Week 6 Lecture 18

Business

What's in this lecture?

- Personal Experiences

- Being on the lookout: Good and Bad

Knowing your Role

- Mistake: individually replying to a vendor saying that you'll work around their bugs

- The problems:

  - I removed the opportunity for a paper trail with the vendor's mistakes

  - I left my team in the dark

  - I went over the heads of the project manager

Knowing your Role

- Why I made the mistake:

  - The vendor was headed out for a holiday weekend, and the fix would involve multiple people spending many hours

  - I assumed that I could work around it faster than I could wait for them

  - I was overtired, and writing at the end of a long day

Knowing your Role

- Takeaways:
  - Not your decision whether other people work on the weekend or are forced to work on holidays
  - If your action will affect another developer, share it with them
  - Set boundaries on your hours
  - always cc the team members

Driving Toward a Cliff

- Mistake: not delaying a demonstration meeting when the application wasn't ready

- The problems:

  - Said that everything was going fine

  - Everything was not going fine

  - I did not communicate the depth of changes required for new features

  - I could not accept that I wouldn't finish

Driving Toward a Cliff

- Why I made the mistake:

  - I was getting complaints about progress taking too long, so I put up a front of it going well

  - I did not estimate the time required to get 'the little things' working correctly

  - I was overtired and willfully deluded by my ability to pull all-nighters to complete tasks in the past

  - I was way to prideful to admit with < 7 days to go that the past 3 weeks were not productive

Driving Toward a Cliff

- Takeaways:
  - It is not just you demo'ing an application -- you are wasting the time of everybody there
  - If you are getting badgered because of 'working too slow' take it as a warning sign that you aren't communicating well
  - If a meeting scheduled N days from the present won't go well *right now*, delay it
    - Adjust N for scope and set at project initialization
  - Pride gets in the way of good business

Born on the 4th of July

- Mistake: Not holding my ground when saying I didn't want to work on the weekend

- The problems:
  - I was untrue to myself and to my work

  - I allowed myself to be brow beaten by cries for 'the schedule'

  - Instead of following up in an email, I decided to work and it:

    - made my family mad

    - made my other commitments mad

    - damaged my ability to do consistently well

    - the client wasn't even satisfied with my work at the end

Born on the 4th of July

- Why I made the mistake:

  - It is hard to say 'no' when every time you do, it feels like a ding to your character

  - I thought that it would buy me goodwill in the future

  - I felt responsible for the project being behind

Born on the 4th of July

- Takeaways:
  - Setting your schedule early doesn't make it immutable, but it does make your argument stronger
  - Try to satisfy everybody and satisfy none
  - Don't take saying 'no' as a sign of weakness
  - Goodwill is not a currency

Being on the Lookout

- Good: team is pragmatic with code -- simplest working version is better than great conceptual nothing

- Bad: One developer writes spec for another without input

- Good: Team asks questions of your section of the project and asks you to diagram and explain it

Being on the Lookout

- Bad: Member plays hot potato with development goals -- either always 'blocked' or stalling

- Good: members work late with you even when their part is finished

- Bad: another developer tries to manage you without cause

Final Thoughts

- You are the steward of your mind and heart: lead it not into woods and mire but up mountains and through valleys. Embrace the highs and lows as opportunities to learn and with them appreciate the good around you. Seek the joy of satisfying, good work, hold fast your decisions, and approach new challenges without fear