Twitter Thread by Annie■■



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For the past 3 months, I've been consistently pair-programming with my CTO.

Here's how it started, the progress, and what I've learnt along the way.

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I'd always been vaguely interested in pairing, but it wasn't something we really did in my first job.

My interest was piqued by this (oh so timely!) tweet from James, a week before I started my new job:

https://t.co/qaG81P1osT

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> 1.5 years into my dev career and I think the most beneficial ritual I've committed to is frequent pair programming with a senior I jive with.
>
> — James Tucker (@tucker_dev) October 6, 2020

In my onboarding, I mentioned this to my CTO and he was open to giving it a go.

We decided to incorporate it into our workflow and agreed to slack each other whenever we wanted to pair.

However, this did not go to plan.

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Neither of us were in the habit of pairing and honestly, I had so much imposter syndrome around being hired that I was hesitant to ask because I didn't want to reveal how "terrible" I was.

(I moved from a largely HTML/CSS role to a full-blown React/Redux environment.)

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Two weeks went by with little pairing.

In my week three one-to-one, I finally mentioned my struggles with the massive codebase & the panic I was feeling.

My CTO immediately came up with a game-plan, and we formally scheduled two weekly pairing sessions henceforth.

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The relief I felt about how it was handled was palpable.

https://t.co/bPZtxyk78W

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> I can't express what a weight off my shoulders it is to have a manager who says, "It's normal. We expect you to be learning a lot right now.. what can we do to support you?"
>
> If you're in a position to be this person for your team, know that it makes a world of difference \U0001f64f
>
> 2/2
>
> — Annie\U0001f984\u26a1 (@anniebombanie_) November 12, 2020

As the weeks went by, we've gotten more comfortable pairing with each other.

For a while, our two scheduled weekly pairing sessions turned into four, as we started to ad-hoc slack each other to work together beyond our scheduled times.

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We'll pair on fixing bugs, implementing feature work & sometimes have mini-learning sessions.

For example, we're slowly transitioning our codebase to TypeScript. My CTO talked through what he's done so far, his learnings, and next steps.

I usually ask a million questions.

8/13

POSITIVES:

I've been able to familiarise myself with the codebase much faster, ask questions, & assimilate many of my CTO's workflow habits.

I've learnt small VSCode tricks & really started to appreciate the importance of reading documentation.

It also fostered teamwork.

9/13

NEGATIVES:

It requires a certain amount of vulnerability to pair with someone much better. I want to show my best, but constantly feel "stupid" for not knowing or forgetting things.

Luckily I don't get treated as such, however, it's an internal battle I face each time.

10/13

For the most part, it's also currently a one-way stream because our levels are so different. (However, I once helped solve a CSS issue and made it even better than it was... that felt awesome!)

Would I suggest adding pairing into your workflow?

Absolutely!

11/13

I'm more comfortable with it now and have since paired with other devs to help them out. Plus, you both get to practice speaking the language of your craft.

If you use Mac, I highly recommend @tuple for pairing. The team has done an amazing job with it!

12/13

Hopefully, this has shed a bit of light on what pairing involves.

For the complete story and a super awesome Pair-Programming Guide, here's the full article on @hashnode

https://t.co/WDlTecX9bK

/end