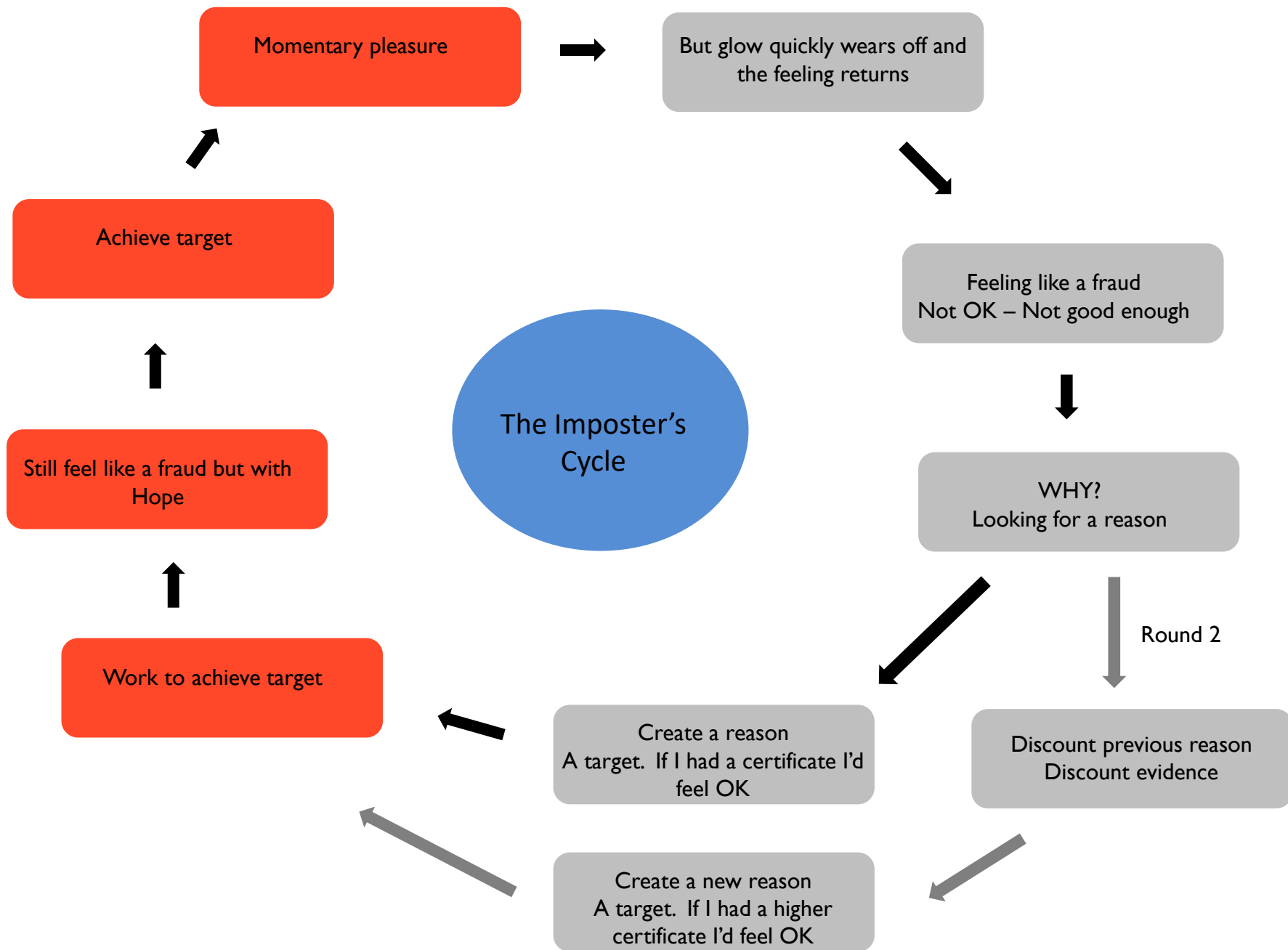


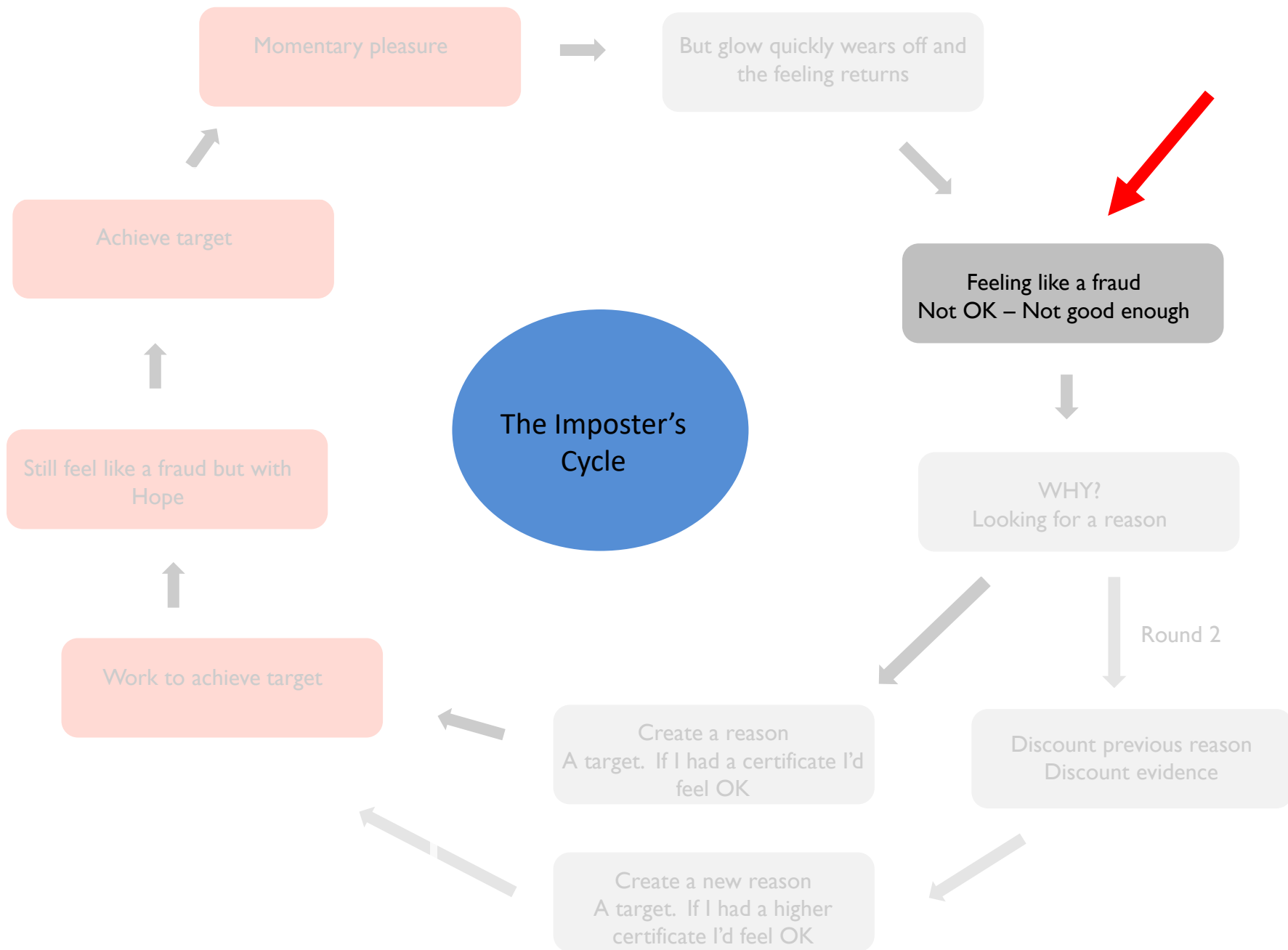










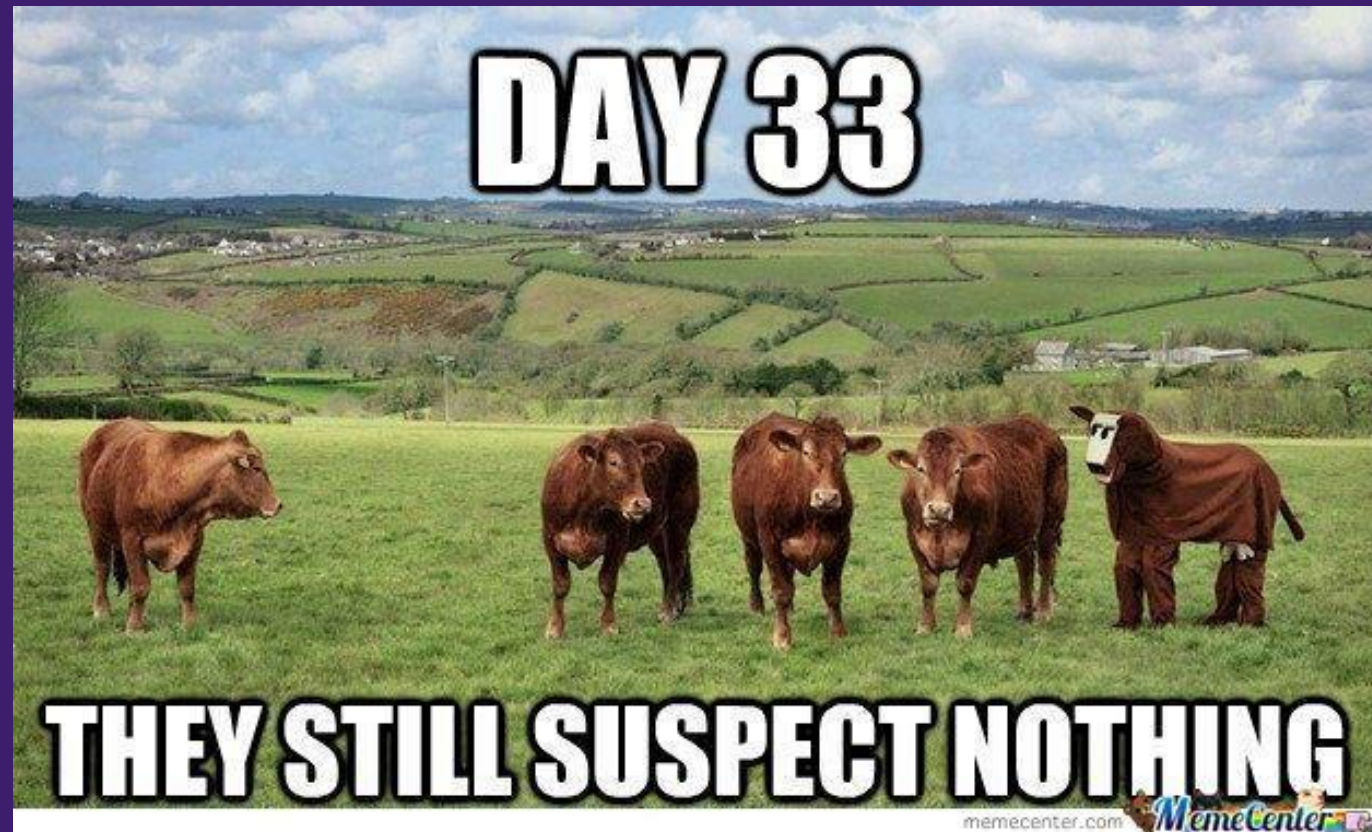




# How people respond

Work hard

Avoid



# Avoid being found out

- Avoid
- Don't try
- Procrastinate
- Over-commit

## I. Imposter feelings are normal

Most people will occasionally feel like an imposter, especially in new situations.

## 2. Feelings are not facts

You can feel something (even strongly) and it might not be true. Look at the facts.

## 3. Mind your language

Don't discount your  
achievements. Just say  
Thank you.

## 4. Create a fact file and a brag file

Make a file that contains  
evidence about your  
achievements.



## 5. Know your imposter moments

When you:

- Speak in public
- Write
- Make a mistake

## 6. Be brave and take action

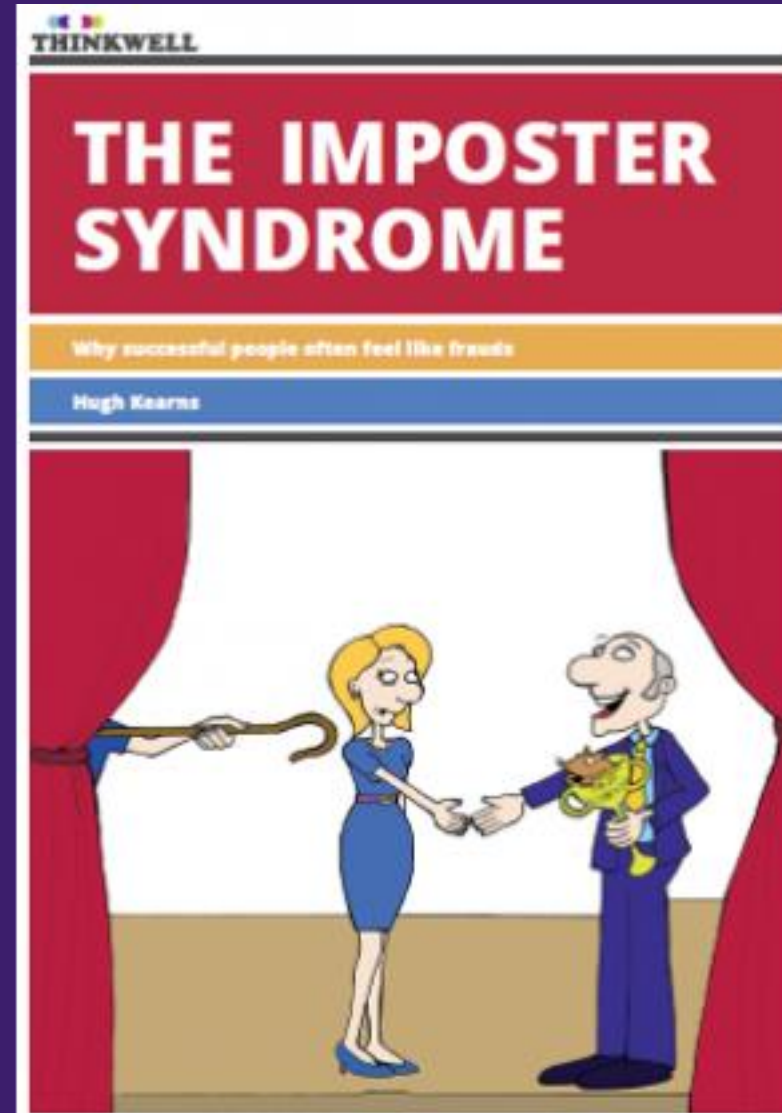
*“A great deal of talent is lost to the world  
for want of a little courage.”*

Sydney Smith, 1849

# Six things

1. Imposter feelings are normal
2. Feelings are not facts
3. Mind your language
4. Create a fact file and a brag file
5. Know your imposter moments
6. Be brave and take action

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So

# In conclusion

# The Secret Life of the Researcher



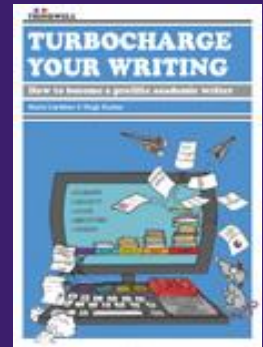
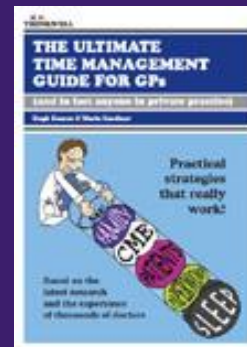




## Stay well in research

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Hugh Kearns



# Thank you.

Ask your questions on:

Researcher Academy Mendeley group  
Follow us on Twitter

