

Mentoring and Coaching Junior Engineers

Insights from a Career Changer

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Hi, I'm Verena 🙋



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HR & Tech Recruiting



Web Development



Cloud / k8s / IaC



What's in for you today... _____

- ✓ Experiences from “both sides”
- ✓ Tips & Tricks for Mentoring & Collaborating
- ✗ Bashing & Complaining

**YOU GET A MENTOR! AND YOU GET A
MENTOR!**

**EVERYONE GETS A
MENTOR!**

makeameme.org

b'

What makes a good mentor... ---

- ✓ Eagerness & the skill to share own knowledge
- ✓ Empathy & patience
- ✓ Ability to give regular, constructive feedback

**OH, SO YOU DON'T PRACTICE
PAIR PROGRAMMING?**



b'



“Let me quickly show you ...”

b'



We learn best when working on a task or topic ourselves.



“Well, you just need to ...”



Prefer a discussion about possible solutions over sharing the solution right away.



“Now we have to put a map there in line 27.”

“Errr ... A map ... (?!?!?)”

“Yeah, just there in line 27.”

“Hmm... A map ...”

“Yeah, just put an object in there.”



Think of technical terms as a kind of new language the Junior is still in process of learning.



*“Ah, that was the error, let me
just ...”*



Interpreting & troubleshooting errors is an essential skill - and needs to be learned.



*“Why is your IDE so weird? Let
me fix that.”*



Don't over-optimize.



“Have you checked the docu?”

b'

**Junior Developer
after reading documentation**



b'



Never forget how much more
experience you have.

Bonus



As a Junior, the more you know, the more you know what you don't know.

b'

Bonus



There is only a thin line between a
positive challenge - and
challenging too much.

Talking about this line is worthed.

b'

Bonus



We learn most from mistakes we
make ourselves.

b'



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How to pair with a junior developer

Prioritize learning over productivity

Yes, you could probably complete this task faster on your own.

If you've chosen to pair on it, it's because you are wisely prioritizing your junior's future productivity. Over the long term, leveling up a team member is worth more than completing today's task.

You're likely to learn from this experience as well. If you take your pair's questions seriously, you might find yourself discovering holes in your knowledge, or uncovering assumptions you didn't know you had.

If you're under too much pressure to prioritize this learning, don't pair.

Understand they're probably nervous

Most people find it intimidating to pair with someone with more experience.

This can happen even if you're extremely friendly, or have known each other a long time.

Assume your pair is at least a bit nervous.

Realize fear disrupts thinking



Thanks for listening 🙏



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