



Stuart Clark

*Technical Leader/Developer
Advocate at Cisco*

Real-life Programmers

This series lets developers share their journey as a way to inspire others. Get to know Stuart:

Initial goal

Left school at 16 to become an apprentice hairdresser, I worked in London, Beverley Hills, New Zealand, and had celebrity clients. When I was 28, I realized that I needed a change.

His journey

My father-in-law worked in IT and earned as much in a day as I was in a month. Had an interest in computers but always thought it was for smart people. After they installed fiber Internet in our village in 2006, I bought a router and became the go-to person when people wanted help. My father-in-law loaned me a book covering CCNA, and I read it cover-to-cover. Twice. I put myself through CCNA certification and started banging on doors.

How stars aligned for success

1. My hairdressing background—talking to people all the time—has helped me have success within this industry
2. I started going into automation because I wanted to solve challenges business was facing
3. Programmability started for me—taking a software-engineer DevOps approach to my work—when it became impossible to manage everything manually



Is programming in your future? [Click to find out.](#)



Favorite part of the job



I enjoy being an advocate because it gives me the ability to help people.

Advice for others

1. Do a little coding every day (doesn't matter if it's bad code—eventually, it will become great code)
2. Don't feel like you have to learn everything overnight (find the thing that interests you—focus on that!)