

# Why you should start teaching early!\*

Talking myself into holding my first workshop

\* This presentation was meant for myself, to talk me into holding my first workshop only weeks after I started coding. It is **not** to say that beginners are better teachers than seasoned programmers. It is not an either/or situation. I think that sharing knowledge is a good thing no matter how deep your knowledge is. As long as it is deeper than the knowledge of the person you're teaching all is good.

And I am forever thankful for all the long-time coders I can turn to for advice, guidance and help.

# Why I want to teach:

When I started to learn how to code (and that was not too long ago!), I was overwhelmed by a lot of things: all the possibilities, all the fancy words and the kindness of other coders. Not once was I turned down or ignored when I had a question. Every coder I asked took the time to help me.

And I think it would be nice to give back to the community by helping the ones starting to learn after me.

# Why I did not want to teach:

- It will be embarrassing to talk in front of others. - Maybe.
- Someone could ask a question I don't know the answer to. - Probably.
- I don't know everything about this topic. - Most definitely.

# Why teaching early is good for you:

- **It will help you to get to the bottom of things.**  
Not just knowing what and how. But why. You will gain a deeper understanding of things when you try to explain them to others.
- **It will help you to communicate clearly.**  
The words we use are a reflection of our understanding of the things we try to describe. The better we understand things, the clearer we can communicate them. And this is a skill that will help you not just with coding but in job interviews and when working on projects with others as well.
- **It will teach you how to teach.**  
Teaching needs practice. Like with everything you need practice in, it's best to start early. While you build your knowledge in coding, you can build your teaching skills at the same time. And when you're a seasoned programmer you will have become a good teacher along the way. Who knows what conferences you will one day speak at.

# Why teaching early is good for the ones you teach:

- **You are only one step ahead - and that is a good thing.**
  - Being taught something by someone who seems to know everything can be intimidating. Seeing someone who is just a couple of weeks or month your senior coding-wise, can be a great motivation to keep going.  
If you can wrap your head around a certain concept, so can they.
  - When you do something long enough things become automatic. What a seasoned pro does without thinking (like using the editor or the dev tools of the browser) are a mystery to beginners. So being only one step ahead of the people you teach can be a really good thing. You know what they are struggling with because you were struggling with the same shit yesterday.

- **Just a fancy word for „can be changed“ - scary language.**

Up until recently I thought „mutable“ had something to do with silencing data. (Whatever that could mean.) And because for most people around me „mutable“ is just a normal word like „house“ or „blue“, no one bothered to tell me what it really meant. So being a beginner yourself you can easily avoid terrifying learners with your vocabulary because all these fancy words are most likely new to you as well.

- **You know the new stuff.**

In the world of coding stuff changes constantly and it changes fast. So the fact that you learned something only yesterday means that you learned the newest stuff. And that is a good thing, right?

- **You're excited by the small stuff.**

When I discovered the live view feature in my code editor and the dev tools in my browser, I was so excited. I wanted to tell everyone about it. But of course... everyone already knew. Everyone except this one person at CodeDoor class I shyly told about my „discoveries“. And he, being a beginner himself, was just as excited as I was. And he was glad. Because no one had told him about these things. Because everyone thought that everyone knew about them.

# **So let's go back to the three reasons why not to teach from the beginning:**

- It will be embarrassing to talk in front of others. - Maybe. The first time. And the second. And... by the 10th time it will be fun. Hopefully.
- Someone could ask a question I don't know the answer to. - Probably. And it will be a great opportunity for you to say: „I don't know that. But let's find out together!“
- I don't know everything about this topic. - Most definitely. And it is not necessary to know everything about it. It's only important that you know a bit more than your students and that you are able to explain it well.

**So why don't you start teaching - now?**