Headline: I quit my job in consulting and spent $7,000 on a 9-week coding boot camp in Bali. It's given me a whole new take on imposter syndrome.

I quit my job in consulting and spent $7,000 on a 9-week coding boot camp in Bali. It's given me a whole new take on imposter syndrome.

- Jessica Kalip worked as a strategy consultant in Singapore after graduating from college.
- Two years into the job, she felt unfulfilled and burned out.
- She enrolled in a nine-week coding boot camp in Bali.

This as-told-to essay is based on a conversation with Jessica Kalip, a 27-year-old software engineer working at a tech startup based in Berlin. The following has been edited for length and clarity. Business Insider has verified her employment history.

After graduating from Singapore Management University with a business degree in 2019, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life.

In Singaporean society, there's an unspoken expectation that we should become doctors and lawyers, or consultants and investment bankers if we study business.

So, I just ended up going with the flow and getting a job as a strategy consultant at a boutique consulting firm. I liked my bosses and colleagues, but two years into the job, I began to see it wasn't the right career path for me. I was unfulfilled and burned out.

I knew then that I wanted to do work where I could see a tangible outcome.
My first brush with coding

After working as a consultant for about half a year, I managed to convince my boss to let me work remotely. I ended up working remotely in Bali for about one and a half years.

While I was on the island, I regularly went to a coworking space, where I saw a lot of people coding on their computers.

Back then, I didn't know what software developers did. I just knew a lot of them managed to work remotely from paradise.

A friend of mine had previously enrolled in a coding boot camp by training provider Le Wagon. She inspired me to take the leap and to give coding a try.

I didn't have big dreams of conquering the tech industry. I just wanted to learn some hard skills and be able to work remotely. Programming seemed to fit the bill perfectly.
Coding in Bali

In April 2021, I quit my job and enrolled in Le Wagon's coding boot camp in Bali. I paid $7,000 in school fees, and classes began in June 2021.

I found a long-term rental at Pererenan, Canggu, a seaside village near the boot camp premises. I stayed in a one-bedroom rental in a shared villa with another guest and a live-in landlord.

The nine-week boot camp was really intensive. Classes took place only on the weekdays. They would start at about 9 a.m. and would go on until about 6 or 7 p.m. Sometimes, the class would go out for dinner together at the end of the day.

There was an unintended benefit to taking the course during the pandemic. There were only about eight students in my class. Ordinarily, there would've been 20 or 30 of them in a batch. That allowed our teachers to devote more attention to each of us.

Plus, the environment there made it feel like I was on holiday. We had our classes on the top floor of a hotel facing the ocean!

Job hunting during the pandemic

After the boot camp ended, I took some time to learn additional programming languages and frameworks. I also completed a few online courses and brushed up on my computer science fundamentals.

I knew that landing a job during the pandemic would be tough, so I told myself to apply to at least 10 positions a day. After about two months of applying, I was offered a job with a tech startup based in Berlin.

I started working for the startup in January 2022, remotely as I still needed to sort out my visa. I moved to Berlin in June 2022 and worked there until July this year. Since August, I've been working remotely from Bali again.

My journey into tech has paid off financially. I got about a 40% increase in my salary after switching jobs.

Permanent imposter syndrome

When I started as a junior software engineer, I was like the baby of the team.

Fortunately, I got a lot of support from my colleagues and mentors. They carved out time to go through technical concepts with me.

I have worked as a software engineer for two years now. Over time, I've been given more responsibilities and opportunities to drive my own projects.

Looking back, I would say that aspiring career switchers shouldn't feel too insecure if they don't know everything about tech.

The thing I've come to realize is that the tech industry is constantly changing and growing. Even my mentors, who taught me so much, don't know everything about the industry. When it comes to working in tech, there's a permanent state of imposter syndrome that you've just got to accept.