

how to mentor devs



Without Going Crazy.

Who is this?

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(Where's Your House Key)

Independent Contractor

Currently At Verify Brand

Former Lead Instructor



Outline

“The Need”

General attitudes

Specific behaviors (Dos and Don'ts)

Setting up a formal mentorship program

Why you should not be a 'senior dev only' shop

Expensive

Less Challenging\Boring\High Burnout

Where Do Sr. Devs Come From?

Hard to find Sr. Devs (ask any recruiter)

First, the bad news...

Mentoring takes time (and frustration!)

No business value(?)

An 'investment'

Can be futile (in extreme cases)

The good news...

Developers are really helpful people!

(e.g. The open source movement)

Provides a flow of ‘good talent’

Can provide good marketing

Can provide very good business value(!)

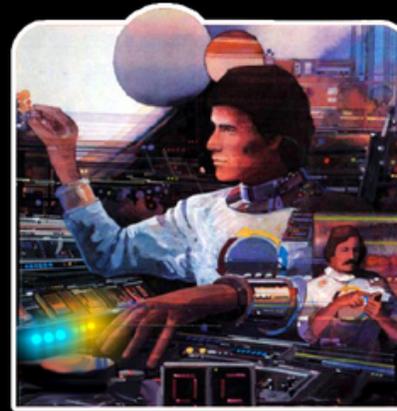
Every developer has an ego problem

Check your ego at the door

Understand imposter syndrome

Encourage confidence, not cockiness

THE TWO STATES OF EVERY PROGRAMMER



I AM A GOD.



**I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT I'M DOING.**

Their side of the bargain

Check their ego at the door

Give it a fair shake

Admit that they're wrong/don't have the answer/seek help

Sometimes, just go with the flow

Be learning constantly

How can I be helpful?

Your side of the bargain

The Suzuki Method (create the environment)

Patience, patience, patience

Empathy

Be available

Be active

Be willing to have hard conversations

Do (cont.)

Explain it how you would to your mom

Enforce a 20-30 minute “I’m stuck” rule

Give context

Ask how they would solve a problem

Demonstrate by example

Do mini lunch and learns

Do (cont.)

Pair Program

Teach 'Amish Code'

Praise publicly, criticize privately.

Give them 'homework'

Introduce them to people

Take them to user groups/conferences

Do (cont.)

Ask how things are going (follow up)

Help them understand concepts with their own examples

Talk about new technology with them

Set career expectations

Schedule specific times

Dont's

‘Just Google it’

Expect them to know ‘basic computer skills’

Throw the codebase at them and run away.

Give more info than needed to solve problem

Cutting corners to meet arbitrary management deadlines



Essential

Copying and Pasting
from Stack Overflow

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Don't (cont.)

Go on...and on...and on...and on...

Treat mentoring as 'secondary' work

Lose your cool

'Because I said so'

Expect them to understand architecture

Throw them in the deep end (too much)

Setting up your own mentoring program

Determine their interests

Put them on various dev teams

Have them do customer support

Give them two mentors, one technical, one social

Don't predetermine their role

Setting up your own mentoring program (cont.)

Set achievable, measurable goals at frequent intervals

Give them a big raise after one or two years(?)

Offer outside training

Questions?

Thank you!

Slide Share: <http://bit.ly/1S0IM1h>

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