A FREE CHALLENGE BY SCOTT ALTIPARMAK

THE 30-DAY CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGE

30 days. 4 challenges. Zero excuses.

~/30-day-challenge

```
$ cat goals.txt
[ ]  network     4 genuine connections
[ ]  build       1 project you can explain
[ ]  research    10 job posts, 1 new skill
[ ]  learn       4 podcast episodes
```

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Completely free.
No job guarantees. Just action.

START HERE

THE CHALLENGE

You don't need another 30 days of watching cybersecurity career advice. You need 30 days of actually doing something. Four small, measurable challenges. Do them alongside whatever else you're already doing.

01 / NETWORK

Make 4 genuine connections

Reach out to one person working in cybersecurity each week. Genuine, personalized, no asking for jobs.

02 / BUILD

Work on 1 project

Build something practical that you understand well enough to explain, start to finish.

03 / RESEARCH

10 job descriptions, 1 new skill

Find what employers keep asking for, pick one gap, and start closing it.

04 / LEARN

Listen to 4 podcast episodes

One a week. Hear how people who work in this industry actually think about it.

My Start Date: _____ **My Finish Date:** _____

SUGGESTED PACE. ADJUST IT TO YOUR LIFE.

WEEK 1 · DAYS 1-7

START

- [ ] Send your first LinkedIn message
- [ ] Choose your project
- [ ] Start collecting job descriptions
- [ ] Listen to your first episode

WEEK 2 · DAYS 8-14

BUILD MOMENTUM

- [ ] Send your second message
- [ ] Start building your project
- [ ] Finish reviewing 10 job descriptions
- [ ] Identify your target skill
- [ ] Listen to another episode

WEEK 3 · DAYS 15-21

GO DEEPER

- [ ] Send your third message
- [ ] Make real progress on your project
- [ ] Practice your chosen skill
- [ ] Listen to your third episode

WEEK 4 · DAYS 22-30

FINISH STRONG

- [ ] Send your fourth message
- [ ] Document and demo your project
- [ ] Summarize what you learned
- [ ] Listen to your fourth episode
- [ ] Reflect on your progress

The objective is consistent effort and practical progress.

This won't guarantee you a cybersecurity job. Nothing in 30 days will. What it will give you is proof, to yourself and to anyone who asks, that you're doing the work.

CHALLENGE 01 · NETWORK

MAKE 4 GENUINE CONNECTIONS

One thoughtful message a week to someone working in cybersecurity. A reply isn't required to count. Sending it is the challenge.

> Networking isn't about finding people who can give you something.
>
> Some of my favorite people in cybersecurity are people I've never asked for a single thing. We just enjoy talking about the industry. That's what community is.

☐ WEEK 1 WHO / ROLE _____ DATE _____

_____

_____

☐ WEEK 2 WHO / ROLE _____ DATE _____

_____

_____

☐ WEEK 3 WHO / ROLE _____ DATE _____

_____

_____

☐ WEEK 4 WHO / ROLE _____ DATE _____

_____

_____

Use the lines under each name for what you learned or talked about.

NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY?

"Hey `[Name]`, I came across your profile and noticed you work in `[field]`. I'm currently learning more about cybersecurity and was interested in your experience with `[topic]`. I'd love to connect and hear more about what you do!"

DO

+ Pick people whose work genuinely interests you
+ Personalize every message
+ Ask thoughtful questions about their role
+ Have a real conversation if they reply

DON'T

– Ask for a job or referral right away
– Copy-paste the same message to hundreds of people
– Pressure anyone or chase a reply
– Forget they're busy. Respect their time.

CHALLENGE 02 · BUILD

MY PORTFOLIO PROJECT

Small, ambitious, AI-assisted, or completely original. I don't care if AI helped you build it. I care whether you understand it. Build something you can explain.

- [ ] Chose it
- [ ] Started it
- [ ] Documented it
- [ ] Demonstrated it

PROJECT NAME

WHAT I'M BUILDING

WHY I CHOSE IT

TECHNOLOGIES OR CONCEPTS INVOLVED

MY INTENDED RESULT

WHAT I ACCOMPLISHED

WHAT I LEARNED (WHAT WORKED, WHAT FAILED)

STUCK ON AN IDEA?

Home lab with VMs · Windows Event Log investigation · security automation script · phishing email analysis (safe samples) · SIEM detection rule · Active Directory lab · cloud security config in a sandbox · security data analysis in Python

Only use systems and data you own, simulated environments, or systems you have explicit permission to test.

CHALLENGE 03 · RESEARCH

10 JOB DESCRIPTIONS. 1 NEW SKILL.

Pick roles you could realistically go after next. Requirements vary by role, location, and seniority, so compare like with like.

	JOB / COMPANY	RECURRING SKILLS OR REQUIREMENTS
01		
02		
03		
04		
05		
06		
07		
08		
09		
10		

MOST COMMON SKILLS

ONE SKILL I'M GOING TO LEARN

WHAT I LEARNED

Stop relying entirely on what university teaches you or what some influencer says you should learn. Look at actual job descriptions. Find the gaps in your knowledge. Start closing them.

CHALLENGE 04 · LEARN

4 PODCAST EPISODES

One episode a week. You can memorize every exam objective and still have no idea what's happening in cybersecurity. Become dangerously informed.

SUGGESTIONS (ANY LEGITIMATE CYBERSECURITY PODCAST COUNTS)

The CyberWire Daily
Daily news and industry developments.
thecyberwire.com

SANS Internet Stormcast
Short daily news, vulns, and technical updates.
isc.sans.edu

Risky Business
News, analysis, and professional perspectives.
risky.biz

Darknet Diaries
Incidents and the people behind them.
darknetdiaries.com

Malicious Life
Cybersecurity history and how threats evolved.
malicious.life

EPISODE 01 ☐ Done

PODCAST

EPISODE TITLE

DATE LISTENED

ONE INTERESTING TAKEAWAY

EPISODE 02 ☐ Done

PODCAST

EPISODE TITLE

DATE LISTENED

ONE INTERESTING TAKEAWAY

EPISODE 03 ☐ Done

PODCAST

EPISODE TITLE

DATE LISTENED

ONE INTERESTING TAKEAWAY

EPISODE 04 ☐ Done

PODCAST

EPISODE TITLE

DATE LISTENED

ONE INTERESTING TAKEAWAY

DAY 30

30 DAYS LATER. WHAT CHANGED?

01 **Who did you reach out to?**

02 **What did you build?**

03 **What new skill did you learn?**

04 **What did you learn about the industry?**

05 **What are you going to keep doing?**

You don't need to transform your life in 30 days. You need to prove to yourself that you can make meaningful progress.

Keep going.

THE CHALLENGE ONLINE

scottaltiparmak.com/challenge

Created by Scott Altiparmak. Free to share for personal educational use.