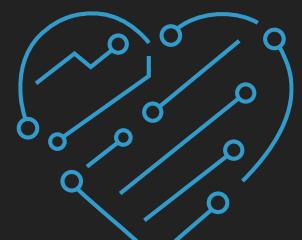


# COMPASSIONATE (YET CANDID) CODE REVIEWS



COMPASSIONATE CODING

@APRILWENSEL

# SOFTWARE ENGINEER & TECHNICAL LEADER

SONY

zoodles

Playdom™

CARNEGIE  
INSTITUTION FOR  
SCIENCE



leeo

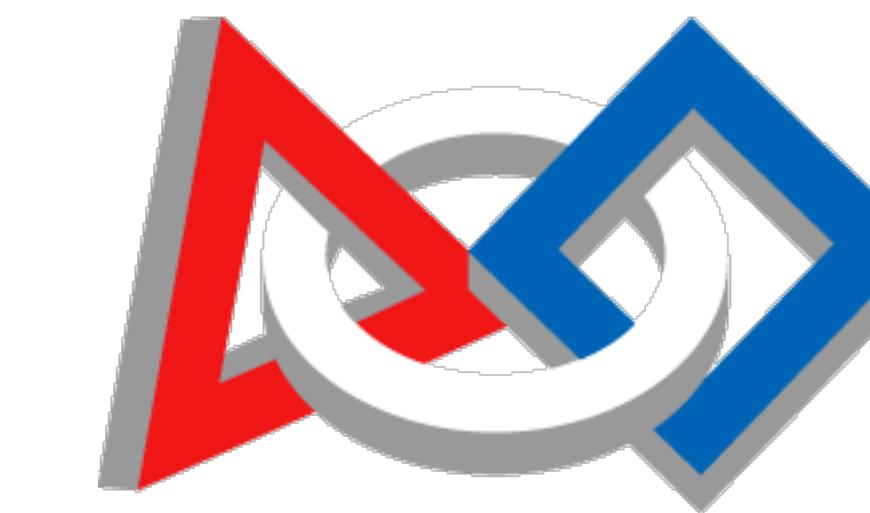


User Testing

# VOLUNTEER CODING INSTRUCTOR & MENTOR



LEVEL PLAYING FIELD  
INSTITUTE



**FIRST**  
**LEGO**  
**LEAGUE**



Hackbright  
Academy

A red paper-mache robot with a sad face and a broken heart.

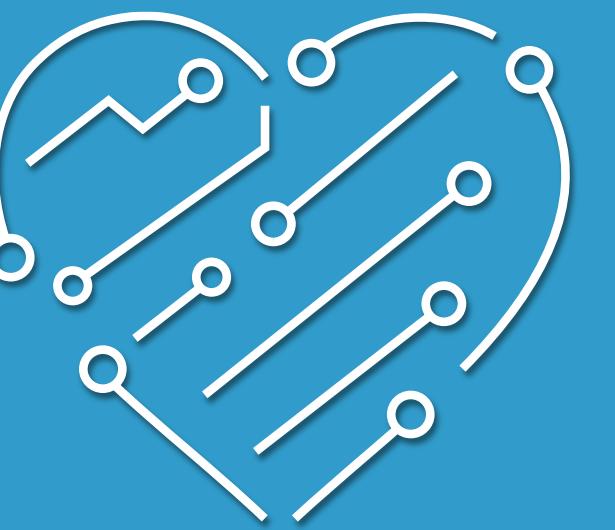
THERE'S A LOT  
OF SUFFERING  
IN SOFTWARE

# SUFFERING IN SOFTWARE

- STRESS & BURNOUT
- “TALENT SHORTAGE”
- LACK OF DIVERSITY
- POOR UX
- UNETHICAL PRODUCTS
- FAILED PROJECTS



**WE DON'T CARE ENOUGH  
ABOUT HUMANS**



COMPASSIONATE  
CODING

A CONSCIOUS BUSINESS  
BRINGING EMOTIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE & ETHICS TO THE  
TECH INDUSTRY THROUGH

- ◆ TRAINING
- ◆ COACHING
- ◆ CONSULTING
- ◆ SPEAKING
- ◆ WRITING

@APRILWENSEL

**COMPASSION  
IS NOT BEING FAKE NICE**

**COMPASSION  
IS NOT BEING “POLITE”**

COMPASSION  
IS NOT PITY

# COMPASSION

“THE FEELING THAT ARISES WHEN YOU  
ARE CONFRONTED WITH ANOTHER'S  
SUFFERING AND FEEL MOTIVATED TO  
RELIEVE THAT SUFFERING”

# BEING VEGAN MEANS FEELING COMPASSION FOR ALL BEINGS



blossom  
**DU JOUR**  
100% VEGAN

617 9th Avenue  
(between 43rd & 44th St.)

@APRILWENSEL

**COMPASSION IS GOOD FOR  
THE BOTTOM LINE**

@APRILWENSEL

**“THE COMPASSIONATE [BUSINESS] UNITS  
EXHIBITED BETTER FINANCIAL  
PERFORMANCE...AND THESE UNITS REALIZED  
HIGHER EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER RETENTION.”**

**Monica Worline & Jane Dutton**

*Awakening Compassion at Work*

"PEOPLE IN **POSITIVE** WORK  
ENVIRONMENTS OUTPERFORM THOSE  
WHO WORK IN NEGATIVE CLIMATES **BY**  
**10-30%.**"

Shawn Murphy

*The Optimistic Workplace*

COMPASSION IS GOOD FOR  
YOU

@APRILWENSEL

# BENEFITS OF COMPASSION

- ▶ JOY
- ▶ RESILIENCE
- ▶ PEACE OF MIND
- ▶ JOB SATISFACTION
- ▶ LOWER CHANCE OF BURNOUT

# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CODE REVIEWS?

# COMPASSIONATE CODE REVIEWS

MINIMIZE SUFFERING FOR  
EVERYONE INVOLVED—AUTHORS,  
REVIEWERS, & EVEN USERS

# 3 FILTERS FOR COMPASSIONATE CODE REVIEWS



1



2



3



1

IS IT TRUE?

**EXAMPLE:  
“YOU SHOULD NEVER USE  
SINGLETONS.”**

**EXAMPLE:  
“YOU SHOULD NEVER USE  
SINGLETONS.”**



**IS IT TRUE?**

IT'S AN OPINION, NOT A  
FACT, SO IT CAN'T BE  
PROVEN TRUE OR FALSE

**ALTERNATIVE:  
“IN THIS CASE, I WOULD  
ADVISE AGAINST USING A  
SINGLETON BECAUSE...”**

ALTERNATIVE:  
“COULD YOU EXPLAIN YOUR  
DECISION TO USE A  
SINGLETON? DID YOU  
CONSIDER...?”

**EXAMPLE:  
“THESE 3 LINES SHOULD REALLY  
BE IN A SEPARATE METHOD.”**

**IS IT TRUE?**

**ALTERNATIVE:  
“WOULD IT MAKE SENSE TO  
MOVE THESE LINES INTO A  
SEPARATE METHOD TO HELP  
WITH READABILITY?”**

**EXAMPLE:  
“THIS ISN’T IDIOMATIC.”**

**EXAMPLE:**  
**“THIS ISN’T IDIOMATIC.”**  
**“IT’S BEST PRACTICE TO....”**  
**“THE RIGHT WAY TO....”**

**ALTERNATIVES:  
“ACCORDING TO THIS GUIDE....”  
“I’VE OFTEN SEEN....”**



# IS IT TRUE?

- ◆ IF IT'S YOUR OPINION, SAY SO
- ◆ IF IT'S A FACT, CONSIDER SHARING A SOURCE
- ◆ AVOID RIGHT/WRONG LANGUAGE
- ◆ TRY A QUESTION INSTEAD
- ◆ AVOID "SHOULDING" ON PEOPLE



**IS IT NECESSARY?**

**EXAMPLE:  
“THIS IS A NITPICK, BUT . . .”**

**EXAMPLE:  
“THIS IS A NITPICK, BUT . . .”**

**IS IT NECESSARY?**

**TAKE A BREATH AND CHECK  
YOUR MOTIVE**

**ARE YOU TRYING TO HELP  
OR  
BOOST YOUR OWN EGO?**

**@APRILWENSEL**

# ALTERNATIVES:

- AUTOMATE IF POSSIBLE
- MENTION IT PRIVATELY
- IGNORE IT

EXAMPLE:

“THIS CODE MAKES ME CRINGE, BUT I  
SEE WHY YOU DID IT THIS WAY . . .”

EXAMPLE:

“THIS CODE MAKES ME CRINGE, BUT I  
SEE WHY YOU DID IT THIS WAY . . .”

IS IT NECESSARY?

EXAMPLE:  
‘THIS IS FINE, BUT WE SHOULD  
REALLY REWRITE THIS WHOLE  
MODULE...’

EXAMPLE:  
‘THIS IS FINE, BUT WE SHOULD  
REALLY REWRITE THIS WHOLE  
MODULE...’

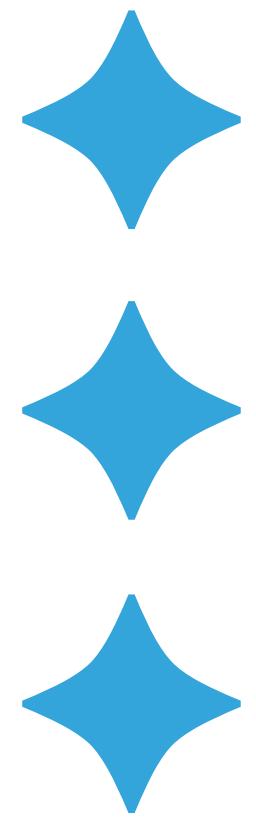
IS IT NECESSARY?

# ALTERNATIVE:

RAISE THE ISSUE WITH THE TEAM  
THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE  
CHANNEL (A TICKET, CHAT, ETC.)



# IS IT NECESSARY?



**BE CAREFUL WITH NITPICKS  
CHECK YOUR MOTIVES  
CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHANNEL**



**IS IT KIND?**



I USED TO BE  
KIND OF A JERK

@APRILWENSEL

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

A close-up photograph of a round chocolate cake. The cake is covered in a thick layer of white frosting, which is heavily speckled with red, possibly crushed candy or sprinkles. It sits on a metal cooling rack against a dark, blurred background.

@APRILWENSEL

BEING KIND != SUGARCOATING

**BEING KIND IS ULTIMATELY  
MORE EFFICIENT BECAUSE YOU  
AVOID TRIGGERING SOMEONE'S  
DEFENSIVE THREAT RESPONSE**

## EXAMPLE:

“The above code is [BLEEP], and it generates [BLEEP] code. It looks bad, and there's no reason for it.

The code could \*easily\* have been done with just a single and understandable conditional... I really see no reason for this kind of complete idiotic [BLEEP].”

## EXAMPLE:

“The above code is [BLEEP], and it generates [BLEEP] code. It looks bad, and there's no reason for it.

The code could \*easily\* have been done with just a single and understandable conditional... I really see no reason for this kind of complete idiotic [BLEEP].”

# IS IT KIND?

# ALTERNATIVE:

“DID YOU CONSIDER USING A SINGULAR  
CONDITIONAL LIKE THIS...?

I THINK THAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR  
PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND.”

**EXAMPLE:  
“WHY DIDN’T YOU JUST USE A  
FACTORY?”**

**EXAMPLE:  
“WHY DIDN’T YOU JUST USE A  
FACTORY?”**

**IS IT KIND?**

**EXAMPLE:  
“WHY DIDN’T YOU JUST USE A  
FACTORY?”**

**IS IT KIND?**

# ALTERNATIVE:

“DID YOU CONSIDER USING A FACTORY HERE?  
IT WOULD HELP BY....”

# EXAMPLE:

REVIEWER: “GIVEN THE DEPENDENCIES, I’M CONCERNED THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MODIFY THIS IN THE FUTURE.”

AUTHOR: “I THINK THAT’S A TRIVIAL CONCERN.”

# EXAMPLE:

REVIEWER: “GIVEN THE DEPENDENCIES, I’M CONCERNED THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MODIFY THIS IN THE FUTURE.”

AUTHOR: “I THINK THAT’S A TRIVIAL CONCERN.”

IS IT KIND?

@APRILWENSEL

# ALTERNATIVE:

“THANKS FOR RAISING THAT ISSUE. I DON’T  
THINK THAT’S GOING TO BE A PROBLEM  
BECAUSE [...] WHAT DO YOU THINK?”

EXAMPLE:

“I DISAGREE WITH THIS WHOLE APPROACH. I THINK IT'S MESSY AND UNMAINTAINABLE.”

EXAMPLE:

“I DISAGREE WITH THIS WHOLE APPROACH. I THINK IT'S MESSY AND UNMAINTAINABLE.”

IS IT KIND?

# ALTERNATIVES:

- DO SOME REVIEW \*BEFORE\* CODING
- DISCUSS IT OFFLINE
- PAIR PROGRAM!

IT'S KIND TO HELP PEOPLE  
IMPROVE;  
IT'S NOT KIND TO SHAME  
THEM IN THE PROCESS



# IS IT KIND?

- ◆ TAKE A BREATH
- ◆ AVOID INSULTS AND SHAMING
- ◆ REMEMBER YOU'RE DEALING WITH HUMANS
- ◆ ASSUME COMPETENCE; SEEK TO UNDERSTAND
- ◆ CHOOSE THE RIGHT MEDIUM
- ◆ OFFER GRATITUDE

# 3 FILTERS FOR COMPASSIONATE CODE REVIEWS



IS IT TRUE?



IS IT NECESSARY?

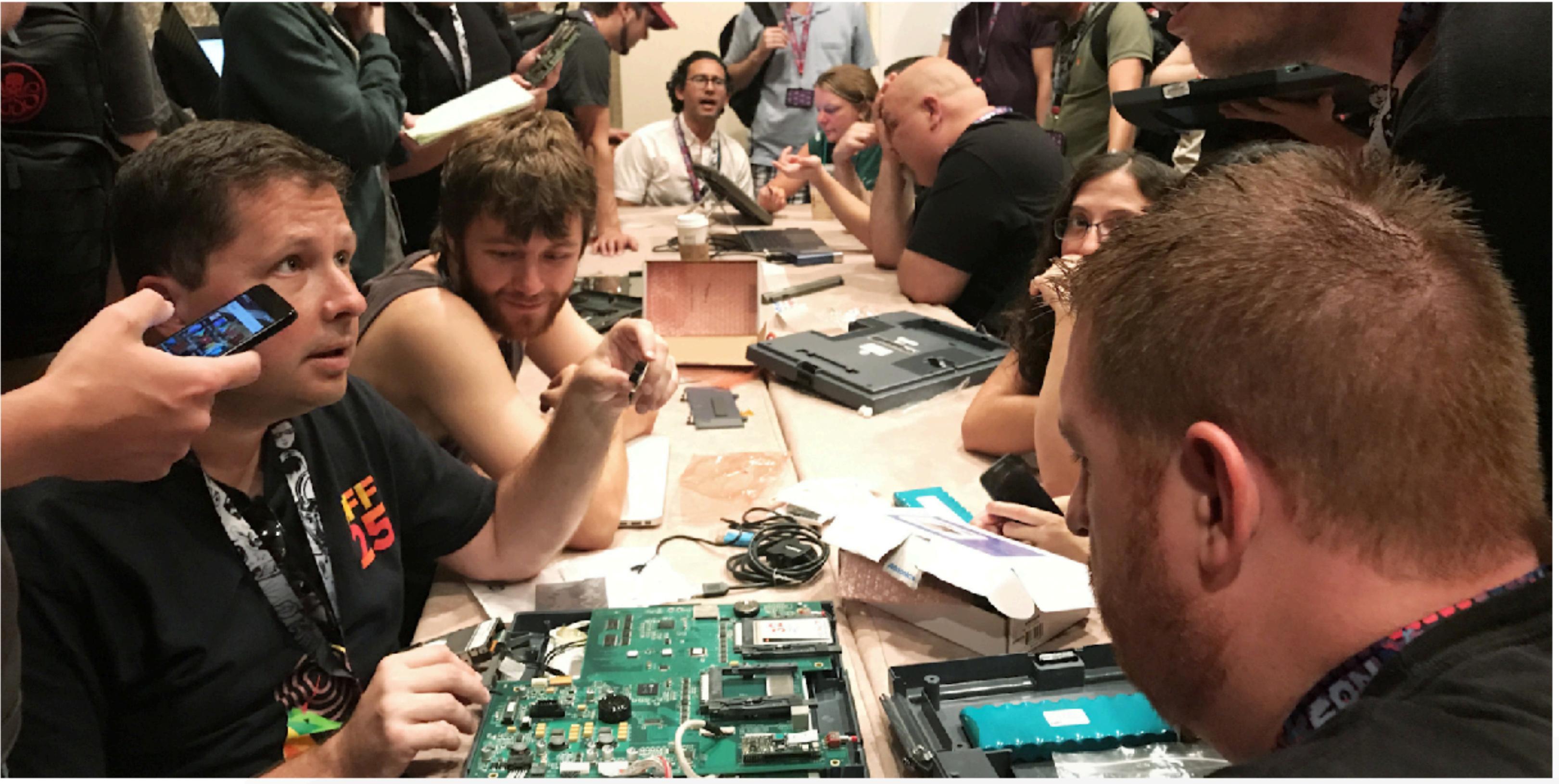


IS IT KIND?

ISN'T  
“COMPASSIONATE CODING”  
AN OXYMORON?

# Programmers are having a huge debate over whether they should be required to behave respectfully to each other

Julie Bort May 6, 2018, 10:00 AM



<http://www.businessinsider.com/programmers-debate-requirements-to-behave-respectfully-ccoc-2018-5>

@APRILWENSEL

# THE STATUS QUO OF TECH CULTURE

- ▶ EGO
- ▶ ELITISM
- ▶ COMPETITION
- ▶ BEING “SMART”
- ▶ BEING A “ROCKSTAR”

# THE COMPASSIONATE FUTURE OF TECH CULTURE

- ▶ EGO HUMILITY
- ▶ ELITISM INCLUSION
- ▶ COMPETITION COOPERATION
- ▶ BEING “SMART” LEARNING
- ▶ BEING A “ROCKSTAR” BEING A MENTOR

ISN'T  
“COMPASSIONATE CODING”  
AN OXYMORON?

LET'S MAKE  
“COMPASSIONATE CODING”  
REDUNDANT

@APRILWENSEL



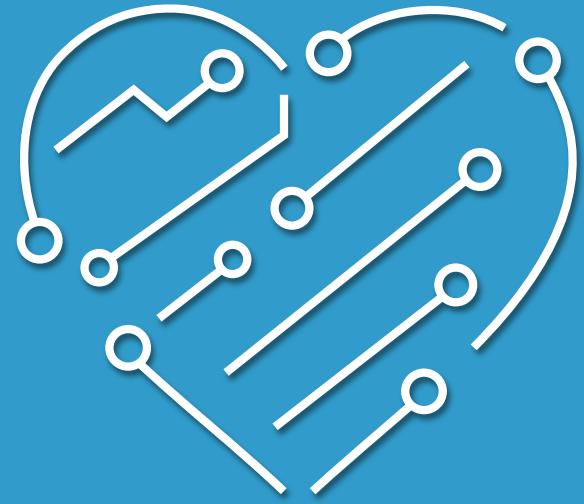
PLANT SEEDS OF COMPASSION  
IN YOUR CODEBASE &  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

@APRILWENSEL

# THANK YOU!

✉ NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP:  
[COMPASSIONATECODING.COM](http://COMPASSIONATECODING.COM)

# COME GET A STICKER!



COMPASSIONATE  
CODING