

10 TRICKS

– to –

• APPEAR SMART •

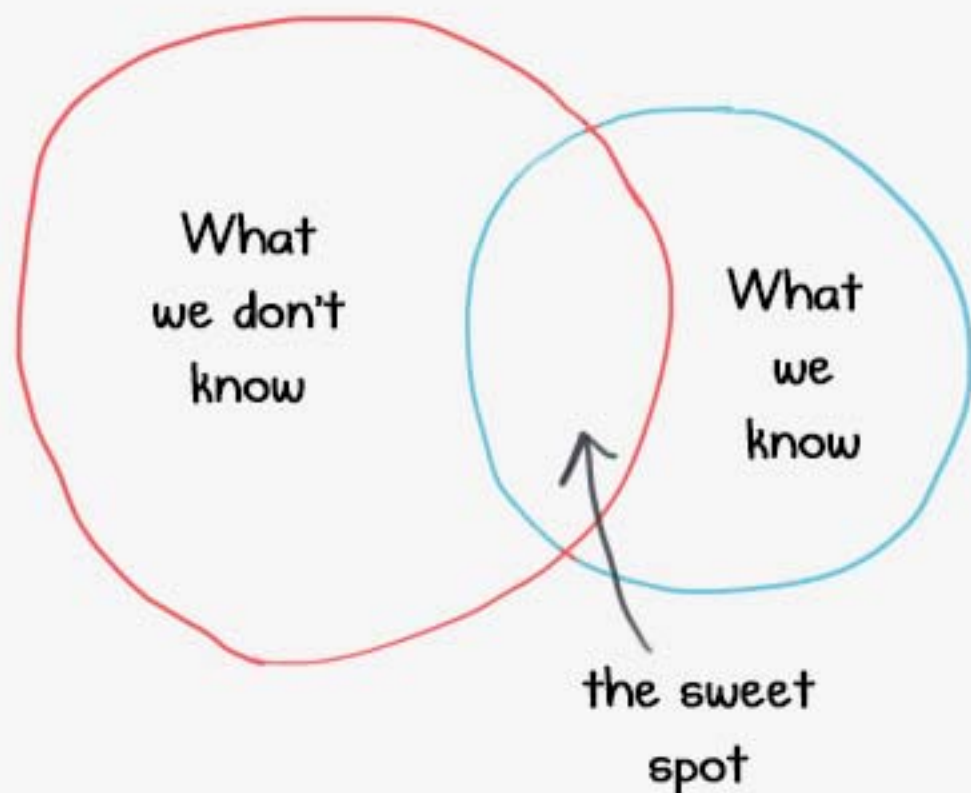
IN MEETINGS

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Like everyone, appearing smart in meetings is my top priority. Sometimes this can be difficult if you start daydreaming about your next vacation, your next nap, or bacon. When this happens, it's good to have some fallback tricks to fall back on. Here are my ten favorite tricks to quickly appear smart during meetings.

#1 DRAW A VENN DIAGRAM

It doesn't matter if your Venn diagram is wildly inaccurate, in fact, the more inaccurate the better.



Even before you've put that marker down, your colleagues will begin fighting about what exactly the labels should be and how big the circles should be, etc.

At this point, you can slink back to your chair and go back to playing Candy Crush.

#2 TRANSLATE PERCENTAGES INTO FRACTIONS

If someone says “About 25% of all users click on this button,” quickly chime in with, “So about 1 in 4,” and make a note of it.

Everyone will nod their head in agreement, secretly impressed and envious of your quick math skills.

25% of people
clicked on this
button.

So, about
one in four.



#3 ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO "TAKE A STEP BACK"

Can we take
a step back
here?



There comes a point in most meetings where everyone is chiming in, except you. This is a great point to go, "Guys, guys, guys, can we take a step back here?"

Follow it up with a quick, "What problem are we *really* trying to solve?" and, boom! You've bought yourself another hour of looking smart.

#4 NOD CONTINUOUSLY WHILE PRETENDING TO TAKE NOTES

Always bring a notepad with you.
Your rejection of technology will
be revered.

Take notes by simply writing
down one word from every
sentence that you hear.

Nod continuously while
doing so.

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#5 REPEAT THE LAST THING THE ENGINEER SAID, BUT VERY VERY SLOWLY

Let me
just
repeat
that...



After the engineer utters his divine words, chime in with, “Let me just repeat that,” and repeat exactly what he just said, but very, very slowly.

Now, his brilliance has been transferred to you.

#6 ASK "WILL THIS SCALE?" NO MATTER WHAT IT IS

No one even really knows what that means, but it's a good catch-all question that generally applies and drives engineers nuts.



Will this
scale?

#7 PACE AROUND THE ROOM

Whenever someone gets up from the table and walks around, don't you immediately respect them?

I know I do.



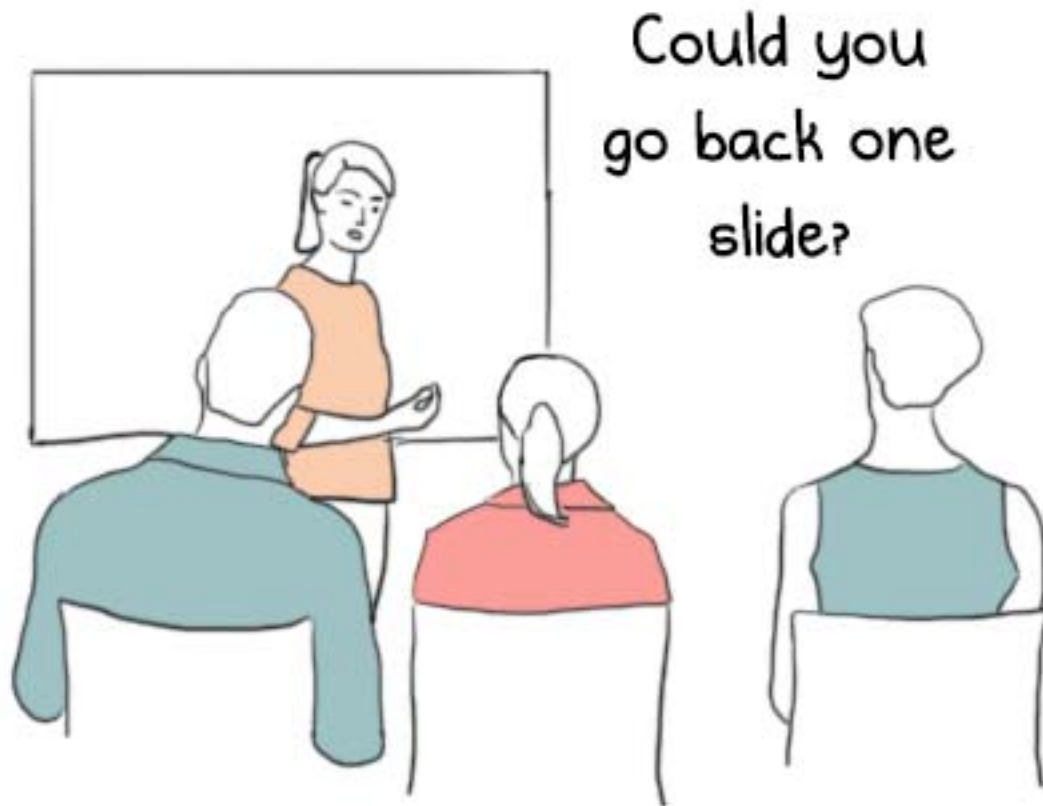
Walk around.

Go to the corner and lean against the wall.

Take a deep, contemplative sigh.

Everyone will be freaking out and wondering what you're thinking.

#8 ASK THE PRESENTER TO GO BACK A SLIDE



Could you
go back one
slide?

It doesn't matter where in the presentation you shout this out, it'll immediately make you look like you're paying closer attention than everyone else is.

Don't have anything to point out? Just say something like, "I'm not sure what these numbers mean."

#9 STEP OUT FOR A VERY IMPORTANT PHONE CALL

When you step out of a meeting for an “important” phone call, everyone will realize just how busy and important you are.

They’ll say, “Wow, this meeting is important, so if he has something even more important than this, well, we better not bother him.”



Sorry, I
have to
take this...

#10 MAKE FUN OF YOURSELF

People love self-deprecating humor.

Say things like, "Maybe we can just use the lawyers from my divorce," or "God I wish I was dead."

They'll laugh, value your honesty, consider contacting H.R., but most importantly, think you're the smartest looking person in the room.

I haven't heard anything
you've said for the past
hour





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