

Compassionate Coding

being more humane in tech

Thank you for being here!
I want to start this talk about ...



The act of ...

Communication

Transferring information from one person to another

All our jobs include some form of communication

- Customer contact
- Daily/Planning/Review/Retro etc.
- Jira/Confluence/GitHub and of course

The thing is ...

The tech industry is about



Solving Problems



in an efficient manner

"Holy Grail" of the Tech Industry

- Efficient Code
- Time Management
- High Velocity

Of course that also means we want to have ...

Efficient Communication

And for a lot of people that means ...

Brisk & Direct



Communication

I would like to pose the question, if ...

Brisk & Direct

Communication

= Efficient?

**Lot of "Bla Bla" ... Let's get
more close to reality ...
Let me ask you a question ...**

Who here had a
negative experience
in a code review?

Doesn't have to be @GCX
hurt; left back a bad feeling;
didn't feel quite right

I would bet that a lot of it was
about being efficient! But ...

We are not machines

People are different

Some of you probably now
think ...



Thanks, Captain Obvious!
But in practice that means ...

The things you mean might
not be the things the other
person understands

Just because you can handle brisk
critism doesn't mean the other can ...

Even if you mean well ...

- They might have a difficult time in life
- Their pet might be sick
- They might just have a bad day

Maybe you think ...

**They just need
a thicker skin!**

I certainly did that in the past!
Why am I telling you all of this?

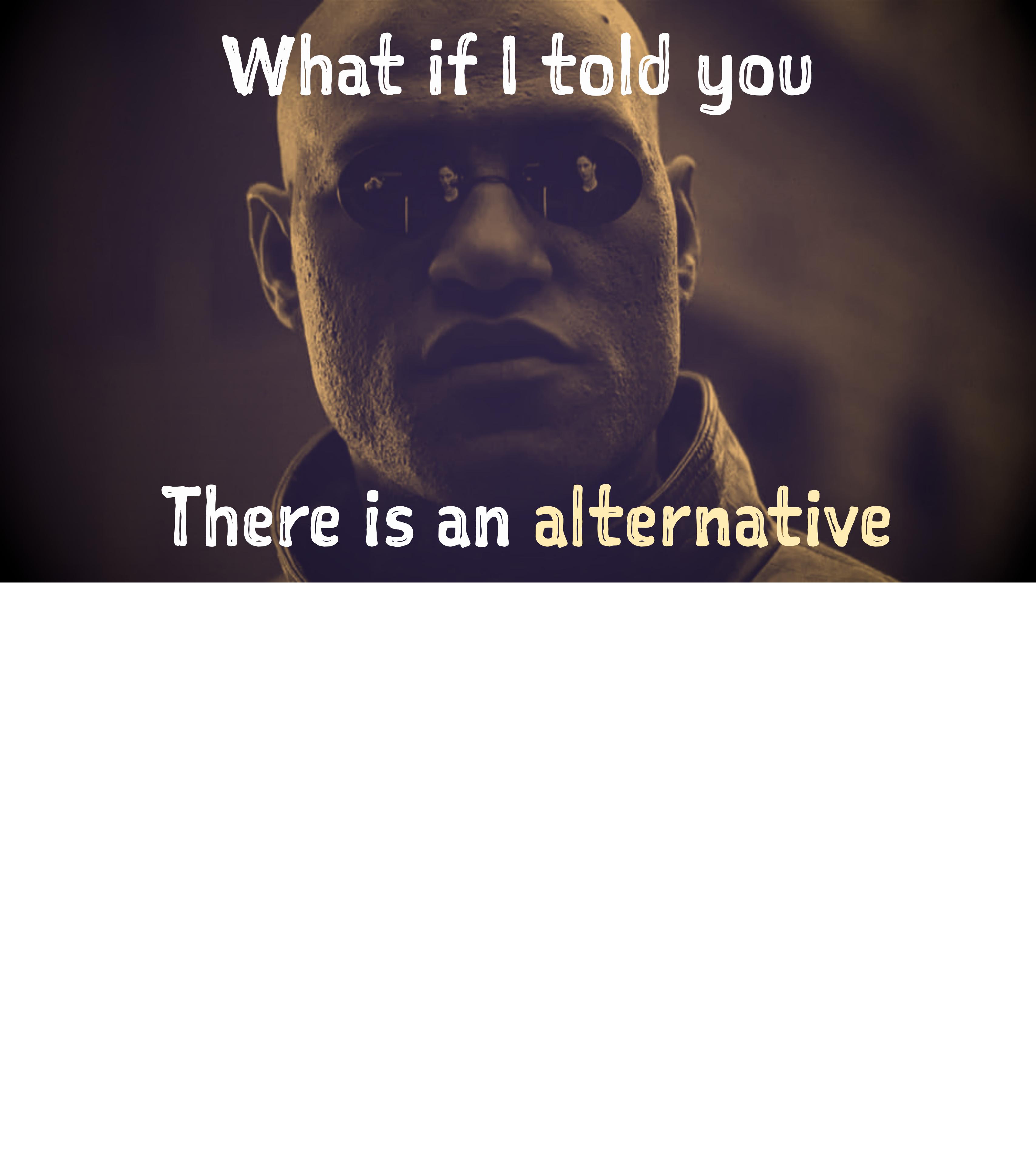
Does that mean
I'm no longer allowed
to criticise people?



Somebody

Of course not! Feedback is important! (Mention talk on feedback?)

I'm here to suggest ...



What if I told you

There is an alternative



Woho! Magic Sauce!
Everything is saved!
Ofc we are not going to get
there with this, so...

How about some examples in the
context of Code Reviews?

I looked at our GitHub and
picked out a few comments ...

But no worries! I'm not gonna
blame anyone! Instead ...

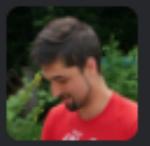
I'm gonna eat my own dog food

What does that mean? You'll
see in a sec ...

Let's start with this one ...

Passing of Opinion as Fact

Passing of Opinion as Fact²



swolf on 1 Sep 2017

This shouldn't be a helper. This should be a context. The Lineup context.

²<https://medium.freecodecamp.org/unlearning-toxic-behaviors-in-a-code-review-culture-b7c295452a3c>

What's the problem with this?
No backup (docs, guidelines etc.). Personal preference is not enough!

How might a compassionate alternative look like?

Compassionate Alternative

The Phoenix docs suggest to move persistence related functionality into a so called “Context” ([see here](#)). I think that’s applicable here and I think will improve the project structure. What do you think?

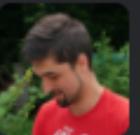
— A better me

Better!

- Links to docs
- Explains why
- Asks for feedback

Asking judgmental questions

Asking judgmental questions²



swolf on 5 Sep 2017

Why not use a view?

²<https://medium.freecodecamp.org/unlearning-toxic-behaviors-in-a-code-review-culture-b7c295452a3c>

Implies solution should be obvious => Person is dumb to not see it

Veiled demands => Instead provide recommendations (links)

Compassionate Alternative

You could move this into a view, which has the benefit of separating the “response building” from the “rendering” logic.

— A better me

I think you get the point

Is it easy? No.



Is it worth it? Yes!

It leads to ...

Better Collaboration

And to have a quote in here ...

Compassion - an optimization problem

Compassion presents an optimization problem — it's about understanding and minimizing suffering. It's not the same as politeness or niceness, and it often involves speaking honestly and assertively.

— April Wensel (Compassionate Coding)¹

¹<https://medium.com/compassionate-coding/confessions-of-a-recovering-jerk-programmer-b9d531a05ea9>

And we like Optimization Problems, right?

Of course

Code Reviews

are just a small part

But they are a



great start

In the end it boils down to ...

Try to leave your colleagues better

If we can do that, we can talk
about the bigger issue

Now that we discussed

Compassion

in Code Reviews

Let's talk about the
Big Picture



And by that I mean ...

The Tech Industry

Because you see, right now ...

We in the tech industry value

intelligence

We talk about

ROCKSTAR DEVS

and

CODE NINJAS

We make fun of

"untechnical" people

Things like: "The customer requested the source code in a PDF!"

It IS pretty funny but we should keep one thing in mind ...

But what does



technical



actually mean?

I looked it up on Wiktionary
and this is what came out of it

Technical

Of or pertaining to the useful or mechanic arts, or to any academic, legal, science, engineering, business, or the like terminology with specific and precise meaning or (frequently, as a degree of distinction) shades of meaning; specially appropriate to any art, science or engineering field, or business

— Wiktionary

I'll just gonna let you read it



quickmeme.com

Maybe let's use some examples

Maybe some examples are better ...

Technical Examples

- Programming Python
- Using Photoshop
- Accounting in Excel
- Dancing Disco Fox
- Using a Fork

Soooo ...

Technical Examples

- Programming Python
- Using Photoshop
- Accounting in Excel
- Dancing Disco Fox
- Using a Fork

Pretty much any learned skill

Also ...

Being

technical & intelligent

isn't everything

What about

Emotional Intelligence?

Because ... If you think about
it ...

If you think about it

Compassion

is all about

...
Emotional Intelligence

It's not only about "being nice"

It actually leads to better

Collaboration

Or as April Wensel put it ...

Smoother Interactions

Eventually, I realized that taking time to care about other people's emotions isn't just kind — it's actually more efficient if it leads to smoother interactions that don't trigger people's threat responses.

— April Wensel (Compassionate Coding)¹

¹<https://medium.com/compassionate-coding/confessions-of-a-recovering-jerk-programmer-b9d531a05ea9>

And here we are again. Full circle back to ...

Efficient Communication



I want to close this talk with a final quote

Be the change ❤

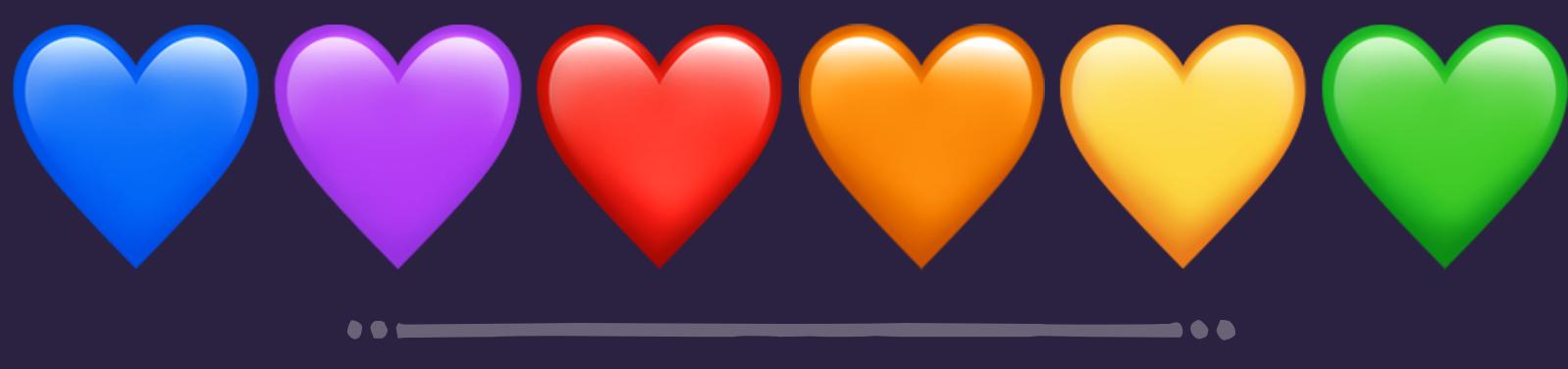
The tech industry — and the world — is made up of individual humans, and a lot of those humans are suffering. Each of us has the opportunity to do something about it.

— April Wensel (Compassionate Coding)¹

¹<https://medium.com/compassionate-coding/confessions-of-a-recovering-jerk-programmer-b9d531a05ea9>

Resources

- Compassionate Coding on Medium
- Confessions of a Recovering Jerk Programmer
- Tech has a Toxic Tone Problem — Let's Fix It!
- Unlearning toxic behaviors in a code review culture



Thank you for listening

